

Peninsula Grammar School

Complaints Resolution Policy

1. Introduction

Peninsula Grammar School ('PGS' or 'School') is committed to provide a supportive and inclusive environment where every member of our community feels valued and heard. We recognise that concerns and complaints may arise from time to time, and it is important to resolve these fairly, efficiently and promptly.

2. Purpose

This policy outlines our approach to managing complaints, to ensure they are handled in a confidential, professional and procedurally fair manner to achieve a positive resolution. Our complaints resolution procedure provides a clear and transparent process for students, parents, staff, and community members to raise concerns and complaints.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all complaints from students, parents, staff, and community members related to any aspect of school operations, including but not limited to, academic matters, student behaviour, staff conduct, school facilities, the boarding premises, school homestay arrangements, and school administrative processes.

4. Definitions

A *complaint* is an expression of dissatisfaction related to the school, which requires a response

The *complainant* is the person(s) making the complaint

A *formal complaint* is a documented expression of dissatisfaction made by a student, parent, staff member, or other member of the school community regarding a specific issue that requires investigation and resolution.

5. Complaint resolution principles

When engaging in the Complaint Resolution Procedure set out below, all parties must:

- adhere to requirements set out by the school's procedure
- respect the privacy of others and adhere to confidentiality requirements throughout the process
- be considerate of each other's views and roles with this procedure
- act cooperatively and in good faith and
- endeavour to address and resolve the complaint as quickly as possible

Where the above principles are not observed it may be difficult to reach a resolution.

6. Complaint resolution procedure

(a) Informal resolution

Complainants are encouraged to first discuss their concerns directly with the relevant person/party (e.g. teacher, staff member) to seek an informal resolution. If the issue is unresolved, another

member of staff may be involved to facilitate a resolution. Should the issue remain unresolved after this stage, the complainant may wish to submit a formal complaint to the School.

(b) Formal complaint

The School will adopt a four-stage approach to manage formal complaints.

Stage 1 - Submission of a complaint

A complaint may be made in person, by phone or in writing.

Where possible, a complaint should provide the following information:

- Name and contact details of the complainant
- Dates and times of any specific incidents relevant to the complaint
- Names of any students, staff or other person(s) relevant to the complaint
- The sought outcome (if any)

Where appropriate, staff will notify the Principal of their receipt of a formal complaint, and provide the information about the complaint as required or directed.

Given the size and structure of the school, complaints should be addressed to the following staff:

- To the Head of School regarding Junior, Middle, Pre-Senior or Senior School matters
- To the Executive Deputy Principal regarding the English Language Centre
- To the Executive Deputy Principal regarding the Boarding House and/or boarders
- To the Executive Deputy Principal regarding international student issues of a serious nature
- To the Executive Deputy Principal regarding Head of School or Head of Department/Faculty
- To the Executive Deputy Principal regarding a staff or student issues of a serious nature
- To the Chief Operating Officer regarding non-teaching staff matters
- To the Chief Operating Officer regarding school operational matters
- To the Chief Financial Officer regarding matters of a financial nature
- To the Principal regarding matters that pertain to student enrolments
- To the Principal regarding matters of a serious and highly confidential nature and
- To the Chair of the Board regarding the Principal, any Board Director or the Board

In circumstances where a complaint is referred to another member of staff, the staff member will direct the complaint to the appropriate person and channel.

Stage 2 - Complaint acknowledgement

The School will write to the complainant within 5 business days, from the receipt of the complaint to:

- acknowledge receipt of their formal complaint
- inform them which staff member will manage their complaint, and their contact details
- confirm any initial steps being undertaken to resolve the complaint; and
- provide them a copy of this policy

Stage 3 - Investigation and response

The designated staff member will investigate the complaint and endeavour to provide a written response of their findings within 5 business days, from the time of acknowledging the complaint.

A considered response from the School to the complainant will detail:

- any investigations undertaken and the findings, subject to Privacy legislation
- the School's position with respect to the complaint and
- a recommended resolution

The School will prioritise its response to formal complaints of an urgent nature.

Where appropriate, a response may be reviewed by the Principal.

Stage 4 – Resolution

The School is committed to ensuring procedural fairness when determining an appropriate resolution to a complaint. Where possible, the School will:

- provide a person likely to be affected by a resolution an opportunity to present their position
- ensure the decision-maker(s) is provided necessary information and
- determine a resolution based upon the reliable evidence provided.

Resolutions will vary from case to case depending on the nature and circumstances of each complaint and could include, but are not limited to:

- acknowledgement of the complaint's circumstances
- reassurance to the complainant
- a verbal or written apology
- disciplinary action and/or
- any other appropriate resolution that may be appropriate in the circumstances

The complainant will receive communication from the School to confirm the resolution of a complaint.

7. Time extension

Where the School requires a time extension to resolve the complaint in accordance with this policy, the School will notify the affected parties of the extended timeframe.

8. Appeals process

(a) Internal appeal

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution, they may submit an appeal in writing to the Principal or Chair of the Board within 5 business days of the School's resolution of the complaint.

The grounds for making an appeal must either be that:

- the Complaints Resolution Policy was not followed or
- the resolution of the complaint is claimed to be insufficient, unfair, biased or unreasonable.

The appeal will be reviewed, and a final decision will be communicated to the complainant within 10 business days.

(b) External appeal

The complainant may seek further resolution through relevant independent authorities, such as the Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (VRQA) if they are dissatisfied with the resolution of the complaint.

9. Support during Complaint Resolution Process

A complainant may have a support person to assist them at any time during the Complaint Resolution Process. The complainant must advise the School if they would like to include a support person, advocate or another representative when making a complaint.

10. Review

The School will monitor changes on its compliance obligations and review this policy as appropriate, or within two years of the authorised date, whichever comes first.

11. Further information

Any questions or further information regarding this policy should be directed to the Principal.

12. Relevant legislation, standards and documents

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)
Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000
Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2001
VRQA Minimum Standards for School Registration
Child Safe Standards Ministerial Order 1359
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
PGS Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
PGS Child Safe Code of Conduct
PGS International Student Complaint Resolution Policy
PGS Privacy Policy
PGS Whistleblower Protection Policy
PGS Enrolment Agreement

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