



# COMPLAINTS POLICY

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Mount St. Joseph Girls' College is a community of faith, hope and love where communication takes place in an environment of transparency, respect, compassion, fairness, inclusion and concern for all. MSJ welcomes feedback from all members of the College community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously.

Within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised from time to time misunderstandings and issues may arise, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily and in partnership with members of the school community. These situations can be opportunities to model the love of Christ, and our response can be founded on a belief in the dignity of each person, on respect, compassion, integrity and truth.

This Complaints Policy is designed to assist you to understand how to make a complaint.

## What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to Mount St. Joseph Girls' College, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

A dissatisfaction will usually arise from a perception that the school has:

- done something wrong;
- failed to do something it should have;
- acted unfairly or inappropriately.

The complaint may be about an individual staff member, a student or a policy or procedure. Examples may include: student discipline procedures; learning and teaching; students requiring educational adjustments; damage/loss of personal property; bullying and harassment by students against other students.

This policy does not cover complaints that are of a child protection nature. These must be addressed in accordance with child protection laws and reporting obligations (see PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to all Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools)

(<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/identify.aspx>).

## How Do I Make a Complaint?

The vast majority of issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. In most cases, these issues can be resolved through informal discussions with appropriate staff members.

We ask that, where appropriate, you first raise the matter directly with the relevant staff member.

If that is not appropriate or the issue was not addressed to your satisfaction, please contact a member of the Stewardship Team at the College on 03 8398 2000. If you should have a complaint about a member of the Stewardship Team, please contact the College Principal. If the complaint is regarding the College Principal, it should be directed to the Chair of the College Board.

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### Anonymous Complaints

The College may be unable to deal with complaints that are made anonymously if there is insufficient detail for investigation or resolution of the matter. However, there may be situations where it is possible to investigate an anonymous complaint, depending on the nature of the complaint and circumstances. This will be at the discretion of the Principal or Stewardship Team.

If the College receives an anonymous complaint from the public about the behaviour of a group of students, this can be dealt with on a general basis, with reminders to students about College expectations.

### Guiding Principles for the Positive Resolution of Complaints

- An Environment of Openness and Respect
- All people will be treated with respect
- The College encourages an openness to listening to the concerns of parents and students
- Members of the school community can be assured that their concerns will be heard
- Individuals may wish to telephone the College or complete the attached Complaint Form

### Responding to Complaints

The complaint will be acknowledged promptly, whether formally or informally; a clear timeline for investigating and responding to the complaint will be established. It is expected that staff will acknowledge the receipt of a complaint within two working days.

### Procedural Fairness

The principles of procedural fairness apply to the handling of complaints and require that the College will:

- respect the right of all parties to be heard and treated fairly;
- respond to complaints promptly and thoroughly;
- make sure all parties understand the complaints policy and process;
- if the complaint is about a person, give that person the opportunity to respond to any allegations;
- conduct investigations impartially, substantiate the facts of the matter and maintain appropriate records;
- appropriately communicate the reason for any decision and any action taken;
- meet privacy and other legal obligations;
- record complaints on a secure database with relevant levels.

### Confidentiality

Staff members involved in an investigation of a complaint will not discuss the matter with any other people not relevant to the matter.

The College will treat complaints with respect and sensitivity. However, it may not be possible that all communications with the College, or any documents supplied, will necessarily be kept confidential. Although we will endeavour to deal with complaints with appropriate discretion, we reserve our right to disclose details of the matter to other persons who, in our opinion, need to know them in order to facilitate the resolution of the complaint.

Date: 19 February 2020
Date for review: 14 February 2021

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## Complaint Form

1. YOUR DETAILS				
Name				
Address				
Phone				
Email				
Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Specify)
2. SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT				
<input type="checkbox"/> College member	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy/Procedure	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Specify)				
3. DETAILS OF COMPLAINT (PLEASE USE AN ADDITIONAL PAGE IF REQUIRED)				
4. DETAILS OF OUTCOME YOU ARE SEEKING (PLEASE USE AN ADDITIONAL PAGE IF REQUIRED)				
5. HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY RAISED THIS CONCERN WITH A STAFF MEMBER?				
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	If yes, when?		
Who dealt with the matter?				
What was the result?				
Signature:			Date:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Resolution	<input type="checkbox"/> Intervention	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigation	<input type="checkbox"/> Supported Mediation	<input type="checkbox"/> Supported Self Resolution
Actions Undertaken:				
Outcome:				
Date of Finalisation:				
Staff Member:		Signature:		
Referred to:		Date;		
Referred by:		Signature:		
Outcome:				
Name of Staff Member		Signature:		