

Policy Title	Grievance / Complaint Resolution Policy
Date Policy Approved	July 2016
Policy Owner & Position	Principal
Team Responsible for Policy	Principal
Authorised by	Board
Who is the Policy for?	Staff, students, parents <sup>1</sup> and community
Version Control	Version 1
Statutory/Legislative Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privacy Act</li> <li>• Discrimination Acts</li> </ul>
Relevant cross references	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harrassment, Bullying &amp; Discrimination Policy (Amended 2013), Bullying &amp; Harrassment (2015)</li> <li>• The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct (June 2008), Board Code of Conduct (Review June 2011), National School Chaplaincy &amp; Student Welfare Program Code of Conduct for School Chaplains/Student Welfare Workers (February 2012)</li> <li>• Mission, Vision, Objects, Principles &amp; Statement of Faith</li> <li>• Duty of Care (2015)</li> <li>• Student Wellbeing Policy</li> </ul>
Include during Induction	Yes
Review Date	2018

Purpose of the Policy	<p>To provide a set of principles and procedures for the resolution of grievances, complaints or appeals, hereafter referred to as grievances.</p> <p><i>“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”</i> <i>Ephesians 4:3</i></p>
Policy Statement	<p>Ballarat Christian College is committed to building a strong Christian focused community, ensuring a harmonious, fair, just, working and learning environment. Matthew 18:15-17</p> <p>Staff, students, parents<sup>1</sup> and community will have access to processes that allow for grievances to be resolved.</p> <p>All grievances will be dealt with in a supportive environment without victimisation or intimidation of anyone connected with the grievance either during or subsequent to a grievance resolution procedure.</p>

<p>Recommended process for resolving grievances</p>	<p>This document outlines steps to be taken by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Parents<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Members of the Community</li> </ul> <p>A copy of the Grievance Policy will be given to the complainants as soon as a grievance is reported to the College.</p> <p><b>1. Informal Process</b></p> <p>As a first step, informal and private attempts at resolution or reconciliation should be undertaken between the parties concerned in accordance with Matthew 5:24, "... <i>first go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.</i>"</p> <p><b>2. Formal Process</b></p> <p>Once a formal process is commenced, mediation is an available option at any stage of the process. This will be facilitated by the College and conducted by a person mutually agreed upon by the parties to the dispute.</p> <p><b>a) <i>for student grievances</i></b></p> <p>Complainants may refer grievances to a Teacher in the first instance. If the complainant prefers, their grievance may be submitted in writing to the teacher. Upon receipt of the grievance, the Teacher will assess the situation and organise to meet with the complainant and/or other parties involved, to resolve the situation as quickly as possible in an informal manner. The complainant may request that a support person of their choosing accompanies them to any meeting regarding their grievance.</p> <p>The Teacher may determine if other members of the College Community need to be consulted, such as parents<sup>1</sup>, chaplain, counsellor or other independent experts. Mediation may need to be facilitated in some cases as a result of this consultation.</p> <p>At the conclusion of the grievance resolution process, both parties in the dispute will be asked if the matter has been satisfactorily resolved. If not, the complainant may refer the matter to Executive staff and/or the Principal for further discussion/resolution.</p> <p><b>b) <i>for grievances of staff, parents<sup>1</sup> and members of the community.</i></b></p> <p>The complainant must refer the grievance to the appropriate Head of School and/or Principal in writing.</p> <p>Upon receipt of the grievance, the Principal will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) ensure that the person against whom the complaint is made is informed and given reasonable time to respond.</li> <li>ii) organise to meet with the complainant and/or other parties involved to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.</li> </ol>
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Both parties may request that a support person of their choosing accompanies them to any meeting regarding their grievance.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the result or handling of their grievance by Ballarat Christian College staff, the complainant may submit a formal complaint to the Chair of the Ballarat Christian College Board.

All meetings, discussions and outcomes will be documented and given a copy given to the complainant in writing. In the case of a student complainant, a copy will also be placed on the student's file.

**c) *for grievances against the Principal***

The complainant may refer the grievance to the Chair of the Board in writing.

Contact between the Principal and the Complainant would not occur (except in an exceptional circumstance) and the delegated Head of School would assume responsibility for school communication with the complainant.

The role of the Chair of the College Board is to:

- i) ensure the College Board is properly briefed and the individual members of the Board adhere to the mutually agreed guidelines.
- ii) ensure the Principal is accorded natural justice and the guidelines for the role of the Board are adhered to.
- iii) be responsible for controlling the publicity and communication to the whole College body, if required, when the complaint is filed and concluded.

The role of the Board is to ensure correct processes are observed along mutually agreed guidelines.

Upon receipt of the grievance, the Chair of the Board will:

- i) ensure that the Principal is informed and given reasonable time to respond.
- ii) organise to meet with the complainant and/or other parties involved to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

Both parties may request that a support person of their choosing accompanies them to any meeting regarding their grievance.

**d) *Records***

Where the matter enters a formal process, it is expected that all parties, including the College, shall maintain documentary records of meetings, correspondence and steps taken to resolve the matter under these guidelines. At this time, parties involved should be asked for background information and notes will be taken of the information furnished. Furthermore, any records, once the formal complaint is resolved, will be kept securely and confidentially.

e) *Natural Justice*

Both individuals who are the subject of a complaint and individuals making complaints have the right to be afforded natural justice.

A person who is the subject of a complaint has the right to:

- be informed of the nature of the allegations in the first instance
- respond to the allegations
- an impartial hearing, and fair and equitable treatment
- an understanding that all reasonable care will be taken to ensure the matter is handled confidentially
- engage the person or organisation of their choice to provide assistance and support throughout the course of the matter (e.g. assisting with the preparation of responses, representation, accompanying to meetings, etc.) at their own cost.
- access to any documentation to be relied on by any person in the hearing relating to the complaint (including the person hearing the complaint)

A person making a complaint has the right to:

- an understanding that all reasonable care will be taken to ensure the matter is handled confidentially
- an impartial hearing, respect, and fair and equitable treatment
- engage the person or organisation of their choice to provide assistance and support throughout the course of the matter at their own cost
- access to any documentation to be relied on by any person in the hearing relating to the complaint (including the person hearing the complaint).

**External Arbitration**

At any stage the complainant can seek recourse to appropriate legal means at their own expense. The solution is then no longer in the hands of the complainants or the College.

Ballarat Christian College Grievance Policy							
Source	Student	Parent <sup>1</sup>	Staff	General Community Member	Anyone	Mediation is available at any stage	
Against	Any member of the Ballarat Christian College Community				Principal		
Contact/ Escalation Procedure	Teacher		↓	↓	↓		
	Head of School						
	Principal				↓		
	Ballarat Christian College Board						
<p>At any stage the complainant can seek recourse to appropriate legal means at their own expense.</p> <p>The solution is then no longer in the hands of the complainants or the College.</p>							
Publication and Accessibility to Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provided to any complainant as soon as possible</li> <li>✓ Included in Induction Course</li> <li>✓ Annual inclusion into Newsletter (Staff and Parents<sup>1</sup>)</li> <li>✓ Available on College Website</li> <li>✓ Copies provided to preferred suppliers</li> <li>✓ Annually reviewed with all staff</li> <li>✓ Shared with students (P-12) on their level of understanding</li> </ul>						
Acknowledgement	The College acknowledges the permission of another Christian School to use the content of their policy in developing this document.						

1 Parents, Carers or Guardians



## Grievance / Complaint Form - Confidential

Name:	Relationship with College (student, staff, parent <sup>1</sup> , community):
Contact details:	Date of meeting:
Phone: _____	Date issue raised:
Address: _____	
Email: _____	
Details of your grievance/complaint:	
Have you received a copy of the Grievance / Complaint Resolution Policy? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ( A copy may be obtained from the College or directly from the College website at <a href="http://www.balcc.vic.edu.au">www.balcc.vic.edu.au</a> )	
Action: What actions have you taken already to resolve the problem?	
What do you believe is needed now to solve the problem?	

Action Plan:

What has been decided?

What is to be done?

By whom?

Review Dates(s):

Results of Action Plan:

I consider the grievance/complaint raised has been resolved to my satisfaction:

Yes  No

**Signed**

Complainant:

Person in Authority:

College Use

Logged: Entry date \_\_\_\_\_

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Acknowledgement sent: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred for further action: \_\_\_\_\_

Filed: \_\_\_\_\_