


Document Title: Complaints Handling Policy	 EMMANUEL ANGLICAN COLLEGE <i>Learning ~ Living ~ Leading</i>
Section: College Operations and Administration	
Date Updated: January 2024	

Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to Emmanuel Anglican College in dealing with issues, concerns and complaints made in respect to services provided by the College or regarding employees, contractors and volunteers. The policy is designed to provide guidance to parents, students and staff on what constitutes a complaint, and the manner in which the College receives and manages complaints.

This procedure does not extend to personal grievances between parents, guardians or other members of the College community.

The relationship between home and school plays a very important part in a child's education. When families and the College work in positive partnership, improved outcomes for students will be the likely result. The College encourages open communication to assist staff in getting to know each child and supporting a child's individual needs. The College is committed to being responsive to the needs and concerns of parents and students and to resolving any concerns as quickly as possible.

The College will maintain processes to ensure that issues, concerns and complaints from members of the College community are dealt with promptly and in accordance with procedural fairness. This policy ensures that matters are dealt with consistently and fairly and contribute to continuous improvement.

Whenever dealing with an issue, concern or complaint, all parties are reminded of the need to approach the situation in a respectful manner, to be polite and well mannered in all communication, to maintain confidentiality and to ensure the dignity of each individual.


Related Policies

Complaints about reportable conduct will be addressed in accordance with the College's Child Protection Policy. Please refer to the College's Child Protection Policy for information about reportable conduct. Complainants are not required to assess whether their concern meets the threshold of reportable conduct before making a complaint. Any concern about a child's wellbeing should be reported under this policy.

Concerns regarding bullying will first be addressed in accordance with the Student Anti-Bullying Policy and the Student Management System.

Any matters related to student or staff health and safety will be addressed in accordance with the College's Work Health and Safety Policy and Procedures.

A member of staff or a contractor wishing to raise concerns regarding a grievance between staff members about work matters, including work relationships and decisions made by other staff members which impact on their work, and staff complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying between staff are generally addressed in accordance with the College's Staff

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Grievances, Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy. This complaints Handling Policy does not apply to complaints made by staff or contractors.

Dealing with Issues and Concerns – Students

Students are encouraged to take steps to resolve an issue before it gets worse or affects them in a negative manner. A student will not be in trouble for raising an issue or for trying to responsibly solve it. These are the guidelines as to the steps a student should take:

- If the issue relates to a teacher, then the student should talk to the teacher concerned. If the student is unsure about how to go about this then they should talk to their parents, another teacher or their Pastoral Care Teacher to seek advice. Students need to choose an appropriate time to do this and should remain calm and respectful at all times.
- If the issue relates to another student, then the student should talk to either the classroom teacher, the teacher on duty, the Pastoral Care teacher or the Wellbeing Coordinator. If the student is unsure about how to go about this then they should talk to their parents directly to seek advice. Students need to choose an appropriate time to do this and should remain calm and respectful at all times.
- If the issue is of a more personal nature, then the student should talk to the Pastoral Care Teacher, College Chaplain or Counsellor.

Dealing with Issues and Concerns – Parents


When a parent has a concern or issue that is affecting their child, they should follow the procedure set out below.

- If the issue relates to a specific subject or class, contact the subject teacher and arrange a suitable time to discuss the issue.
- If the matter involves other students, the student's general progress or relates to their personal welfare and well being the parent should contact the student's Pastoral Care Teacher or the Stage Coordinator.
- If a parent feels the matter has not been resolved appropriately, or if it is ongoing or the issue is of a very serious nature then the parent should make contact with the Deputy Principal.

What is a Complaint?

In most cases, concerns and questions can be addressed in a simple conversation or by following the procedures outlined above. If all steps above have been followed and a suitable resolution is not reached then the matter may be escalated into a "complaint". The College will seek to resolve complaints informally where possible but acknowledges that in some cases a person may wish to make a formal complaint.

A "complaint" is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the College about an educational and/or operational matter relating to services provided by the College, the behaviour of an employee,

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contractor or volunteer, or the manner in which a decision was made by an employee, contractor or volunteer.

Any concerns about the outcome of a properly conducted process (eg. failure of a student to be selected) or any request aimed at obtaining an outcome contrary to law or College policies and procedures are excluded from being a “complaint” under this policy.

Complaints may be made by a student or parent/carer.

Raising a Complaint

If a suitable resolve has not been reached and the matter is serious and meets the threshold of a complaint, a complaint can be lodged. Initially complaints should be made to the Deputy Principal. The Deputy Principal will communicate with parties involved or impacted, as they see fit. The Deputy Principal will review all information provided and endeavor to find a solution that is satisfactory to all parties.

Should the matter not be resolved through this process, the complainant may raise the matter formally with the College. A formal complaint must be made in writing to the Principal via email principal@eac.nsw.edu.au. The Principal will be responsible for receiving this correspondence and directing it to the appropriate person to manage, if that person is not the Principal.


To help the Principal investigate your complaint quickly and efficiently please provide the following information.

- Your name and contact details;
- The name of the staff member you have been dealing with previously;
- The nature of your complaint;
- Details of any steps you have already taken to resolve the complaint;
- Details of conversations you may have had with members of staff that may be relevant to resolving your complaint;
- Copies of any evidence that supports your complaint.

Procedure for Complaints Management

The person managing the complaint will be responsible for:

1. Registering the complaint:
 - Registering the complaint in the Complaints Register.
 - Informing the complainant that their complaint has been received and providing them with information about the process and time frame.
 - Delegating the complaints management process, as appropriate.
2. Investigating the complaint:

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- Examining the complaint within 5 working days of the complaint being received.
 - Informing the complainant in writing within 10 working days of the complaint being received of what is being done to investigate and resolve it, and the expected timeframe for resolution.
 - Investigate the complaint impartially with a balanced view of all information and evidence.
3. Resolving the complaint:
- Making a decision or referring to the appropriate people for a decision within 20 working days of the complaint being received.
 - Where appropriate, ensure practices and policies are amended.
 - Informing the complainant of the outcome and any options for further action if required.
4. Recording the complaint:
- The College will maintain a register of complaints. The register will be maintained by the Business Manager and will record for each complaint, details of the complainant, the nature of the complaint, date received, actions taken, date of resolution, reasons for the decision, response from complainant and any further action required.
 - The complaints register and files will be kept for seven years. They remain confidential and access is restricted to the Chair of College Council, the Principal, Business Manager or other delegates only in accordance with this policy and legislative requirements.
 - A statistical summary of complaints and appeals will be provided to College Council on a periodic basis for the purpose of them fulfilling their governance responsibilities and to help identify any trends or opportunities for improvement.

As far as possible, complaints will be investigated and resolved within 20 working days of being received. If this time frame can not be met, the complainant will be informed of the reasons why and of the alternative time frame for resolution.

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning misconduct of the Principal the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of College Council.


Lodging an Appeal

A person can lodge an appeal if the documented complaints process was not followed or if the complainant was not afforded procedural fairness. An appeal is not a new investigation of the complaint. It is not the intent of the appeals procedure to allow a person to appeal about the outcome of a formal complaint because the final result does not agree with that persons personal position.

An appeal may be made by a student or parent/carer.

A person wishing to lodge an appeal may do so in writing:

- to the Chair of College Council via email to the Business Manager

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businessmanager@eac.nsw.edu.au (as Secretary of College Council);

- providing their full name and contact details;
- with a copy of the original formal complaint made to the Principal;
- providing details of how the complaints process was not followed or how the complainant was not afforded procedural fairness, including any evidence available.

As the “appeals” body, College Council will consider the process adopted by the original complaints investigator and whether it was appropriate to identify the validity of the complaint and where applicable, address the concerns raised. College Council will consider the merit of the conclusions and whether they were clearly and appropriately explained to the complainant. Their role is to determine if the documented complaints process was followed and if the complainant was afforded procedural fairness.

College Council will not overturn the outcome of a formal complaint. They will, however, refer the matter back to the Principal for further investigation if they determine that the correct process was not followed or if there was additional evidence that was not considered. If College Council determine that the investigation into a complaint was procedurally fair the Principal’s decision will stand.

The appeals process, as the second review, will finalise the complaint (subject to the finalisation of any additional matters referred back to the Principal for consideration).

Your Rights Under Consumer Law

You reserve the right to refer your complaint to any federal or state consumer protection agency or law enforcement agency, including the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), at any time. Please note that the Anglican Diocese of Grafton, and the Bishop of the Diocese, do not play a role in responding to complaints made in relation to the services provided by the College or its employees, contractors or volunteers.

Confidentiality

All parties involved in complaints handling are required to maintain appropriate confidentiality, including in relation to handling and storing records. We will take reasonable steps to actively protect your personal information but may need to disclose limited details provided during the complaint process to be able to conduct an appropriate and meaningful investigation.