Complaints and Disputes Policy

St Andrew’s Grammar welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes seriously complaints and concerns that may be raised. This leaflet will show you how to use our complaints system.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction that needs a response.

We wish to ensure that:
Parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so
We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way
Parents realize that we listen and take complaints seriously
We take action where appropriate

“How should I complain?”
When you contact the school, ask to speak to your child’s teacher then either the Head of Secondary, Mrs Maria Coate or the Head of Primary, Mr Wayne Cronin. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you.

Members of staff will be happy to help. It may be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue. For example, the classroom teacher, or sports concerns with the Head of Physical Education. They may be able to sort things out quickly, with the minimum of fuss. However, you may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example the Head of Secondary, Primary or the Principal.

“I don’t want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me”

The school is here for you and your child. We want to hear your views and your ideas. Contact a member of staff, as described in the Complaints & Disputes Policy.

“I am not sure whether to complain or not”
If as parents you have concerns, you are entitled to raise them. If in doubt, you should contact the school, we are here to help.

“What will happen next?”
If you raise something face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction.

If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing, we will contact you within five working days, to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.

In many circumstances, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding. You will be given a date by which time you will receive a response. If a detailed exploration of the issue is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

Parents need to be aware that in some cases the school will not be able to discuss the details of action taken as it would be inappropriate. For example if the action involved staff discipline.
“What about confidentiality?”
Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal and those directly involved. The Chair of the School Governing Body may also need to be informed. It is the school’s policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child’s safety was at risk or it becomes necessary to refer matters to the Police. You would be fully informed.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints might not be pursued.

“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”
We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

If you are not satisfied, the Principal will offer to refer the matter to the Chair of the School Governing Body. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Chair. The Chair will call for a full report from the Principal, and will examine matters thoroughly before responding. This may result in a satisfactory solution, but if it does not, the Chair will invite you to a meeting. You may wish to be supported by a friend, but legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage.

If the meeting does not bring about a resolution, the matter would be referred to the school’s Conciliation Committee or to an independent arbiter.

It is their task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. The Committee Convenor will invite you to a meeting. You will be asked if there are any papers you would like to have circulated beforehand. As with the Chair’s meeting, you will be invited to bring a friend with you.

The school recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.

International Students
Any party may appeal the Principal’s decision, in writing, to the Chair of the School Board. Any party may appeal the School Board’s decision, in writing, to the Chair of SAG Inc. If a party chooses to write to the board, St. Andrew’s Grammar Inc shall appoint an impartial Investigating Officer at no cost to the family of the student. The parties to the dispute or complaint shall be notified in writing of the findings of the appeal within ten (10) working days of the meeting.

The Principal or parents of international students may also call on outside mediation. International Student Conciliator Department of Education Services Phone 9441 1953.

For further information regarding your rights and responsibilities in the event of a grievance issue being raised.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may seek independent external mediation, through other external organisations such as: The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (Victoria) Phone: 1300 656 419 (local call) or The State and/or Commonwealth Ombudsman’s Office Phone: 9613 6222 (international callers 0011 + 61 +3 + phone number).

Note- International students who may be involved in a Grievance Procedure against them will remain enrolled at the School until a decision has been reached. They may however, be placed on suspension from classes if required during this time.

STUDENTS
Any Problems, Complaints, or Suggestions?
How do I make a complaint?
By talking about it - or by writing it down if you find that easier.

You can do it by yourself, as part of a group, or through your parents.

To Whom?
To anyone on staff.

Does it matter what the issue is?
No, it can be a big problem or a small one. By discussing it, you may come up with some positive ideas.

What will happen next?
If possible, the staff member will deal with it in person. If not, he or she will go on your behalf to someone who can help.

Do others have to know?
If you are worried about confidentiality, tell the staff - they will understand.

Even if you find the issue hurtful or embarrassing, don’t worry - it will only be discussed by staff who can help you.

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