

POLICY STATEMENT

Concordia College will provide a clear and fair process by which parent grievances can be lodged and addressed.

RATIONALE

Concordia College exists to provide a vibrant and challenging education for all students within a caring, supportive Christian community. As a caring community, we believe we are better together. We act in the spirit of grace because we recognise God's love for us. We actively look for opportunities to support each other as we learn and grow.

Concordia is committed to working in open, active partnership with parents¹ and the community and aims to resolve any concerns regarding the wellbeing, relationships, sense of belonging or academic progress within the school life of all students.

The process of addressing concerns or grievances is based on a set of principles and a clearly articulated, impartial, respectful, and restorative set of practices. The intention is to support parents, students and staff to achieve a timely and just resolution. We accept and celebrate differences and believe that they enhance and enrich our community. We aim to make people feel valued and appreciated.

DEFINITIONS

1. *Grievance*: a serious allegation raised by a parent concerning an incident, judgment or situation made against a student, a member of staff or a group of students or staff members.
2. *Concern/complaint*: matters that may be raised informally via conversation, a phone call or email to a member of staff that may be dealt with expediently
3. *Restorative Practice*: a process by which the healing of relationships between community members is at the centre of the grievance management processes adopted by the College
4. *Natural Justice*: an unbiased and fair process which allows all parties to be heard and kept informed
5. *Report Abuse and Neglect* (previously Mandatory Reporting): the need for all employees to notify authorities about information relating to incidents that are covered under relevant legislation
6. *Resolution*: where the complaint is withdrawn or parties agree on a future course of action or a compromise is agreed upon.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

1. The **safety and wellbeing** of all those involved is paramount
2. All those involved have the right to be treated with **respect and courtesy**
3. All parties respect and adhere to **confidentiality** and a respect of **privacy** of those involved taking into account relevant legislation
4. All parties provide **full and accurate information and details** of any event or incident
5. All parties work to **facilitate respectful communication and openness to others**

¹ Other than parents, this term is also inclusive of guardians and any parent who has parental responsibility (see Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975) and any person with whom the child or student normally or regularly resides.

6. The rights and responsibilities of all parties are balanced in **seeking a mutually acceptable outcome**
7. All parties are open to participation in **Restorative practice** and the **principles of natural justice**
8. Allegations/grievances/concerns/complaints will be considered in a **timely, consistent and impartial manner**. The best interest of a student is served when there is open and timely communication between parents and the College.

SCOPE

This policy applies to parents of the College.

Note that neither the Minister for Education and Child Development nor the Department for Education and Child Development has any power to directly intervene in any complaints relating to the operations of a non-government school.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal

- Ensure that a clear and fair process by which parent grievances can be lodged and addressed is in place
- Ensure that sufficient College resources are provided to support this policy
- Ensure that compliance is enacted

APPROVED AUTHORITY	Concordia College Board
RESPONSIBLE OFFICE	Head of College
IMPLEMENTATION DATE:	23 November 2016
LAST POLICY REVIEW:	August 2020
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	*August 2023

*Unless otherwise indicated, this policy will still apply beyond the review date. This policy will also be updated as required due to any changes in legislation etc

Procedure**SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES****Parents**

1. Consider whether the concern/complaint can be dealt with through direct contact with a teacher
2. Notify the appropriate member of the College Leadership Team of a grievance at the earliest opportunity
3. Provide complete, accurate information when submitting a grievance
4. If possible, articulate the preferred resolution, accepting that this might not be possible or may change as the grievance is acted upon
5. Contact the Head of College if the grievance has not been handled appropriately
6. Contact the Chair of the College Board if the grievance concerns the Head of College.

Staff members

1. Resolve parent concerns/complaints, whenever possible, in a timely and informal manner
2. Refer formal grievances or escalating concerns to the appropriate College Leadership member
3. Keep accurate records of communication regarding any parent grievances
4. Participate, as appropriate, in grievance resolution processes.

College Executive

1. Acknowledge receipt of parent grievances at the earliest opportunity
2. A times it may be appropriate to refer the grievance to another Leadership Member or Learning Leadership team for resolution
3. Investigate grievances in a timely manner, and work towards a just resolution
4. Inform those involved of their right to be accompanied by a support person in any meetings
5. Keep accurate records of any meetings and communication, validating these with others involved in the process
6. Record the grievance in an appropriate way
7. Keep the Head of College informed of the progress of the grievance procedure
8. Maintain contact with all those involved, providing updates on progress and steps to resolution
9. If appropriate, involve the appropriate School Counsellor in grievance resolution processes
10. Ensure that all mandatory reporting requirements are dealt with according to the law.

Principal:

1. Ensure that the College keeps a record of all grievances
2. Be involved in the resolution process if it cannot be resolved at College Leadership Team level
3. If an unresolved issue has the potential to escalate, the Head of College will inform the Board Chair and they will jointly decide what further action should be taken
4. Review grievances to identify and address grievance patterns
5. Address grievance issues that relate to Leadership Team members.

RESOLUTION

1. The Grievance Policy flowchart provides a clear pathway for tracking progress towards resolution
2. A resolution may include acknowledgement that the grievance is valid in whole or in part
3. In cases where there is no opportunity for incidents or events to be reversed, the grievance may inform future practice and policy, and this will be acknowledged within the resolution
4. There may be times when the Head of College or Principal delegate censures a staff member in response to a grievance
5. A resolution may include restorative justice practices
6. In maintaining the due privacy of a staff member or others involved, the Head of College of Principal delegate will not disclose confidential matters as part of the resolution, unless required to do so by legislation.
7. A resolution may include a verbal or written apology
8. A resolution may include an explanation for the context and situation leading to the grievance
9. A resolution may include an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or more effectively
10. A resolution may include an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that the cause of the grievance has been addressed and all steps taken to minimize or avoid any repeat.

Links to other policies/statements:

- Counselling Policy
- Philosophy Statement
- Student Grievance Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Parent College contact guidelines

RESOLUTION OF PARENT GRIEVANCES POLICY Concordia Campus Executive Contact details

For telephone contact for all Executive members: via Reception: (08) 8272 0444

Head of College -Mr Paul Weinert

Email: pweinert@concordia.sa.edu.au

Areas of Responsibility:

- Line Manager for all Leadership members
- Oversight of all College activities

Principal -Middle and Senior School - Mr Dennis Mulherin

Email: dmulherin@concordia.sa.edu.au

Areas of Responsibility:

- Pastoral care and academic progress of all students in Years 7 - 12

Principal -ELC – Primary School - Mr Michael Paech

Email: mpaech@concordia.sa.edu.au

Areas of Responsibility:

- Pastoral care and academic progress of all students in ELC -6

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS: Mr Mick Hoopmann

Email: mhoopmann@concordia.sa.edu.au

Areas of Responsibility:

- Finances including fees and financial hardship
- Maintenance services and Uniform Shop
- Buses
- Facility hire
- Security

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS: Mrs Jodie Escott

Email: jescott@concordia.sa.edu.au

Areas of Responsibility:

- Philanthropy
- Publications
- Enrolments
- Connections with College auxiliary organisations such as Old Concordians' Association (OCA) and Parents & Friends

COLLEGE PASTOR: Rev Dale Gosden

Email: dgosden@concordia.sa.edu.au

Areas of Responsibility:

- Spiritual Development of students and staff
- Worship life of the College
- Ministry activities

DIRECTOR OF EARLY LEARNING CENTRE: Mrs Kate Wood

Email: kwood@concordia.sa.edu.au

Areas of Responsibility:

- Ensuring that the ELC meets all regulations and requirements
- Day to day management of the ELC

CHAIR OF COLLEGE BOARD: Dr Loyd Fyffe

Email: lfyffe@concordia.sa.edu.au

Parent Grievance Policy Flow Chart

