



## Grievances Policy (Community)

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### Section 1 – Purpose

This policy provides clear and transparent information about how a parent or other member of the College community (other than a staff member who is not a parent of students at the College) can raise grievances about the College, staff conduct, a student's education and/or student wellbeing, and about how such grievances will be managed and resolved.

### Section 2 – Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all College Board members, staff, contractors, volunteers, visitors, parents/guardians, students and other members of the College community (subject to clauses 2.2 and 2.3 below).

2.2 This policy does not apply to:

- a. Staff grievances, which should be raised in accordance with the College's Grievances Policy (Staff).
- b. Student grievances, which should be raised in accordance with the College's Grievances Policy (Students).
- c. Overseas Student Complaints and Appeals, which are managed by [the Overseas Student Complaints and Appeals Policy](#).
- d. Concerns about child abuse, reportable conduct and student safety, which will be addressed in accordance with the John Paul College Student Protection Policy and/or Child Protection Policy (ECS).
- e. Legal matters, including requests for compensation, payment and redress.

2.3 To the extent that there are any inconsistencies between this policy and the College's other grievance policies and appendices, other than the Child Protection Policy and Procedures (ECS and College), this policy shall prevail.

### Section 3 – Policy Statement

John Paul College (the College) is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy environment characterised by respect, tolerance and support; which enables the College to deliver on its core purpose (student learning) and remain mindful of its paramount consideration (the care, safety and welfare of students).

Part of this commitment involves ensuring the College community has access to processes that allow for grievances to be managed appropriately, promptly and fairly. The College is a working community and inevitably concerns, grievances, disputes or allegations of inappropriate or illegal behaviour arise.

The College takes all complaints and concerns received seriously. Our aim is to ensure that grievances are handled objectively and with sensitivity. In doing so, we will seek to identify both the specific and (where applicable) systemic issues raised by a grievance (thereby enabling future improvements to be identified and implemented).

### Section 4 – Processes

#### 4.1 Guiding Principles

- 4.11 When raising a grievance with the College, a member of the College community can expect to:
- (a) Be treated with respect and courtesy.

- (b) Have their grievance taken seriously, considered impartially (with consideration of any power imbalances) by an unbiased decision-maker, and dealt with on the merits in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness.
- (c) Have their grievance dealt with in a confidential and timely manner.
- (d) Have access to appropriate and easily understandable information regarding the grievance resolution process being followed by the College (including this policy).
- (e) Be supported by the College during the grievance handling process, with a focus on maintaining the emotional wellbeing of any students involved.
- (f) Be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the grievance.
- (g) Receive an outcome that is based on the information available to the College.
- (h) Not be victimised, or subjected to reprisal, for raising grievances in good faith.

4.12 In return, the College expects that a member of the College community who raises a grievance will:

- (a) Treat others (including College staff, students and parents, both former and present) with respect and courtesy.
- (b) Raise grievances in the appropriate forum, having regard to the below framework, and as soon as possible after the event giving rise to the grievance has occurred.
- (c) Provide complete and factual information about the grievance.
- (d) Ask for assistance or further information as needed.
- (e) Act in good faith to achieve a reasonable outcome.
- (f) Be understanding and accepting of any outcome reached, being mindful that the College must sometimes manage the interests of several students and other individuals when making decisions, and may be privy to confidential information not known to the person raising the grievance.

4.13 Our aim is for the prompt resolution of concerns, ideally without there being a need for a formal complaint to be made. As the Board appoints the Principal to manage the day-to-day operations of the College, a review by the Board Chair should be a last resort.

4.14 Timeframes listed in this policy are only a guide and can vary due to the nature of the grievance and surrounding circumstances. Where timeframes set out in this policy cannot be met the College will strive to communicate with the affected parties about the status of the grievance, and the steps taken (or to be taken) to progress a resolution.

4.15 Please note the processes outlined in this policy are intended to be conciliatory, non-adversarial and non-legal. Steps will be implemented flexibly at the College's discretion, depending on the circumstances of each situation.

## 4.2 Framework

4.21 The College's framework for dealing with grievances involves a three-step process, namely:

- a) Stage 1 – A concern is raised with the College.
- b) Stage 2 – A formal written complaint is made to the Principal.
- c) Stage 3 – A review by the Board Chair is requested.

4.22 Further details about these Stages are set out in Schedule 1.

4.23 Common considerations when the College is managing grievances are set out in Schedule 2.

## 4.3 Recommendations for initially raising concerns (Stage 1)

- 4.31 At first instance, you should raise your concerns directly with the College. The College must be aware of a concern and its substance to address it.
- 4.32 The College believes that a concern is often best resolved closest to its source, and when a concern relates to a student, the College encourages the concerns to be raised with the relevant classroom teacher / academic welfare teacher in the first instance.
- 4.33 However, depending on the nature and severity of an issue, and whether the classroom teacher has a conflict of interest, concerns may instead be raised directly with a member of the College's Middle, Senior or Executive Leadership Teams. For guidance on who to contact if unresolved with the first point of contact, refer below.

Designated staff member		Nature of grievance
Prep to Year 6	Years 7 to 12	
Year Level Co-Ordinator	The relevant Head of Year	Student-related matters
Director of Community Engagement	Director of Community Engagement	Enrolment related matters
Dean of Academic Welfare (Primary)	Head of Year Dean of Academic Welfare (Secondary)	Student wellbeing matters
Dean of Academic Welfare (Primary)	Dean of Studies (Secondary)	Curriculum matters
Dean of Pedagogy (Primary)	Dean of Pedagogy (Secondary)	Teaching matters
		Boarding matters
		Co-Curricular matters
Relevant Senior Leader	Relevant Senior Leader	Staff related matters
Director of Business Operations		Business operations or finance matters

- 4.34 The following considerations are relevant prior to, and when, raising a concern:
- Clearly identify the issue or problem before contacting the College.
  - Decide whether the issue or problem is in the nature of a complaint, concern, enquiry or suggestion. This will help in finding a solution.
  - Identify the party or parties involved.
  - Consider the practical outcome you are trying to achieve (while being realistic and open to other outcomes and solutions).
  - If there is more than one issue or problem, write a list so that you are adequately prepared and then decide which issue or problem matters most to you.
  - Consider whether there are any interim measures you would like the College to consider whilst it makes enquiries about the issue or problem.

- (g) Make an appointment to meet with the relevant staff member to discuss the concern - the best way to do this is to contact Primary Administration, Secondary Administration or Main Administration to arrange a mutually convenient time for a telephone call or meeting. When contacting the College, please identify yourself and the student concerned, the subject of your concern, identify the person you would like to speak with and provide a brief description of the issue you wish to speak about (for example 'homework', 'enrolment decision (including appeals)', 'wellbeing' or 'grounds maintenance').
- (h) Remain courteous and calm when conveying your concerns. The College is within its rights to terminate a conversation with the person raising the concern until such time that a courteous and calm conversation can continue.
- (i) Anonymous complaints are considered to not be acts of good faith, and unless made under the College's Whistleblower Policy, may not be afforded proper consideration under this policy.
- (j) The proper process to allow the College to best assess and manage concerns is by following the processes detailed in this policy. By-passing this policy and directing grievances directly to a Board Member prior to is considered inconsistent with the College Values and may prejudice the College's ability to uphold the principles of procedural fairness, confidentiality, natural justice and impartiality.

## Schedule 1

### Further details about the College's Grievances Resolution Procedure

Step	Details	Comment
<b>Stage 1: Raise the concern</b>		
Step 1	Identify the concern	<p>Clarify your concern: <i>"who, what, when, where, why, and how"</i>.</p> <p>Identify the outcome you are trying to achieve by raising your concern.</p>
Step 2	Raise the concern	<p>The College believes that concern is often best resolved closest to its source and encourages concerns to be raised with the relevant classroom teacher in the first instance.</p> <p>Depending on the nature and severity of an issue, and whether the classroom teacher has a conflict of interest, concerns may instead be raised directly with a senior staff member (e.g. a Dean or Deputy). However, that senior staff member may decide to delegate responsibility for dealing with the concern to another appropriate staff member (eg A Head of Year/Faculty or Assistant Head of Year/Faculty).</p>
Step 3	Acknowledgement	<p>Once a concern is raised, the College will record (either by way of an electronic file note or written correspondence) the details of the concern including your name and contact details.</p> <p>The College's focus will be on understanding the nature of the problem, the party or parties involved, and the nature of any agreeable solutions.</p> <p>Anonymous complaints by their very nature cannot afford the College to acknowledge or review. As such, they may not proceed to Step 4.</p>
Step 4	Review	<p>When concerns are raised in accordance with this framework, the College will review the grievance.</p> <p>This review serves two key purposes. The first purpose is to ensure procedural fairness, including by allowing all relevant parties the chance to be heard before the relevant decision-maker determines any outcomes. The second purpose is to ensure that the decision-maker has sufficient information to address all relevant considerations to be taken into account as part of the process.</p>

Step	Details	Comment
Step 5	Outcome	<p>Where a mutually agreeable solution is available, this will usually be communicated in writing to you (being usually within three (3) business days of the outcome being reached).</p> <p>Where a mutually-agreeable solution between the College and the person raising the concern is not appropriate, or possible, the staff member handling the concern will make a decision that best aligns with the College's procedures and legal obligations. This decision will be communicated in writing to you (usually within three (3) business days of the outcome being reached), and the communication will be kept on the relevant student's (and if appropriate, staff member's) file.</p>
<b>Stage 2: Make a complaint</b>		
Step 1	Make a complaint	<p>If you are not satisfied with the way your concern has been handled, you may choose to make a formal written complaint. Complaints should ordinarily be made within one (1) calendar month of the initial concern first being raised with the College.</p> <p>A formal complaint should at first instance be addressed to the Principal. If the complaint concerns the Principal, the complaint should be made to the Board Chair (see Stage 3), in which case the Board Chair will manage the process outlined below.</p> <p>You may lodge a formal written complaint to the Principal at <a href="mailto:principal@jpc.qld.edu.au">principal@jpc.qld.edu.au</a>.</p> <p>You may also telephone Main Administration who will refer you to the appropriate Executive Assistant to arrange a meeting. Please note that if you phone to arrange a meeting, the College Officer who takes your enquiry will record your details and pass them on as soon as practicable. The relevant Executive Assistant will endeavour to confirm a meeting time as soon as it is practicable to do so.</p>
Step 2	Acknowledge receipt	The Principal will acknowledge receipt of the formal written complaint as soon as practicable (usually within three (3) business days).
Step 3	Review of complaint	<p>When dealing with a formal written complaint, the College's objective is to achieve a resolution by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarifying the substance of the complaint, and the steps taken by the College to address the initial concern.</li> <li>• Identifying whether the complaint raises an issue regarding non-compliance with the College's procedures.</li> <li>• Identifying whether the complaint raises an issue that would be more appropriately addressed under the College's Student Protection Policy.</li> <li>• Communicating with you and relevant parent(s), student(s) and staff, in an attempt to resolve the issue by agreement (where practicable).</li> <li>• Failing agreement, investigating the complaint and deciding appropriate outcomes in accordance with procedural fairness and natural justice principles.</li> </ul>

Step	Details	Comment
		<p>The Principal may delegate parts of the complaint-management process, and seek the assistance of third parties, however, any ultimate decision will still be made by the Principal.</p> <p>If the Principal or delegate arranges to speak with you, you may request to have someone else present as a support person. The support person can be a relative or a friend, but please note that the role of a support person is to support you and not to act as an advocate.</p>
Step 4	Outcome	<p>The Principal or delegate will aim to communicate the outcome of a formal written complaint in writing within fifteen (15) business days where practicable.</p> <p>The Principal will promptly report any formal written complaints, and relevant outcomes, to the Board. This is part of the cyclical review and risk management process at the College.</p>
Step	Details	Comment
<b>Stage 3 – Request a Review</b>		
Step 1	Request a review by the Board Chair	<p>If you are not satisfied that your formal written complaint has been adequately resolved by the Principal, you may request a review by writing to the Board Chair via email at <a href="mailto:boardchair@jpc.qld.edu.au">boardchair@jpc.qld.edu.au</a> or by post at: via post:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Board Chair C/o John Paul College John Paul Drive DAISY HILL QLD 4127</p> <p>Members of the College community who raise grievances with other Board members will be directed to follow the procedures set out in this policy (eg raising a complaint with the Principal or requesting a review by writing to the Board Chair).</p> <p>Review requests must be made in writing within ten (10) business days of the date the Principal communicated the outcome of your complaint in writing. The grounds for the review, and in particular any concerns you have with the way the relevant complaint was dealt with, must be clearly identified in the request for review.</p>
Step 2	Review	<p>Please note that in accordance with good governance, the Board entrusts the Principal with the day-to-day management of the College, and in particular its staff and students. The Principal is accorded significant discretion regarding such matters.</p> <p>Accordingly, any review of the Principal's decision under this policy will be confined to the Board Chair deciding whether there is evidence that the College's procedures have not been followed, in a way likely to have meaningfully influenced the Principal's decision, or that the Principal unreasonably exercised his or her discretion.</p> <p>The Board Chair may delegate parts of the review, or seek the assistance of third parties, however, any ultimate decision will still be made by the Board Chair.</p>

Step	Details	Comment
		<p>For the avoidance of doubt, the Board Chair will not delegate to the Principal a review of a decision they have already made. However, if the Board Chair is satisfied that a complaint has not been properly raised (or dealt) with by the Principal (and the Principal does not otherwise have a conflict of interest), the Board Chair may refer the matter to the Principal to make an initial decision (noting that decision would then create a right to request a review).</p>
Step 6	Outcome	<p>The Board Chair will aim to communicate the outcome of a request for review in writing within forty-five (45) business days where practicable.</p> <p>The Board Chair will promptly report any requests for review, and relevant outcomes, to the Board.</p>



## **Schedule 2**

### **Relevant Considerations**

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#### **1. Withdrawal of a Grievance**

- 1.1 A grievance can be withdrawn at any stage during the processes outlined in this policy. A grievance can only be withdrawn by the person who made the complaint to the College.
- 1.2 Ideally, all grievances should be retracted in writing, however a dated notation on the College's systems, stating the grievance has been withdrawn verbally by the appropriate person can be made by a staff member at the College responsible for managing the grievance.
- 1.3 The College will notify affected parties if a grievance is withdrawn, where considered appropriate.
- 1.4 Regardless of a person's wish to withdraw a grievance, complaints that have disciplinary implications for a member of staff, or relate to the safety and wellbeing of staff or students may still be followed up by the College.

#### **2. Anonymous Grievances**

- 2.1 The College is committed to dealing with grievances by the processes outlined in this policy. The College respects in some cases, complainants would prefer to remain anonymous and not put a name to their grievances.
- 2.2 The College treats grievances about the College, a staff member, a student's education, enrolment and/or a student's wellbeing with the utmost importance, and will investigate such grievances raised to the fullest extent practicable. However, anonymity can make it difficult for the College to effectively resolve grievances (particularly where the College is being asked to accept an anonymous source's version of events) and are accordingly discouraged.

#### **3. Previously Addressed, Stale or Vexatious Grievances**

- 3.1 Grievances that have been previously addressed by the College or externally, or which were not raised with the College within a reasonable period of time (having regard to the nature of the relevant grievance), will not be considered in the absence of highly relevant new information and/or evidence coming to light.
- 3.2 The College does not tolerate vexatious grievances.

#### **4. External Grievances and Redress**

- 4.1 The College acknowledges that grievances relating to the College can also be made to an external body, or be the subject of legal action. However, the College encourages its community to raise any grievances and work to resolve such matters, in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

#### **5. Confidentiality**

- 5.1 Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained by the College at all times when dealing with a grievance, with information only being provided to those who have a right or need to know.
- 5.2 Parties to a grievance raised in accordance with this policy are also expected to observe confidentiality unless advised otherwise by the College. Should details of a grievance become widely known, it may be less likely that the matter will be resolved to the satisfaction of the parties involved.

## 6. Communication

6.1 This policy is available to parents, students and the College community via the College's website. This policy (or aspects thereof) will also feature in communications to parents via the College Learning Management System, the College newsletters and bulletins as required.

## 7. Record keeping

7.1 The College will maintain a record of grievances raised in accordance with this policy and any outcomes.

7.2 The College will also keep a separate record of grievances that are found to be vexatious or based on misinformation.

### Status and Details

<b>Status:</b>	Approved
<b>Effective Date:</b>	April 2024
<b>Review Date:</b>	December 2025 and every two years thereafter in accordance with the College's review cycle, or more frequently as required
<b>Approval Authority:</b>	Principal
<b>Approval Date:</b>	6 December 2023
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	The Principal
<b>Supersedes:</b>	Formal Complaints Policy
<b>Author:</b>	Constructed / Reviewed by John Paul College on advice from Russell Kennedy Lawyers
<b>Enquiries Contact:</b>	Executive Assistant to the Principal