



Complaints Procedure – Overseas Students

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the *Complaints Policy – Overseas Students*.

1. Background

- 1.1 Pymble Ladies' College (the College) acknowledges that many concerns and issues arise from simple misunderstandings or unclear communication and may be resolved in an informal manner without the need to follow the formal complaints process. It is hoped that this will be the case in most instances.
- 1.2 Complaint resolution is best achieved when all parties consistently display respect, mutual trust and co-operation in their actions and their words.

2. Principles of Complaint Handling

- 2.1 A complaint may be made in person, by telephone, email or in writing. In circumstances where a complaint is made anonymously, or the complainant wishes to maintain their anonymity, the capacity for the College to investigate and address the matter may be limited.
- 2.2 Parents/guardians, students and staff are encouraged initially to raise the concern or issue informally with the relevant person as a discussion may clarify the situation and/or clear up any misunderstandings satisfactorily. However, if the complaint is not resolved at this stage, the matter may be referred to the relevant Head of School.
- 2.3 If a parent/guardian is not sure who to contact, the relevant Head of School will generally be able to assist with directing the concern to the appropriate person.
- 2.4 If the concern is about the actions of a student at the College who is not their own child, they should raise the concern with the relevant Head of School, if known. If not known the parents/guardian should raise the issue with the Head of School of their child. Under no circumstances should they contact the other student directly or the other student's parents.
- 2.5 Students can raise a concern with any staff member with whom they feel comfortable. It is then the responsibility of that person to pass the concern on to the relevant Head of School.
- 2.6 All parties may seek support during the resolution process.

- 2.7 If a complaint relates to:
- A key staff member, the complaint should be directed to the Deputy Principal or Principal
 - A member of the Senior Executive Team, the complaint should be put in writing to the Principal or an appointment made with the Principal to discuss the matter
 - The Principal, the complaint should be put in writing and forwarded to the Chair of the Board at the College postal address.
- 2.8 When concerns arise, the College will share information and address issues only with those who genuinely need to know.
- 2.9 Confidentiality, unless otherwise required by law is expected from all parties.
- 2.10 All parties involved in the resolution of the complaint may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting. The College maintains the right to determine whether the person's preferred support person is appropriate and how the meeting will continue.
- 2.11 All parties have the right to seek independent advice at any stage of the resolution process.
- 2.12 Depending on the nature and complexity of the complaint, the time the process will take, will vary.
- 2.13 All written records of the complaint or appeal including a statement of the outcome and the reasons of the outcome will be maintained on the overseas student's file.
- 2.14 The College will respond to any complaint or appeal made by the overseas student or guardian, regarding the student's dealings with the College, the College education agents or any related party the College has arranged to deliver the overseas student's course or related services.

3. Lodging a Complaint

- 3.1 Any complaint related to a child protection issue must be referred immediately to the Principal, or if not available the Deputy Principal - Students (K-12)
- 3.2 Any complaint relating to staff, including staff professional misconduct, should be directed to the Supervisor in the first instance, or to the Human Resources Department.

First Step – Informal Complaint

- 3.3 In the first instance, consideration should be given to an informal face-to-face discussion with the person with whom there is a concern or complaint. In many cases complaints and concerns can be resolved at this level.
- 3.4 If the concern is not resolved, the complaint is of a serious nature or the complainant does not feel comfortable doing so, the matter should be referred formally to the College.

Formal Complaint

- 3.5 Formal complaints should be in writing to the Principal, or if the concern is about the Principal to the Chair of the Board via the College address and marked "Private and Confidential".
- 3.6 The formal complaint should clearly and concisely outline:
- The details of the complaint
 - The facts on which it is based
 - The progress of discussions to date and
 - Suggestions for possible solutions.
- 3.7 The Principal or nominee will acknowledge receipt of the complaint.

4. Assessing a complaint

- 4.1 The College will commence the assessment of the complaint within 10 working days of it being made in accordance with the Policy, and finalise the outcome as soon as practicable.
- 4.2 The Principal, Chair of the Board or nominee will determine the most appropriate method to assess the complaint which may include:
- Requesting further information from the overseas student, parent/guardian
 - Requesting information from other parties
 - Meeting with the overseas student, parent/guardian or others involved in the matter
 - Reviewing and responding to the complaint or arranging for an appropriate person to review and respond to the complaint, or
 - If appropriate, facilitating a meeting between the relevant parties.
- 4.3 The Principal, Chair of the Board or nominee will determine:
- Whether the complaint is one to be addressed by the Policy or is more appropriately addressed by another more relevant policy
 - The priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised
 - Whether the College may be required to report the matter to the Police, Department of Family and Community Services or other relevant authority.

5. Managing a Complaint

- 5.1 The Principal, Chair of the Board or nominees will generally manage the complaint by:
- Advising the overseas student, parent/guardian of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the College in relation to the complaint
 - If appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the complaint at the relevant time and provide them with an opportunity to respond
 - Collecting any additional information, the College considers necessary to assess the complaint
 - Making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved

- Advising the overseas student, parent/guardian in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision of the Principal, Chair of the Board or nominee, and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken. This will generally occur within 10 days of the decision being made.
- Advising the overseas student, parent/guardian in writing of the appeals process.

5.2 There may be circumstances where some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate or practicable and the College will determine, in its absolute discretion, on a case by case basis the most appropriate method of managing the complaint.

6. Internal Review of the Complaint

6.1 An overseas student, parent/guardian may request a review of the resolution decision if they are not satisfied with the decision or they believe that the process for managing the complaint was unfair.

6.2 This request should be made in writing to the Principal or Chair of the Board within 10 working days of receiving notification of the resolution decision.

6.3 An internal review of a decision made by the Principal will be conducted by the Chair of the Board. A review of a decision made by the Chair of the Board will be conducted by another Board Member.

6.4 The College will consider that the review decision is final and will provide the overseas student, parent/guardian with this advice in writing within 10 working days of the review decision. The overseas student, parent/guardian will also be advised of their right to access an external review from the Australian Government Commonwealth Ombudsman, an agency which investigates complaints about problems that overseas students or intending overseas students may have with private education and training providers in Australia. The services of the Commonwealth Ombudsman are free and can be accessed at ombudsman.gov.au

6.5 If the internal or any external complaints handling or appeal process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of the overseas student, the College must immediately implement the decision or recommendation and/or take the preventative or corrective action required by the decision and advise the student of that action.

7. Authorisation

7.1 Principal

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