

## 1. Purpose & Rationale

This policy relates to complaints brought by parents, carers, students or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school. In some limited instances, we may need to refer the complainant to another Department of Education and Training process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions, for example, expulsion appeals.

## 2. Policy Goals

The goal of this policy is to:

- Provide an outline of the complaints process at Sandringham College so that parents and members of the community are informed of how they can raise concerns about issues arising at our school;
- Ensure that all complaints regarding Sandringham College are managed in timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

## 3. Implementation

Sandringham College welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our families and are committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. We recognise that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

We value and encourage open and positive relationships with our school community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

When addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- Raise and discuss issues in a courteous and respectful manner;
- Acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome that is in the affected student's best interests and acceptable to all parties;
- Act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate;
- Recognise that all parties, including the broader school community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced;
- Recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

### 3.1. Preparation for Raising a Concern or Complaint

Sandringham College encourages parents, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- Carefully consider the issues you would like to discuss;
- Remember that you may not have all the facts relating to the issue you wish to raise;
- Think about how the matter could be resolved;
- Be informed and check the policies and guidelines set by the Department and Sandringham College.

### 3.2. Preparation for Receiving a Concern or Complaints

Sandringham College staff are committed to dealing with concerns and complaints in a professional and reasonable manner. Staff should

- Be approachable and welcoming, listen without prejudice and take all complaints and concerns seriously
- Be informed of DET and Sandringham College policies and procedures
- Be informed of the process and timeline for addressing complaints and concerns

### 3.3. Complaints Process

Sandringham College is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to the students Student Manager. In most cases a Student Manager will be able to support students and parents/carers in the management of a complaint and the resolution of issues. Students Managers will consult with a member of the Leadership Team should they believe that the complaint should be escalated.

Where concerns cannot be resolved through working with the Student Manager, parents/carers or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to a member of the Principal Team. At this point you may be asked to provide a formal complaint in writing as this provides the College with a record of your concerns.

If you would like to make a formal complaint, in most cases, depending on the nature of the complaint raised, our school will first seek to understand the issues and will then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint together. The following process will apply:

**Complaint received:** A member of the College Leadership Team will contact you to discuss your complaint or to organise a time for you to come into the school.

**Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Campus Principal may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.

**Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Campus Principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. If, after the resolution meeting, we are unable to resolve the complaint together, we will work with you to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event you would like to take further action about it. In some circumstances, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.

**Timelines:** Sandringham College will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within 48 hours) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Sandringham College may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. We will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting where appropriate within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, Sandringham College will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

### 3.4. Resolution

Where appropriate, Sandringham College may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- An apology or expression of regret;
- A change of decision;
- A change of policy, procedure or practice;
- Offering the opportunity for student counselling or other support;
- Other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, Sandringham College may also ask you to attend a meeting with an independent third party or participate in a mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute.

### 3.5. Escalation

If a parent or community member is not satisfied that their complaint has been resolved by the school, or if their complaint is about the Principal, the complaint should be referred to the Department of Education South East Victoria Region.

Sandringham College may also refer a complaint to SEV Regional Office if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint without resolution

For more information about the Department's Parent Complaints policy, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Parent complaints policy](#).

## 4. Definitions

*None.*

## 5. References

- School Policy and Advisory Guide (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au>)
- Staff Communication Policy

## 6. Document Control

Policy Number	AA-000-00	Last Approval Date	
Policy Owner	School Principal	Approved By	School Council
Policy Reviewer		Next Review Date	
Review Frequency	Document Availability	Policy Delivery	

- 1 Year
- 2 Years
- 3 Years
- As Required
- n/a

- College Website
- Student Compass
- Parent Compass
- Staff Compass
- Staff Information Drive
- Enrolment Pack

- Annual Staff Meeting
- Annual Parent Meeting
- Annual Student Meeting
- Annual School Assembly
- Per Semester Staff Meeting
- Per Semester Parent Meeting
- Per Semester Student Meeting
- Per Semester School Assembly
- Post-incident Staff Meeting
- Post-incident Parent Meeting
- Post-incident Student Meeting
- Post-incident School Assembly