



Complaints and Grievances Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the process by which complaints and grievances will be handled at Southern Christian College.

2. Scope

This procedure applies primarily to staff, students, parents/carers, and members of Southern Christian College community and members of the general public, and may be used either in relation to grievances raised by groups or by individuals in relation to:

- bullying
- discrimination
- harassment
- unfair or inequitable treatment
- victimisation

Circumstances do exist in which this procedure does not apply, including:

- in relation to issues which are outside of the responsibility or scope of Southern Christian College in its role as an employer;
- where an existing review, appeal or complaint procedure is already in process.

3. Definitions

Definitions for this procedure are defined in the [Complaints Policy](#). Please refer to that document for further information.

4. Procedures

The Complaints and Grievance Procedures for staff, students and community members are set out in the following documents which form part of this procedure:

Information for staff

- Managing a complaint
- Managing a complaint (flowchart)
- Lodging a complaint (flowchart)

Information for students

- Complaints and grievance flowchart for students

Information for parents/carers/Southern Christian College community Members

- Complaints and grievance flowchart for parents/carers/community

Complaints and Grievances Procedure

The subsequent pages of this document will outline the procedure to be undertaken upon receipt of a complaint or grievance from a member of Southern Christian College community, including students and their families.

STAFF: Managing a Complaint

Any staff member at Southern Christian College may receive a complaint or grievance. If you receive a complaint or grievance, your first step should be to consider the nature of the issue and the possible risks associated with it. If you feel that a complaint or grievance is beyond your ability to resolve, you should seek help from your Head of Faculty or Program Coordinator. If it is appropriate for you to manage the complaint or grievance, refer to the 'Staff: managing a complaint' flowchart.

The following procedure applies. At each step in this procedure, it is expected that staff will:

- **Listen** to the complaint
- **Acknowledge** the issues raised
- **Gather** as much information as possible
- **Communicate** your decision, providing reasons
- **Implement** your outcome actions; and either
- **Close** the complaint, or refer to the next step in the process

Are there complaints and grievances that I should *not* manage myself?

Some complaints and grievances must be referred to specialist staff, or to the Executive Leadership. Should you receive a complaint about any of the following, please speak with a member of the Executive Leadership Team.

- allegations of a safeguarding children nature against an employee
- allegations of corruption or misconduct
- a risk of harm or significant harm to a child
- privacy or data breach issues

At each step, if the matter is unable to be resolved, the process will progress to the next step in the flow chart.

Record Keeping

An initial record of a complaint will be recorded via the online form, either by the complainant or the staff member who receives the complaint. The online form will log the report in the restricted access Complispace *Complaint Register*. Records of complaints, interviews and other documentation relating to a complaint are kept on the Register, or if unable to be attached to the record, the location of the records are recorded on the Register.

If the complaint is about a person, documents are placed in a restricted access file, with the location recorded on the Register. If there are any serious ongoing management or care issues relating to a complaint, there will need to be a cross-reference to the restricted file on the staff member or student file.

Substantiated complaints regarding a staff member should also be entered into the staff file and linked to the Complaints Register.

The Principal will review the complaint and notes and follow up or close the complaint when satisfied with the resolution.

STAFF: MANAGING A COMPLAINT (FLOWCHART)

STAFF: MANAGING A COMPLAINT FROM A PARENT FLOW CHART				
	CATAGORY	PROCESS	ACTION	RESOLUTION
STEP 1	Informal Complaint	<p>Complaint received from parent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible speak informally to the person and seek a <u>timely</u> resolution. Class teachers, subject teachers and Pastoral Care teachers are often in the best position to handle routine concerns about matters relating to their own areas of responsibility. • Be mindful to seek further help if require. 	Meet and discuss	Resolved
STEP 2	Informal Complaint	<p>Talk to Head of Faculty or Program Coordinator</p> <p>Your next step is to speak with your Head of Faculty or Program Coordinator, who will support you through the resolution process and arrange a meeting between the parties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a course of action. • Meet with the respondent. • Record keeping is mandatory. 	Meet and discuss	Resolved
STEP 3	Formal Complaint	<p>Parent or Community Complainant lodges a formal online Complaints and Grievances form</p> <p>Should resolution prove impossible at the informal level, a complaint or grievance should now progress to the formal resolution process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the Complaints and Grievances Form (available via a public link on our website), which may be completed either by the complainant, or by the staff member in receipt of a complaint if the complaint has been submitted by an alternative means (eg email) • Completion of the form will escalate the matter the Head of School/Head of Pastoral Care. • Heads of School/Head of Pastoral Care will act 	Meet and discuss	Resolved

		<p>upon the complaint according to the issues and people involved and will seek to resolve the complaint or grievance according to the same steps outlined above in Step 1 and Step 2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record keeping is mandatory. 		
STEP 4	Formal Complaint	<p>Follow on from Step 3 for further resolution This is usually the final step in the Complaints and Grievance Procedure. Decisions made by the Principal are usually final.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal will request to meet with both parties to seek a mutually agreed upon resolution. • Where agreement cannot be reached, the Principal will collate all the available information and make a determination. • Both parties will be informed of the Principal's decision in writing. • Record keeping is mandatory. 	Meet and discuss	Resolution Relationship restoration and building.
STEP 5	Further Action	<p>Formal letter to the Chairperson of the Board. If a complainant continues to be dissatisfied with the decision or process, they may write a formal letter of complaint to the Chair of the Board. This is the final step in the Complaints and Grievances Procedure. Any decisions made at this level are final.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board Chair may request a meeting with all parties either separately or together to seek a resolution. • The Chair may involve legal counsel. • All parties will be informed of the decision in writing. • Record keeping is mandatory. 	Meet and discuss	Final resolution Relationship restoration and building.

Complainants can seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are unable to express their concern clearly. An advocate can be a friend or someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation who does not receive a fee for service.

What do I do if I need to MAKE A COMPLAINT, or if I have a grievance?

If you have a complaint regarding a situation, service, facilities, policy, procedure or behaviour within the College, please follow the flowchart entitled 'Staff: lodging a complaint'.

At each step, if the matter is unable to be resolved, the process will progress to the next step in the flow chart.

STAFF: LODGING A COMPLAINT (FLOWCHART)

STAFF: LODGING A COMPLAINT FLOWCHART				
	CATAGORY	PROCESS	ACTION	RESOLUTION
STEP 1	Informal Complaint	<p>Before lodging a formal complaint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible speak informally to the person and seek a timely resolution. • If your complaint or grievance is regarding a service, facility, policy or procedure, speak with the relevant staff member in charge of this area. 	Meet and discuss	Resolved
STEP 2	Informal Complaint	<p>Informal Resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your immediate supervisor (Head of Faculty or Program Coordinator). • Plan a course of action. • Meet with the respondent. • Record keeping is mandatory. 	Meet and Discuss	Resolved
STEP 3	Formal Complaint	<p>Lodgement of a formal online Complaints and Grievances form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lodge a formal complaint using the online CompliSpace form. This form automatically is forwarded to the Head of School/Head of Pastoral Care, who will act upon the complaint according to the issues and people involved. • Record keeping is mandatory. 	Meet and Discuss	Resolved
STEP 4	Formal Complaint	<p>Follow on from Step 3 for further resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Head of School/Head of Pastoral Care will forward to complaint or grievance to the Principal explaining the previous actions taken. • The Principal will meet with all parties and make a decision. • This decision will be in writing. • Record keeping is mandatory. 	Meet and discuss	Resolution Relationship restoration and building
STEP 5	Further Action	<p>Formal letter to the Chairperson of the Board</p> <p>If any party continues to be dissatisfied with the decision or process, they may write a formal letter of complaint to the Chair of the Board.</p>	Meet and discuss	Final resolution
<p>NOTE: At any time in the process (Step 1 – 5), if a staff member requires the support of a person of their choosing or the IEU, this must be made available to them.</p>				

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

What do I do if I have a complaint or grievance?

If you have a complaint regarding a situation, service, facilities, policy, procedure or behaviour within Southern Christian College, please follow the flowchart enclosed after this information.

What should I expect throughout this process?

The first step of this process requires you to attempt to resolve the complaint or grievance by informal means. Speak with the person involved and try to reach a mutually beneficial outcome. If you cannot resolve the issue at this first step, speak with a staff member, or someone you trust, at Southern Christian College. They will walk you through the rest of the grievance process. You can expect any of our staff to:

1. **Listen** to your complaint
2. **Acknowledge** the issues you have raised
3. **Gather** as much information as possible
4. **Communicate** their decision, providing reasons
5. **Implement** their outcome actions
6. **Close** the complaint or refer to the next step in the process

If at any point you feel that the staff member assigned to the resolution of your grievance or complaint is not an appropriate person, you have the right to request that another staff member manage the process.

You can seek the services of an advocate if you feel you are unable to express your concern clearly. An advocate can be a friend or someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation who does not receive a fee for service.

What is expected of me throughout this process?

Southern Christian College expects that you will continue to maintain your enrolment and attendance throughout the complaints and appeals process.

FLOWCHART FOR STUDENTS

STUDENT: LODGING A COMPLAINT FLOW CHART				
	CATAGORY	COMPLAINT	ACTION	RESOLUTION
STEP 1	Informal Complaint	Complaint received from student Where possible speak informally to the person and seek a timely resolution.	Meet and discuss	Resolved
STEP 2	Informal Complaint	Complaint received from student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either you or your parents or carers should speak with your teacher or the Pastoral Care Teacher. • You may prefer to speak with the College Chaplain • The College Chaplain will act confidentially on your behalf. However, if you are about to harm yourself or others or a law is broken, they must act and disclose information to the Principal and other authorities. • Record keeping is mandatory. 	Meet and Discuss	Resolved - may require an action plan.
STEP 3	Formal Complaint	Complainant lodges a formal online Complaints and Grievances form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either you or your parents or carers should complete the online form. • This form automatically is forwarded to the Head of Pastoral Care, who will act upon the complaint according to the issues and people involved. • Record keeping is mandatory. 	Meet and Discuss	Resolved – may require an action plan.
STEP 4	Formal Complaint	Follow on from Step 3 for further resolution. The Principal will meet with all parties and make a decision. This decision will be in writing. Record keeping is mandatory.	Meet and discuss	Resolution Relationship restoration and building. May require an action plan.
STEP 5	Further Action	Formal letter to the Chairperson of the Board. If your parents or carers continue to be dissatisfied with the decision or process, they may write a formal letter of complaint to the Chair of the Board.	Meet and discuss	Final Resolution.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS / CARERS / COMMUNITY

What do I do if I need to make a complaint?

If you have a complaint regarding a situation, service, facilities, policy, procedure or behaviour within the College, please follow the flowchart on the following page.

You can seek the services of an advocate if you feel you are unable to express your concern clearly. An advocate can be a friend or someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation who does not receive a fee for service.

What should I expect throughout this process?

At each step of the Complaints and Grievances process, it is expected that the managing staff member will adhere to the following process:

1. **Listen** to your Complaint.
2. **Acknowledge** the issues you have raised.
3. **Gather** as much information as possible.
4. **Communicate** their decision, providing reasons to you.
5. **Implement** their outcome actions.
6. **Close** the complaint or refer to the next step in the process.

FLOWCHART FOR PARENTS / CARERS / COMMUNITY MEMBERS

PARENTS/CARERS/COMMUNITY MEMBERS: LODGING A COMPLAINT FLOWCHART				
	CATAGORY	PROCESS	ACTION	RESOLUTION
STEP 1	Informal Complaint	<p>Speak to the Teacher</p> <p>The first step in this process is an attempt at informal resolution. If your complaint relates to an issue with another student or a classroom happening or process, it is VERY IMPORTANT that you speak directly with the teacher involved in the first instance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please phone the Office and make an appointment to see the teacher so your complaint can be dealt with in a timely manner or email the teacher directly. Phone or email the College Office 03 62295744 admin@scc.tas.edu.au • If your complaint is of a more general nature i.e., behaviour of students or staff member in public, noise etc, or finance, please phone the College Office and your complaint will be directed to the appropriate teacher, staff 	Meet and discuss or discuss via phone or email	Resolved

		<p>member or department.</p> <p>The College does not condone parent’s discussion with other parents, teacher’s aides or non-teaching staff regarding school-based issues as it is neither appropriate or helpful regarding any complaint against the College.</p>		
STEP 2	Informal Complaint	<p>Talk to the Head of Faculty of Program Coordinator Some complaints may require further support. Where this is the case, your next step is to speak with a senior staff member (e.g. Head of Faculty, Program Coordinator), who will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a course of action. • Arrange a meeting. • Formal record keeping is mandatory. 	Meet and discuss	Resolved
STEP 3	Formal Complaint	<p>Lodge a formal online Complaints and Grievances form Should resolution prove impossible at the informal level, a complaint or grievance should now progress to the formal resolution process, however it is expected that relatively few complaints or grievances will require management at this level. Should you wish to file a formal complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lodge Complaints and Grievances form online on the College website. This form is automatically forwarded to the Head of Pastoral Care/Head of School, who will act upon the complaint according to the issues and people involved. • Formal record keeping is mandatory. 	Meet and discuss	Resolved
STEP 4	Formal Complaint	<p>Follow on from Step 3 for further resolution This is the usually the final step in the Complaints and Grievance Procedure. Any decisions made by the Principal are usually final. The Principal will collate all of the available information and make a determination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal will meet with all parties and make a decision. • This decision will be in writing. • Formal record keeping is mandatory. 	Meet and discuss	Resolution Relationship restoration and building.
STEP 5	Further Action	<p>Formal letter to the Chairperson of the Board If you continue to be dissatisfied with the decision or process, you may write a formal letter of complaint to the Chair of the Board.</p>	Meet and discuss	Final resolution Relationship restoration and building.

What if my complaint or grievance is against the Principal?

As outlined above, the Principal holds particular responsibilities with handling complaints and grievances arising within the College and wider community. Where a complaint or grievance arises as a direct result of actions and decisions undertaken by the Principal (including the determination made in a formal review), then, only after consultation with the Principal, (if appropriate) and reflecting the degree of seriousness of the complaint, is the person advised to communicate their concern in writing to the Chair of the Board via email at chairman@scc.tas.edu.au.

This advice would also apply to concerns regarding individual Board members and their activities in light of their responsibility and role on the School board. On receipt of the communication, the course of action, if any, will be advised within 14 days' notice of the receipt of the complaint.

Whilst it is preferable that resolution is achieved outside the legal system, we recognise the right of an aggrieved person to seek legal advice at any stage of the process.

Related policies, procedures and other documents

- SCC Complaints Policy
- SCC Fair Process Policy
- SCC Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination policy
- SCC Student enrolment policy
- SCC Student Restorative Justice and Practices Policy
- SCC Student Code of Conduct Policy
- SCC Staff Professional Code of Conduct Policy
- SCC Website <https://www.scc.tas.edu.au/>
- SCC Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions Reference Guide
- SCC Student Guide: Compliments, Complaints, and Suggestions
- SCC Information for Parents and Carers – Making a Complaint
- SCC Tips and Advice for effective Complaining