



Grievance Policy

Rationale

Mary MacKillop College is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning and working environment for all members of our College community. We see the sharing of concerns as a process through which we can strengthen our relationships with the school communities.

As a school steeped in the values of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and the Sisters of St Joseph, Mary MacKillop College strongly believes in and values the Restorative Practices philosophy. Such an approach to education and pastoral care, provides our young women with opportunities to develop self-discipline and positive behaviours in a caring, supportive environment.

Pastoral Care at Mary MacKillop College is based on the principles of Restorative Justice. It is aimed at changing student behaviour and working towards reconciliation while still maintaining respectful interactions.

A restorative approach:

- Encourages appreciation of the consequences of one's actions for others
- Enables amends to be made where their actions have harmed others
- Requires accountability for actions
- Encourages respect for all concerned.

Purpose

At Mary MacKillop College we aim to promote, implement and create a safe environment for all members of the College community. The purpose of this policy is to provide information on how concerns and grievances will be managed and resolutions found in a collaborative, professional and supportive framework.

Definition

Grievance: refers to a situation where an individual believes that a student, staff member, parent or any member of the College Community has acted outside of the normal policies and practices that the College promotes and accepts. A grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived situation or outcome.

Implementation

If a student or parent has a grievance with a member of the Mary MacKillop College staff they are encouraged to contact the staff member in the first instance and discuss the matter. Any student or parent who does not feel as though their grievance has been attended to in an appropriate manner should follow the Grievance Procedure Flow Chart.



Any staff member who has a grievance with a student, staff member or parent is encouraged to discuss this with their Line Manager or the Deputy Principal in the first instance.

Families can expect that their concern or complaint will be responded to in a respectful and timely manner and that staff will work in partnership with them to resolve their concern or complaint. Staff will follow a process that is founded on fairness, impartiality, accessibility, respect and responsiveness. In return, we ask that parents are respectful, cooperative and courteous to staff and that they are realistic and reasonable about what course of action is required to resolve their concern or complaint.

Due process will be followed; where the rights of all will be upheld, using professional, confidential and respectful procedures to work towards a resolution that is fair, reasonable, realistic and commensurate with the seriousness of the grievance. Grievances should be lodged in good faith with all involved, with honest and open communication focusing on the issue and not the person(s).

Each grievance is to be dealt with on its particular circumstances and merits and any settlements reached or determinations made through the resolution process will not necessarily constitute a binding precedent for future similar cases.

All members of the College community will be informed of this Grievance Policy and its procedures and to whom they can go to if they have a grievance complaint.

Informal resolution wherever possible

Many complaints may be minor in nature, or readily resolved and often arise from genuine misunderstandings and/or issues relating to communication. In the vast majority of cases, these can be satisfactorily resolved informally.

The College supports those with grievances, wherever possible and as soon as practicable after a matter becomes of concern, to seek resolution in an informal and amicable manner. This is best done through direct communication/discussion by and between the parties themselves (i.e. a parent and teacher).

Formal procedures for the resolution of complaints should only be invoked when a matter is of very serious nature and/or cannot be resolved by the parties themselves through informal means.



Formal and serious grievances

Grievances that cannot otherwise be resolved informally or are of a serious nature may be referred to or should be lodged formally and in writing to the following staff member as appropriate:

- Pastoral Care Coordinator
- Director of Teaching and Learning
- Director of Students
- Deputy Principal
- Principal

As soon as practicable after a formal written grievance has been lodged, a process will be put in place by the College to investigate. The investigative process in relation to formal grievance will include but not necessarily be limited to gathering information relating to the grievance and convening meetings of the parties for discussion and resolution seeking. If a resolution cannot be found, a determination will be made by the College, based on thorough investigation, as to whether or not to uphold the grievance.

If the formal grievance is substantiated, the evidence is inconclusive or if the grievance is found to not be substantiated, all parties will be formally advised accordingly, along with any follow-up counselling or other actions as agreed and/or the College deems appropriate and necessary in the circumstances.

As a general rule the Chairperson of the Board and Directors of the College Board are not directly involved in the first instance with the receipt, investigation or resolution of a serious formal complaint other than grievances within the College Board of Governance or about the Principal.

Complaints made to Catholic Education South Australia are directed back to the College or the Board Chair. The Minister for Education nor the Department for Education have any power to directly intervene in complaints relating to the operations of Mary MacKillop College.



Grievance Procedure Flow Chart

