



Complaint Management Policy

Approved By: Board
Approval Date: 20 October 2021
Effective From: 1 November 2021

1. Introduction

Hunter Valley Grammar School is committed to the maintenance of a positive relationship with the School community. Hunter Valley Grammar School welcomes feedback from all members of the School community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously.

2. Purpose

The Complaint Management Policy is designed to assist students, parents, carers, and community members understand how to make a complaint

3. Scope

The Complaint Management Policy is for students, parents, carers, and community members who have complaints about the behaviour and/or decisions of staff or students from Hunter Valley Grammar School.

4. Policy

Hunter Valley Grammar School will endeavour to provide an appropriately prompt response to all verbal and written enquiries and to resolve any issues as soon as practicable.

It is the aim of the school to resolve complaints at the first point of contact with a staff member. If a complaint is not resolved at this point, the matter may be escalated to a higher authority for resolution.

The Policy uses as appropriate, procedural fairness in dealing with complaints and grievances and includes processes for raising and responding to matters of concern identified by parents and/or students.

5. What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to Hunter Valley Grammar School related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Complaints and allegations of staff misconduct or reportable conduct are managed separately to other complaints. Refer to the section at the end of this policy - Complaints and Allegations of Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct for more information.



6. Procedure

A complaint or grievance should be directed to the appropriate staff member as listed below, with the following exceptions:

- where the grievance concerns the nominated staff member.
- where it is believed that the issue has not been dealt with expeditiously by the nominated staff member; or
- if the complaint pertains to allegations of staff misconduct or a reportable conduct matter, refer to the section at the end of this policy - Complaints and Allegations of Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct for more information.

In these circumstances the matter should be referred to an appropriate higher authority.

Person with whom contact should be made regarding a complaint or grievance:

| Staff Member | Area of concern |
|--|--|
| Director of Enrolments | - Information about enrolment - Scholarships |
| Communications Officer | - Public Relations and Publications |
| Chief Financial Officer | - Financial issues |
| Director(s) of Sport | - General information about the School's sporting program and fixtures - Students' selections in teams |
| Mentor (Senior School) /Class Teacher (Junior School) | - Student-related issues of a day-to-day nature - In the first instance, issues relating to the wellbeing of the student - Other queries/concerns related to a student |
| Head of Faculty (Senior School)/Head of Stage (Junior School) | - Class placement - Course/class assessment task |
| Dean of Innovative Curriculum (Senior School) and Head of Curriculum (Junior School) | - Information about the curriculum offering of the School - Information about the HSC and NSW Education Standards Authority curriculum requirements - Reporting |
| Head of Students (Senior School) and Head of Academic Care (Junior School) | - Student behaviour inside and outside the School - Student-to-student interaction and |



| Staff Member | Area of concern |
|--|--|
| School) | harassment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation of a student in school activities - Issues that relate to the relationship between a student and teacher - Organisational or administrative issues - Issues associated with bus travel - Concerns about welfare and discipline of students - Parent groups |
| Director of Academic Services and K-6 Coordinator of Academic Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personalised student learning support and learning enrichment services |
| Principal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application for a student to be absent from school for an identified or extended period - Having exhausted the due process and where the aggrieved feels a concern remains unresolved then the matter should be raised with the Principal |
| Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where a grievance is held about the Principal that matter should be made to the Chair of the Board in writing and addressed to Chair of the Board, Hunter Valley Grammar School Board, PO Box 458, East Maitland NSW 2323 |

Contact with the relevant member of staff can be facilitated by phoning the School Administration Office on 4934 2444 to arrange an appointment, or by email to the relevant staff member.

7. Complaints and Allegations of Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct

Complaints and allegations of staff misconduct and/or reportable conduct are managed by the Hunter Valley Grammar School in a different manner to other complaints. This is because the Hunter Valley Grammar School has legal obligations to report certain staff conduct to external authorities. Staff misconduct is a broad term that could include breaches of professional boundaries, codes of conduct or standards of behaviour, whereas reportable conduct is a term defined in law and includes:

- any sexual offence or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including child pornography offences, sexual touching or an offence involving child abuse material) including grooming behaviours



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- any assault, ill-treatment, or neglect of a child
- any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child (whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child).

If your complaint relates to alleged staff misconduct or reportable conduct please make your complaint to the Principal, or if this person is the subject of your complaint please notify the Chair of the Board.

For more information about Hunter Valley Grammar School’s complaints handling procedures regarding allegations of staff misconduct or reportable conduct, please refer to our Procedures for Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct document available on our public website.

8. Responsibilities

| Position | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Board | The Board is the Approver for this Policy |
| Principal | The Principal is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented by all staff. |
| Employees of Hunter Valley Grammar School | Employees of HVGS are required to ensure that they have reviewed this policy and act in accordance. |

9. Definitions

| Term | Meaning |
|--------------------|--|
| Complaint | A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to Hunter Valley Grammar School related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected |
| Reportable Conduct | Reportable Conduct is defined as per the Children’s Guardian Act 2019 and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any sexual offence or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including child pornography offences, sexual touching or an offence involving child abuse material) including grooming behaviours • any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child • any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child (whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child). |
| Misconduct | Staff behaviour contrary to the Staff Code of Conduct |



10. Related documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related documents:

List relevant documents, including:

- a. Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct Procedure
- b. Whistle-blower Policy

11. Contacts

Governance Officer: Compliance Manager

Accountable Officer: Principal

12. Document information and review

This policy document will be reviewed at least every two years.

Review Due: 20 October 2023

13. Evaluation

The Board is responsible for evaluating compliance with the policy. Evaluation will be facilitated by means of:

- a. Principal’s Report to every Board Meeting;
- b. Minutes from Board Committee Meetings;
- c. Compliance Manager Report to Risk and Compliance Committee

14. Approval history

| No | Effective | Approved by | Amendment |
|----|--------------|-------------|---|
| 1 | May 2010 | Board | New Policy document endorsed by the Board |
| 2 | March 2013 | Board | Policy document reviewed and amended |
| 3 | June 2016 | Board | Policy document reviewed and amended |
| 4 | May 2019 | Board | Policy document reviewed and amended |
| 5 | October 2021 | Board | Policy document reviewed and amended Named changed to “Complaints Management Policy” – Previously “Grievance Policy and Complaints Handling Procedure – Parents/Students” Inclusion of reference to Reportable Conduct. |