



Complaints Handling Policy

Reviewed by:	AIS NSW & Wagga Wagga Christian College
Review date:	May 2025
Approved by:	Board of Directors
Approval date:	May 2025
Date for next review:	May 2028
Version:	3.0

Version History

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	Oct 2016	New CEN Policy
2.0	Sept 2019	WWCC Policy modification & adoption
2.1	Nov 2019	Definition of Bias added and table of Support Documents added.
3.0	May 2025	Full review by AIS NSW & Wagga Christian College

College Vision

In Christ, partnering with families in providing excellent academic and practical education, preparing students to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly before God

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1. Introduction

A productive approach to all feedback has the capacity to:

- protect relationships within the College Community;
- improve the College's services and performance
- highlight key risks within the College
- and enhance decision-making capacity of the Board and Senior Executive.

Complaints management is therefore a key governance tool. Wagga Wagga Christian College seeks to encourage partnership in education with key stakeholders through open communication, with opportunities to provide feedback and constructive suggestions to the College. It is committed to working together with members of the College community to facilitate the vision and mission of the College and provide a quality educational experience for all students.

The College endeavours to respond to complaints in a professional, timely and appropriate way, facilitating positive discussion and building stakeholder confidence in the College.

2. Biblical Context

Godly complaint management seeks the redemption of what was harmful and the restoration of fractured relationships. Even where original decisions of the College are not reversed, the process is designed to honour each person and extend mercy and justice.

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God". Micah 6:8 (NIV)

The foundation of the process is to seek resolution with the first person concerned. "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take on or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses". Matt 18:15-16 (NIV)

This approach models to students, and the College community as a whole, about dealing with conflict as 'effective leaders of godly character', in line with the vision of the College. It stops destructive gossip or slander, which undermines the whole community; and builds a culture of respect, valuing differences, openness, transparentness and trust. We live in a fallen world where mistakes and conflicts occur but God can use even these occasions for good.

3. Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to Wagga Wagga Christian College in handling complaints made in respect of services provided by the College or against staff members, which includes employees, contractors and volunteers.

This policy does not extend to personal grievances between parents, guardians or other members of the College community.

3.1 Whistleblowing complaints

This policy does not extend to complaints which are whistleblowing disclosures. The procedure for processing whistleblowing complaints are dealt with in the College's whistleblowing policy.

In summary a whistleblowing disclosure is a disclosure which:

- is made by a board member, staff member, a person who supplies goods or services to the College, including a volunteer, an employer of a supplier or a relative of any of these people;
- involves alleged misconduct, an improper state of affairs or circumstances, or illegal activity, and
- is made to a senior staff member, or officer of the College, the College's auditor or a person who the College has authorised to collect such disclosures.

3.2 Related policies

Complaints about reportable conduct will be addressed in accordance with the College's Child Protection Policy.

Complaints regarding a grievance between students will be addressed in accordance with the College's Student Code of Conduct and/or Behaviour Management Policy and/or Anti-bullying Policy and/or Student Wellbeing Procedures.

Complaints regarding a grievance between staff members about work matters, including work relationships and decision made by other staff members which impact on their work, will be addressed in accordance with the College's Staff Grievance Policy.

Complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying between staff are generally addressed in accordance with the College's Discrimination, Harassment and

Bullying Statement.

Complaints regarding teacher accreditation processes will be addressed in accordance with the College's Teacher Accreditation Procedures.

4. Confidentiality

All parties involved in complaints handling are required to maintain appropriate confidentiality, including in relation to handling and storing records.

5. Complaints

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the College about an educational and/or operational matter relating to services provided by the College or the behaviour or decisions of a staff member, contractor or volunteer, including misconduct.

If a parent/carer or student has a concern about the conduct of a staff member, they should raise their concern with the College in accordance with section 6.

If a complaint that concerns the behaviour of a staff member may constitute reportable conduct, the matter will be addressed by the College's Child Protection Policy in accordance with section 3.2. A complaint about a reportable conduct matter may be current or historical. Timeframes for investigation of complaints relating to reportable conduct are dependent on the individual matter and may be over an extended period of time, particularly in the case of a historical allegation. The College is bound by privacy or other confidentiality requirements when conducting investigations of reportable conduct allegations, which may limit the information that can be shared with the complainant regarding the outcome of an investigation. Please refer to the College's Child Protection Policy for information about reportable conduct.

Complainants are not required to assess whether their concern meets the threshold of reportable conduct before making a complaint. Any concern about a child's wellbeing or the conduct of an employee, volunteer, contractor or member of the College community may be reported under this policy.

Complaints may be made by a student or parent/carer or any member of the College community.

The College will seek to resolve complaints informally where possible but acknowledges that in some cases a person may wish to make a formal complaint.

6. Raising a complaint

6.1 The complainant

Complaints may be raised by a complainant directly with the person involved. However, if the complainant does not feel comfortable doing so or the matter is one where it may not be appropriate to do so a complaint can be made to the Principal. Any complaint about the conduct of a staff member should be raised directly with the Principal in the first instance.

Should the matter not be resolved between the parties directly in the first instance, the complainant may raise the matter with the College. A complaint can be made in writing to the Principal, via email to principal@wwcc.nsw.edu.au.

Where a person wishes to make a complaint concerning the Principal, the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of the Board, via email board.chair@wwcc.nsw.edu.au. In this situation, the references in this policy relating to the role of the Principal should be read as references to the Chair of Board.

6.2 The College

The Principal will generally acknowledge receipt of a complaint raised with the College in writing as soon as practicable.

7. Handling complaints

7.1 Assessing a complaint

The Principal generally will assess the complaint and determine:

- whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or is a staff grievance or reportable conduct matter, or another matter identified in section 3.2 which are dealt with by the relevant policies, see section 3.2; and
- the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised; and
- whether the College may be required to report the matter to the Office of the Children's Guardian, Police, Department of Communities and Justice or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

7.2 Managing a complaint

The Principal generally will manage a complaint by:

- a. advising the complainant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the College in

- relation to the complaint;
- b. if appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the complaint at the relevant time and providing them with an opportunity to respond;
 - c. collecting any additional information the College considers necessary to assess the complaint;
 - d. making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved (“resolution decision”); and
 - e. if appropriate, advising the complainant in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision of the Principal and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

There may be circumstances where some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the College will determine, on a case-by-case basis the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.

A complainant and the relevant parties that the complaint is about may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the College about the complaint. However, the College maintains the right to determine whether the person’s preferred support person is appropriate and may not approve the attendance of a support person where they are determined by the College to be inappropriate.

8. Contact

If you have any queries about this policy, you should contact the Principal for advice.