

COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY & PROCEDURE

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that student, parent/guardian and employee complaints and disputes are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair way.	
Scope:	Students, parents/guardians and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.	
Status:	Authorised	Supersedes: All previous Complaints and Grievances Policies
Authorised by:	Matthew Vandeppeer (Principal) in collaboration with the Alta-1 College Board Chairperson	Date of Authorisation: 8 November 2019
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2017 • Australian Education Regulations 2013 • Fair Work Act 2009 • Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld) • Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) • Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld) • Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth) • Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) • Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth) • Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) • Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) • Alta-1 College QLD Work Health and Safety Policy • Alta-1 College QLD Anti-Discrimination Policy • Alta-1 College QLD Sexual Harassment Policy • Alta-1 College QLD Disability Discrimination Policy • Alta-1 College QLD Privacy Policy • Alta-1 College QLD Child Protection Policy • Alta-1 College QLD Student Bullying Policy • Alta-1 College QLD Behaviour Management Policy 	
Review Date:	Annually	Next Review Date: November 2020
Policy Owner:	Alta-1 College QLD	

Policy Statement

Alta-1 College QLD is committed to ensuring that student, parent/guardian and employee complaints are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, and effective and fair way.

Alta-1 College QLD views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process.

Alta-1 College QLD acknowledges the right of students, parents/guardians and employees to complain when dissatisfied with an action, inaction or decision of the college and the college encourages constructive criticism and complaints.

Alta-1 College QLD recognises that time spent on handling complaints can be an investment in better service to students, parents/guardians and employees.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy a “concern” is an issue which is typically resolved through informal discussion between the parties directly concerned whereas a “complaint” is a formal grievance requiring resolution through specified channels.

Complaints that may be Resolved under this Policy

Alta-1 College QLD encourage students, parents/guardians and employees to lodge promptly any concerns regarding sexual harassment, child protection, discrimination, workplace bullying and privacy breaches as well as more general complaints that include areas such as:

- the college, its employees or students having done something wrong
- the college, its employees or students having failed to do something they should have done
- the college, its employees or students having acted unfairly or impolitely
- issues of student or employee behaviour that are contrary to their relevant Code of Conduct
- issues related to learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- issues related to communication with students or parents/guardians or between employees
- issues related to college fees and payments
- general administrative issues.

Student complaints may be brought by students or by parents/guardians on behalf of their children, as appropriate in the circumstances.

Issues Outside this Policy

The following matters are outside the scope of this policy and should be managed as follows:

- Child protection concerns or risks of harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the law and the college's Child Protection Policy.
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the Student Bullying Policy and the Behaviour Management Policy.
- Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the Behaviour Management Policy.
- Employee complaints related to their employment should be directed to their supervisor.
- Student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the Principal who will involve the Police as appropriate.
- Formal legal proceedings.

Complaints Handling Principles

Alta-1 College QLD is committed to managing complaints according to the following principles:

- the right to lodge a complaint is acknowledged
- complaints will be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible
- complaints should be lodged in accordance with established procedures
- complaints will be taken seriously
- anonymous complaints will be treated on their merits
- complaints will be dealt with fairly and objectively and in a timely manner
- mediation, negotiation and informal resolution are optional alternatives
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- all parties to the complaints will be appropriately supported
- complainants, respondents and people associated with them will not be victimised as a result of lodging the complaints and they will not suffer any other reprisals

Responsibilities

Alta-1 College QLD

The college has the following responsibilities:

- manage complaints in accordance with the college's Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure
- appropriately communicate and make accessible the college's Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure to students, parents/guardians and employees
- determine the appropriate person to deal with the complaint in the first instance
- investigate and generate a report promptly
- give reasonable progress updates
- provide a review pathway for parties to the complaint if warranted
- ensure that appropriate support is provided to all parties to a complaint
- take appropriate action to prevent victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them
- appropriately offer and implement remedies
- appropriately train relevant employees
- keep records of complaints
- conduct a review/audit of the Complaints Register from time to time
- informed if a complaint could be connected to an insured risk.
- monitor and report to the governing body on complaints
- inform the college's insurer if a complaint could be connected to an insured risk.
- refer to the college's governing body immediately any claim for legal redress.

All Parties to a Dispute

The complainant and respondent both have the following responsibilities:

- apply and comply with the college's Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure
- lodge the complaint as soon as possible after the issue arises
- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
- not provide deliberately false or misleading information
- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints
- act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner
- act in a non-threatening manner
- work towards an outcome acceptable to all parties
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- not victimise or act in reprisal against any party to the dispute or any person associated with them.

Employees Receiving Complaints

Employees receiving complaints have the following responsibilities:

- act in accordance with the college's Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure
- inform the party lodging the complaint of how complaints can be lodged, when they should be lodged and what information is required
- provide the complainant with information about any support or assistance available to assist them in lodging their complaint
- provide the complainant with a copy of the college's Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure
- maintain confidentiality
- keep appropriate records
- to forward complaints to more senior employees, including the Principal, as appropriate
- not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

Implementation

Alta-1 College QLD is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints at the college.

Alta-1 College QLD is also committed to appropriately training relevant employees (especially senior staff) on how to resolve complaints in line with this policy and the related procedures.

Alta-1 College QLD will keep appropriate records, monitor complaints and their resolution and will report on a high-level basis to the college Board on complaint handling at the college.

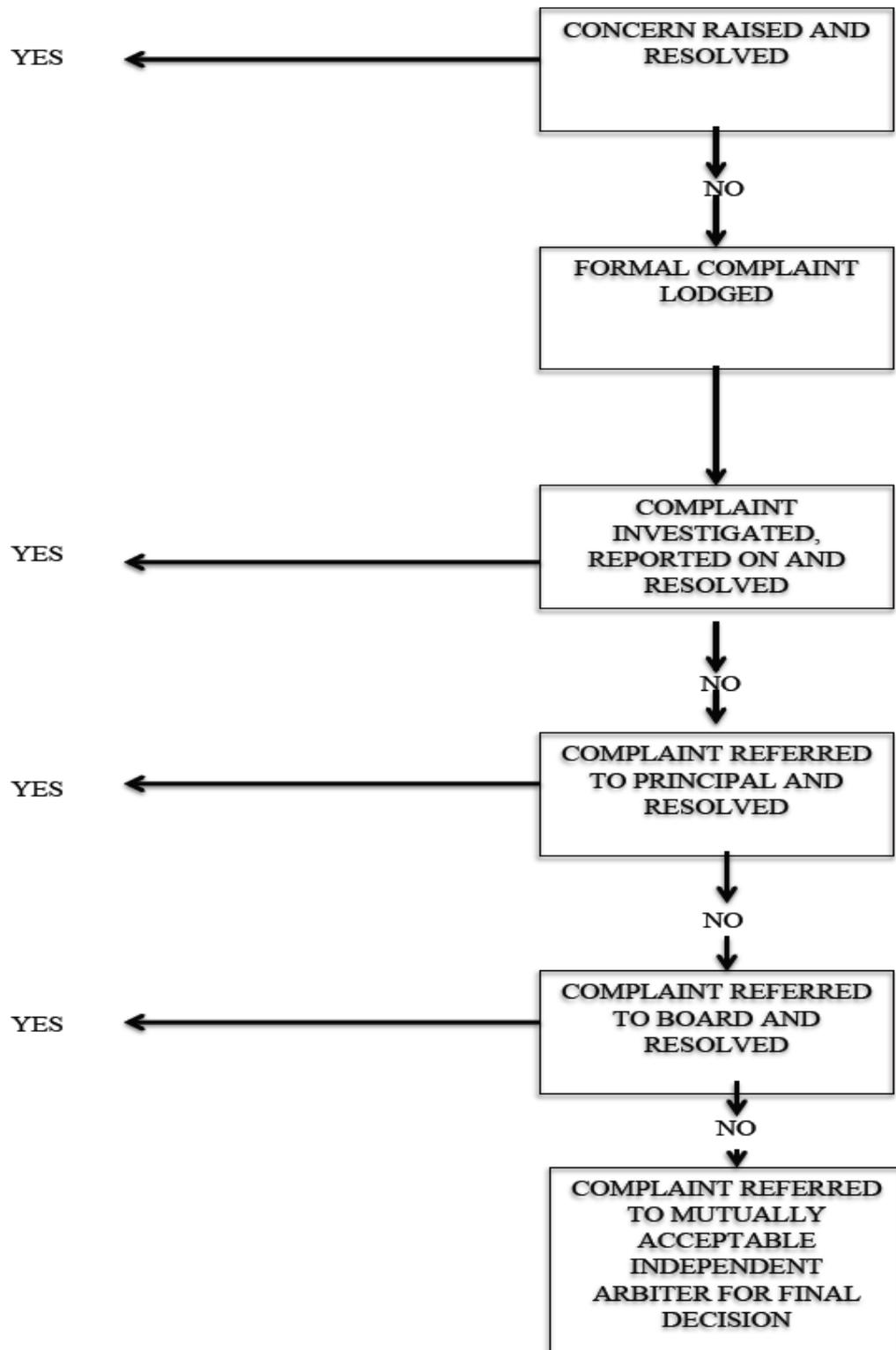
Alta-1 College QLD will act to encourage students, parents/guardians and employees to contribute to a healthy college culture where complaints are resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.

Procedures

Usually concerns are resolved directly and informally between the people involved and no further action is required. Unresolved concerns or serious grievances may lead to a formal complaint being lodged, which will ensue in the following process:

1. Present complaint by letter, email, or face to face along with a signed Complaint Form.
2. Direct complaints about staff to the relevant line manager, complaints about the Principal to the Board Chairman, and complaints about a Board member to the Principal who will contact CSA or ISQ to appoint an independent arbiter.
3. A written acknowledgement and initial response outlining how the college proposes to proceed is sent to the complainant within 5 working days
4. The complainant is investigated and the subject of the complaint notified.
5. The college sends a written response to the complainant by the date indicated in the initial acknowledgement.
6. Successful resolution is recorded.
7. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved the Principal will offer to refer the matter to the Alta-1 College Board Chairman.
8. Successful resolution is acknowledged in writing.
9. If still unresolved the matter is referred to the full Alta-1 College Board, who makes the final decision.
10. If unhappy with the decision of the College Board a request, through the Principal, can be made for a meeting with an independent mediator.

COMPLAINTS FLOW CHART



Throughout the process confidentiality will be maintained by limiting knowledge of the issue only to those directly involved. Depending on the issue, and in accordance with other Alta-1 College policies and procedures (Child Protection Policy, Managing Reportable Criminal Offences Policy, and mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse), third parties outside the college may need to be contacted. Information on file will remain confidential.

Appendices

- Complaints Procedure for Parents and Guardians
- Complaints Procedure for Students
- Complaints Procedure for Workers
- Complaints Form
- Complaints Register

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Alta-1 College welcomes suggestions and comments from parents/guardians and takes seriously complaints and concerns that may be raised.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction that needs a response.

A complaint may be made if a parent/guardian thinks that the college has:

- Done something wrong
- Failed to do something it should have done, or
- Acted unfairly, unjustly or improperly

A complaint may be made about the college as a whole, about a specific site or about an individual staff member.

It is Alta-1's intent that complaints made by parents will be treated with respect and confidentiality.

“How should I complain?”

Try to resolve any problems yourself with those directly involved. If it is impossible to resolve the conflict, then seek assistance. Take the initiative in talking to those involved. Don't wait for them to come to you.

Members of staff will endeavour to help. They may be able to sort things out quickly with a minimum of fuss. When you contact the college, ask to speak with the person most closely concerned with the issue e.g. Campus Teacher. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you.

However, you may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, including the Principal.

“I don’t want to complain as such, but something is bothering me”

The college is here for you and your child and we want to hear your views and ideas. Contact a member of staff as described above.

“I am not sure whether to complain or not”

If as a parent/guardian you have concerns, you are entitled to raise them. If in doubt you should contact Alta-1 as we are here to help.

“What will happen next?”

If you raise something face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction.

If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing, we will contact you within five working days to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.

In many circumstances, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding. You will be given a date by which time you will receive a response. If a detailed exploration of the issue is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

“What happens about confidentiality?”

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal and those directly involved. The Chairman of the Alta-1 Board may also need to be informed. It is the college’s intent that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the college aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child’s safety was at risk, mandatory reporting is required or it becomes necessary to refer matters to the police.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints may not be pursued.

Action, which needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints, would be handled confidentially within the college.

“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

If you are not satisfied, the Principal will offer to refer the matter to the Chairman of the Alta-1 Board. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Chairman. The Chairman will call for a full report from the Principal and will examine matters thoroughly before responding. This may result in a positive solution, but if it does not, the Chairman will invite you to a meeting. You may wish to be supported by a friend.

If the meeting does not bring about a resolution, the matter would be referred to the full Alta-1 Board. The Board will look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. If you are still unhappy you can request a meeting with an independent mediator.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS

If you are attending Alta-1 College and you are unhappy about something, then you have the right to raise a concern. To do that you need to contact us so that we can try to put things right as soon as possible.

Here are some steps to follow if you'd like to make a complaint:

1. Talk to someone

The first step in sorting out a problem is to tell someone you know. Most of your problems can be sorted out once they have been shared.

You can talk to any staff member at Alta-1 or if you'd prefer you can speak directly to the Principal, Mr Matthew Vandeppeer. He can help with your issue. His number is 0431 416 488 or email matt.v@alta-1.qld.edu.au or you can see him in person.

We will take your complaint seriously. You may contact us in any way you choose. You have a right to complain in the best way for you: by phone or face to face, text or by email.

Remember that at any time you can have someone you trust to help you make the complaint.

Alta-1 expects staff at all times to conduct themselves in a way that creates an environment of respect, safety and care. If you feel a staff member is not behaving in this way, please share this with another staff member or the Principal.

Once you share your complaint with a staff member, s/he is required to talk with you about the best way to resolve the issue. The staff member will then make sure something happens to resolve the problem. That might mean talking with other staff or the Principal.

If you are worried about confidentiality talk it over with the staff member so s/he can let you know exactly who will need to know about the complaint.

If you feel the staff member has not resolved the issue to your satisfaction, you can contact the Principal.

2. Tell the Board Chairperson

If you're not happy about the way your complaint has been dealt with or if you feel you can't speak with a staff member or Principal, you have the right to tell the Alta-1 College board Chairperson. His name is Glenn Bergsma and you can contact him via on email: Chairman@alta-1.qld.edu.au. Glenn will discuss your complaint with you and then discuss how the matter can be resolved to your satisfaction.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR WORKERS

As a worker (employee, volunteer, contractor, or person undertaking work experience or vocational placement) at Alta-1 College, we welcome suggestions and comments from you. The college takes seriously all complaints and concerns that may be raised.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction that needs a response.

A complaint may be made if you think that the college has:

- Done something wrong
- Failed to do something it should have done, or
- Acted unfairly, unjustly or improperly

A complaint may be made about the college as a whole, about a specific site or about an individual staff member. Complaints will be treated with respect and confidentiality.

“How should I complain?”

Try to resolve any problems yourself with those directly involved. Take the initiative and don't wait for them to come to you. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you.

If it is impossible to resolve the conflict, then seek assistance from your line manager. You may prefer to take the matter to the Principal.

“I don't want to complain as such, but something is bothering me”

The college is here for you we want to hear your views and ideas.

“I am not sure whether to complain or not”

If you have concerns, you are entitled to raise them.

“What will happen next?”

If you raise a concern, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction.

If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing, we will contact you within five working days to acknowledge your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed. You will be given a date by which time you will receive a response.

If a detailed exploration of the issue is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

“What happens about confidentiality?”

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal and those directly involved. The Chairman of the Alta-1 Board may also need to be informed.

In some cases, there may be the need to make third parties outside the college aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would be likely to happen when a child’s safety is at risk, mandatory reporting is required, or it becomes necessary to refer matters to the police.

Information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file.

Action that needs to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints, will be handled confidentially.

“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

If you are not satisfied, the Principal will offer to refer the matter to the Chairman of the Alta-1 Board. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Chairman. The Chairman will call for a full report from the Principal and will examine matters thoroughly before responding. This may result in a positive solution, but if it does not, the Chairman will invite you to a meeting. You may wish to be supported by a friend.

If the meeting does not bring about a resolution, the matter would be referred to the full Alta-1 Board. The Board will look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. If you are still unhappy you can request a meeting with an independent mediator.

COMPLAINTS FORM

Name of complainant: _____ Contact details: _____

Received by: _____ Date: _____

Issue: _____

Signature of complainant _____

Action Taken: _____

Resolved: Yes No

Referral to: _____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Final Resolution Yes No Date: _____