



CAULFIELD JUNIOR COLLEGE

ÉCOLE FRANCO-AUSTRALIENNE

COMPLAINTS POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the front office.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Caulfield Junior College (CJC), the “School”, so that students, parents and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school
- ensure that all complaints and concerns regarding Caulfield Junior College are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

SCOPE

This policy relates to complaints brought by students, parents, carers, or members of our school community (here forward referred to as complainants) and applies to all matters relating to our school.

In some limited instances, we may need to refer a complainant to another policy or area if there are different processes in place to the manage the issue including:

- Complaints and concerns relating to fraud and corruption will be managed in accordance with the department’s [Fraud and Corruption Policy](#)
- Criminal matters will be referred to Victorian Police
- Legal claims will be referred to the Department’s Legal Division
- Complaints and concerns relating to child abuse will be managed in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures.



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TERM	DEFINITION
School	Caulfield junior college (CJC)
The School Community	Parents, students, contractors, visitors, volunteers, neighbours, suppliers, families on the enrolment wait-list.
Parents	Parents, guardians, carers.
Staff	All staff employed at CJC.
Students	All students enrolled at CJC.
Peer Mediator	
The Department	Department of Education
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction with an action taken, decision made, or service provided, or the failure to provide a service, take action or make a decision.
Grievance	A dispute or disagreement between two parties. A grievance is also a complaint one party has against another party for some alleged wrong committed by the second party.
Complainant	The party that brings a complaint against another.
Respondent	The person against whom the complaint is made.
Support Person	Has the role of providing moral support but cannot interfere with procedures and should refrain from interrupting and adding their personal opinion. This person cannot be someone who will be interviewed as part of the investigation.
Resolved	A complaint is considered to be 'resolved' when an acceptable outcome is reached between both the Complainant and respondent.



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Finalised	A complaint is considered to be 'finalised' when the Principal has made a final determination on the matter after exhausting the processes set out in this policy.
Unresolved	A complaint is considered to be 'unresolved' when agreement cannot be reached on a course of action and/or a remedy, or if the remedy cannot be implemented.

TYPES OF COMPLAINTS

CJC is committed to considering all complaints.

1.1.1. Legitimate Complaints

Legitimate complaints and genuine factual expressions of dissatisfaction warrant response and resolution. CJC is committed to providing good quality educational services to students and child safety. The School will act upon feedback to ensure utmost safety and continuous improvement.

1.1.2. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints raise natural justice issues for respondents, who have a right to know particulars of allegations made against them. However, it should be recognised that the School may not be able to fully consider a complaint if it cannot effectively liaise with a Complainant.

In consultation with relevant CJC staff, the Principal will determine the extent to which an anonymous complaint will be investigated. The School will always act when anonymous concerns about child safety are raised.

1.1.3. Vexatious Complaints

Inaccurate, misleading, malicious or false accusations have negative consequences for the person(s) concerned, interpersonal relationships and the morale of the School Community. Where it is found that a complaint has been made in bad faith to cause distress to one or more people, or as a practical joke, disciplinary measures will be taken.

1.1.4. Unreasonable Complaint Conduct

Unreasonable Complaint Conduct is behaviour that:

• is victimising (complaints causes further disadvantage or in response to retaliation or threats).



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is vexatious (a complaint brought without merit, often to cause annoyance to another person).

is oriented towards conflict or defamation.

is clearly and significantly outside the expectation of confidentiality, co-operation, courtesy and respect.

The School will not tolerate this conduct.

POLICY

Caulfield Junior College welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our families and are committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. We recognise that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

We value and encourage open and positive relationships with our school community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

When addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- be considerate of each other's views and respect each other's role.
- be focused on resolution of the complaint, with the interests of the student involved at the centre.
- act in good faith and cooperation.
- behave with respect and courtesy.
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved [in line with our Privacy Policy](#), as appropriate
- operate within and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with any applicable legislation and Department policy.
- recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

Complaints and concerns process for students

Caulfield Junior College acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. Caulfield Junior College encourages our students to raise issues or concerns as they arise so that we can work together to resolve them.

Students with a concern or complaint can raise them with a trusted adult at school, for example, with your classroom teacher, Student Wellbeing Coordinator or School Leadership team. This person will take [their](#) concern or complaint seriously and will explain what steps to follow to attempt to resolve the issue and support them .

Students can also ask their parent, carer or another trusted adult outside of the school (as agreed upon by the parent/carer/child), to talk to the School about the issue instead. Information about



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our parent/carer complaints and concerns process is outlined further below. The parent/carer process also applies to students who are mature minors, refer to: [Mature Minors and Decision Making](#).

Other ways you can raise a concern or complaint with the School include:

- talking to a member of the student representative council about their concern and any suggestions they have for resolving it.
- speaking to a [Peer Mediator](#).
- participating in our Attitudes to School Survey (for Grades 4-6).
- writing a note to a trusted adult.

Commented [1]: Can be defined in the Definitions section so everyone understands who they are (students, not staff) and what their role is.

Further information and resources to support students to raise issues or concerns are available at:

- [Report Racism Hotline](#) (call 1800 722 476) – this hotline enables students to report concerns relating to racism or religious discrimination
- [Reach Out](#)
- [Headspace](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#) (call 1800 55 1800)
- [Victorian Aboriginal Education Association](#) (VAEAI)

Complaints and concerns process for parents, carers and community members

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

Caulfield Junior College encourages parents, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- place in writing.
- carefully consider the issues to be discussed.
- ensure they have all the relevant facts relating to the issue they want to raise.
- consider whether the matter could be resolved informally.
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by [the Department](#) and Caulfield Junior College (see “Further Information and Resources” section below).

Commented [2]: Can be added to the Definition section so audience understands it relates to the Department of Education.

Support person

A complainant is welcome to have a support person to assist them in raising a complaint or concern with the School. The complainant should advise the school if they wish to have a support person assist them, and provide their name, contact details and their relationship to them.

Raising a concern

Caulfield Junior College is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to their child’s teacher. Where possible, school staff will work with the Parent to ensure that their concerns are appropriately addressed.

Commented [3]: Is there a form to complete? I have added a suggested form at the end of the policy which could form Appendix 1.

Making a complaint



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Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, the Complainant s may wish to make a formal complaint in writing to the team leader, student wellbeing coordinator or school leadership team.

If the Complainant would like to make a formal complaint, in most cases, depending on the nature of the complaint raised, the School will first seek to understand the issues (refer to timeline below) and will then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint together. The following process will apply:

- 1. Complaint received: The Complainant should** either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the Assistant Principal or Principal, to outline their complaint so that the School can fully understand what the issues are. CJC will discuss their complaint in a way that is convenient for them, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.
- 2. Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Principal, Assistant Principal or nominee may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
- 3. Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Assistant Principal/Principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. If after the resolution meeting we are unable to resolve the complaint together, the School will work with the Complainant to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event they would like to take further action. In some circumstances, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the Complainant will be provided in writing.
- 4. Timelines:** Caulfield Junior College will acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as possible (usually within two school days) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, the School may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of the complaint. CJC will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting where appropriate within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, the School will consult with the Complainant and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

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Please note that unreasonable conduct (e.g. vexatious complaints) may need to be managed differently to the procedures in this policy.

Resolution

Where appropriate, Caulfield Junior College may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- an apology or expression of regret.
- a change of decision.
- an amendment to a policy, procedure or practice.
- offering the opportunity for student wellbeing or other support to be provided.



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- other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, Caulfield Junior College may also ask the complainant to attend a meeting with an independent third party, or participate in a mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute.

In resolving the complaint, a statement should be prepared confirming that those involved consider the complaint (or an aspect of the complaint) is resolved. This statement will include details of how the complaint has been resolved and provide description of each specific action or decision, including a note as to who is responsible for the action and by when. A copy of the statement will be provided to the complainant.

When the complaint is resolved (or dismissed), a follow up meeting or conversation may be scheduled to ensure that the agreed actions have been implemented and that there are no further matters outstanding.

Escalation

If a formal complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the Complainant, it may, at the request of the Complainant, be escalated to an internal Appeals Panel, chaired by the Principal or their nominee. An appeal must be made in writing within 14 days of finalising the complaint resolution and should be addressed to the Principal. The Principal will acknowledge the request for an appeal within two (2) working days.

The grounds for the appeal should be clearly identified. The grounds could include the following:

¿ the complaints policy and procedures were not followed.

¿ the resolution of the complaint is claimed to be insufficient, unfair, biased, unreasonable and/or disproportionate.

The appeal will use the record of the complaint and will not re-hear the complaint itself. The Complainant will be asked to indicate how, if possible and practicable, they would want the appeal to be resolved.

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the process or the outcome of the resolution, or if their complaint is about the Principal/leadership team and they do not want to raise it directly with them, then they must refer their complaint to the [South-East Region](#).

Caulfield Junior College may also refer a complaint to the South East Region if they believe that they have done all they can to address the complaint.

Commented [5]: Could we change this to "Appeals" instead of escalation?

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Commented [7]: school days?

Commented [8]: Include link to the webpage or email address.



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For more information about the Department's parent complaints process, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Raise a complaint or concern about your school.](#)

Record keeping and other requirements

To meet the Department's and legal requirements, CJC must keep written records of:

- Serious, substantial or unusual complaints.
- Complaints relating to the Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, to meet regulatory requirements - refer to Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes for further information.

The School also follows Department policy to ensure that record-keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints or concerns.

It is important that consistent, well-structured, concise and complete information is on file for current and future use.

The following documentation will form the record of the complaint and will be kept in the relevant student or staff electronic file:

• the formal complaints form, whether completed by the parents or by the school and confirmed by the parents.

• a record of the complaints meeting.

• a record of the resolution.

• a record of the follow up meeting or email to the parents.

The management of these records will follow the School's Record Management Policy. Except where dictated otherwise by law, the School will retain all records of complaints for a minimum of one year after the family or Student has left the School and will then be destroyed. The records will be kept secured by the Principal or the School Council (in the case of a complaint made against the Principal) as is appropriate.

Commented [9]: Do you have a Records Management Policy?

Commented [10]: Suggestion if you suitable.

Breach of Policy

Any breach of this Policy will be handled by the Principal, or delegated by the Principal to an authorised representative, to handle on a case-by-case basis. The Principal may take such action as considered appropriate in response to a breach of this policy and may include but is not limited to the following:

• Provision of a verbal or a written warning.

• Withdrawal of certain privileges or opportunities.

• Exclusion from future school events or functions.

• Exclusion from the school grounds and facilities.



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¿ Termination of an enrolment.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

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COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Publicly available on the School's website.
- Annual reference in school newsletter.
- Discussed at student forums/through communication tools.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

- [Complaints - Parents](#)

The Department's parents' website:

- [Raise a complaint or concern about your school](#)
- [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	2024
Consultation	Policy Committee
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2026

Appendix 1: Formal Complaint Form

Formal Complaint Form



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To lodge a formal complaint, please fill out this form completely and submit together with any supporting documentation to caulfield.jr.co@education.vic.gov.au.

CJC endeavours to acknowledge all complaints within 2 school days of receipt.

Complainant's Contact Details		Date Lodged: DD/MM/YYYY	
Full Name:		Phone:	
Address:		Email:	

Informal Complaint		
Has the matter been raised informally? Where complainant has an issue of concern, they should first attempt to resolve it informally.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No If No, we encourage you to follow the informal resolution process.
If you answered Yes to the previous question, please detail with whom you raised the issue, what the outcome or actions were and why you believe this has not resolved the matter.		

Nature of Formal Complaint
Describe the nature of the complaint:



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Complaint Details

Please describe the specific details of the complaint.

- ¿ Describe the incident and/or your concerns.
- ¿ Provide a chronology of events if relevant.
- ¿ Detail any relevant phone conversations/meetings/emails (attach copies).
- ¿ Include key dates and times, such as when the incident occurred.
- ¿ Any other relevant information.

Preferred Outcome

How could this matter be resolved?