



BORONIA K-12 COLLEGE
COMPLAINTS POLICY

August 2016

Rationale

- Concerns and complaints are best addressed at the school level by students, parents, teachers, principals and support staff working together.
- A ‘concern’ is an issue of interest which is raised informally in order to improve or change a situation. A ‘complaint’ is an expression of grievance or resentment where the complainant is seeking redress or justice.
- It is expected that all parties when addressing complaints and concerns, will maintain confidentiality, acknowledge their common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties, act in good faith, show respect and understanding for each other’s point of view and recognise all parties have rights and responsibilities. It is essential that complaints and grievances are not posted on social media, this is not respectful or helpful is seeking an acceptable outcome.

Aims

- The school principal determines the most appropriate way to address a concern or complaint, including an assessment of ‘Unreasonable complainant conduct’ (refer to *Unreasonable complainant conduct: interim practice manual* at (www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au)).
- Complaints will be addressed courteously, fairly and promptly (where possible within 20 days of the complaint arising) in line of the DET’s 2006 *Dignity and Respect Statement*.
- All staff must observe the Boronia K-12 College Code of Expectations (see Appendix B) as well as the code of conduct for the Victorian teaching profession outlined by VIT (Victorian Institute of Teaching)
- Complaints will be addressed in accordance with due process and within DET’s regulatory framework, which includes the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007*, *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, *Information Privacy Act 2000*, *Wrongs Act 1958*.
- The school will communicate the outcomes of concerns and complaints to all parties involved, taking into account privacy requirements.
- If the school is unable to resolve a complaint, the regional office can be contacted for support.
- This policy does not apply to matters about which there are existing rights of (and processes for) review or appeal (such as student expulsions, student critical incident, criminal matters, employee misconduct/performance grievance) or where a complainant has employed another party to represent them such as a solicitor. In this instance the concern or complaint should be directed to the DET’s Legal Services Branch.
- When a complainant uses threatening or violent behaviour, the Occupational Violence Policy (www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/ohs/health/morale.htm) should be followed.

IMPLEMENTATION

Communication and training

The school will make information about procedures for addressing concerns and complaints readily available to parents and the school community, in clear and easy-to-understand language via the college website with a link to DET reference material.

The school will regularly review its complaints policy and procedures, seeking feedback from the school community.

The school will:

- Brief all members of staff (including volunteers) about its procedures to address concerns and complaints annually
- Provide staff with (or provide access to) training and support appropriate to their responsibilities under the procedures
- Ensure staff who manage complaints demonstrate the personal attributes outlined in the *Good Practice Guide: Ombudsman Victoria's guide to complaint handling for Victorian public sector agencies*.

Scope of the Policy

The following concerns and complaints are covered by internal school procedures:

- General issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's code of conduct
- Incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard
- Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- Communication with parents
- School fees and payments
- General administrative issues

These procedures **do not** cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the *School Policy & Advisory Guide*.

Raising Concerns or Complaints

The complainant should telephone or email to:

- The student's class teacher, mentor group or home group teacher about learning issues and incidents that happened in their class or group
- The Stages of School Leader if students from several classes are involved
- The Assistant Principal about issues relating to staff members or complex student issues
- The Principal about issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex student issues.

If unsure the complainant should contact an Assistant Principal or Principal

Managing parent concerns and complaints information

The school should record the following details of all complaints received, even if the complaint appears to be minor:

- Name and contact details (with permission) of the person with a concern or complaint
- The date the concern was expressed or complaint made
- The form in which the concern or complaint was received (such as face-to-face, by telephone, in writing, by email)
- A brief description of the concern or complaint

- Details of the school officer responding to the concern or complaint
- Action taken on the concern or complaint
- The outcome of action taken on the concern or complaint
- Any recommendations for future improvement in the school's policy or procedures.

However, in the first instance, when the complaint is easily resolved in a telephone call, a brief note in the school's/principal's/teacher's diary recording the issue and the resolution may be all that is required.

Remedies

Some types of remedies the school would consider if it accepts a concern or complaint is justified might be:

- An explanation or further information about the issue
- Mediation, counselling or other support
- An apology, expression of regret or admission of fault
- To change its decision
- To change its policies, procedures or practices
- To cancel a debt (such as for school payments)
- A fee refund.

The school will implement the remedy as soon as practicable.

Reference DEECD *Addressing parents' concerns and complaints effectively: policy and guides* or refer to: www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year policy review cycle.

Date ratified by College Council:

See Appendix A: Parent Code of Expectations

See Appendix B: Staff Code of Expectations

See Appendix C: Student Code of Expectations

APPENDIX A:

BORONIA K-12 COLLEGE: PARENT CODE OF EXPECTATIONS

The Parent Code of Expectations is consistent with DEECD guidelines, College Values and the Student Engagement Policy of the College.

The Code of Expectations aims to provide direction to parents as to their responsibilities to students, other parents, staff members and the wider community.

Boronia K-12 College parents have developed the following non – negotiable behaviours to operate within the College:

- We treat others with respect, understanding, compassion, honesty and tolerance.
- We respect the rights of others to hold points of view different to our own in a non - critical or judgmental manner.
- Through a positive attitude, we work co-operatively with the College to resolve problems, noting the responsibility of both parties to act with fairness and consistency when issues arise.

COLLEGE VALUES	VALUE DESCRIPTORS	BK12 PARENTS WILL:
Community	Collaborate and share	✓ Commit to working cooperatively with all members of the College community.
	Positive Role Models	✓ Model the values of the College in a positive and consistent fashion.
	Value community and proud to contribute	✓ Actively seek ways to be personally involved in the life of the College.
	Care and support for each other	✓ Treat all members of the College community with empathy and compassion.
Achievement	High Expectations	✓ Challenge and support their child so they can achieve their personal best in everything they do.
	Set goals and take risks	✓ Focus on building a strong and supportive partnership with the College based on trust and respect.
	Seek feedback to reflect and improve	✓ Communicate with the College in a positive, timely and proactive fashion if issues arise.
	Celebrate our successes	✓ Be actively involved in the learning of their children and celebrate the successes of our College.
Respect	Listen to one another with an open mind	✓ Listen to, and appreciate other points of view in a non - critical manner, even if we don't necessarily agree.
	Value our diversity	✓ Interact with each other in an inclusive fashion with care, understanding, tolerance and respect.
	Treat everyone with honesty and empathy	✓ Treat others as we would like to be treated ourselves.
	Take responsibility for our actions	✓ Learn from our mistakes and accept responsibility for our behaviour.
Life Long Learning	Open minded and flexible with our learning	✓ Be open to new ideas and different approaches to learning.
	Inquisitive and seek out new knowledge and skills	✓ Seek ways to display interest and stay engaged with the education of their children.
	Enterprise, initiative and creative abilities	✓ Explore different ways and opportunities to support the vision and goals of the College.
	Not afraid of making mistakes and constantly seek to improve	✓ Strengthen our community by acknowledging mistakes in a positive, non - critical manner.

APPENDIX B:

BORONIA K-12 COLLEGE - STAFF CODE OF EXPECTATIONS

The Staff Code of Expectations is consistent with DEECD guidelines, VIT Code of Conduct, College Values and the Student Engagement Policy of the College.

The Code of Expectations aims to provide direction to staff as to their responsibilities to students, parents, other staff members and the wider community.

Boronia K-12 College staff have developed the following non – negotiable behaviours to operate within the College:

- We treat others with care, courtesy, cooperation, honesty, tolerance and non - discriminatory behaviour.
- We act with professionalism at all times with respect to our actions, appearance, comments and performance as reflected by VIT Standards.
- We demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment to our teaching programs, teams and College.
- Through a positive attitude, we instil a sense of pride, passion and fun to our work.

COLLEGE VALUES	VALUE DESCRIPTORS	BK12 STAFF WILL:
Community	Collaborate and share	✓ Commit to working cooperatively with others and valuing their knowledge and expertise.
	Positive Role Models	✓ Model the values and implement the policies of the College in a positive and consistent fashion.
	Value community and proud to contribute	✓ Seek ways to engage the community with the College and the classroom.
	Care and support for each other	✓ Take an active interest in the wellbeing of our students and support our colleagues.
Achievement	High Expectations	✓ Challenge and assist each other to achieve our best.
	Set goals and take risks	✓ Be willing to try new approaches in our classes to maximise student learning outcomes for all.
	Seek feedback to reflect and improve	✓ Use data to monitor and discuss the progress of our students and our teaching practices.
	Celebrate our successes	✓ Seek opportunities to acknowledge the achievements and positive work of our students and staff.
Respect	Listen to one another with an open mind	✓ Listen to, and appreciate other points of view in a non - critical manner, even if we don't necessarily agree.
	Value our diversity	✓ Interact with each other with empathy, understanding and tolerance.
	Treat everyone with honesty and empathy	✓ Treat others as we would like to be treated ourselves.
	Take responsibility for our actions	✓ Learn from our mistakes and accept responsibility for our behaviour.
Life Long Learning	Open minded and flexible with our learning	✓ Be open to new ideas through professional learning opportunities.
	Inquisitive and seek out new knowledge and skills	✓ Build capacity by seeking out, and keeping abreast of best practices.
	Enterprise, initiative and creative abilities	✓ Explore working in different ways and be willing to share knowledge and expertise with others.
	Not afraid of making mistakes and constantly seek to improve.	✓ Actively use the Annual Review process and other opportunities to build capacity and improve performance.

APPENDIX C:

BORONIA K-12 COLLEGE - STUDENT CODE OF EXPECTATIONS

The Student Code of Expectations is consistent with the College Values and the Student Engagement Policy of the College.

The Code of Expectations aims to provide direction to students as to their responsibilities to staff, parents, other student members and the wider community.

Boronia K-12 College students have developed the following non – negotiable behaviours to operate within the College:

- We are honest, courteous and treat others as we would like to be treated ourselves.
- We abide by College policies and take responsibility for our actions
- We treat our environment with respect, pride and care.
- We actively listen, care and support one another and will not tolerate bullying and racism in any form.

COLLEGE VALUES	VALUE DESCRIPTORS	BK12 STUDENTS WILL:
Community	Collaborate and share	✓ Commit to working cooperatively with others and valuing their knowledge and expertise.
	Positive Role Models	✓ Model the Values of the College in a positive and consistent fashion and wear our uniform with pride.
	Value community and proud to contribute	✓ Have high standards of behaviour and actively contribute to the programs of the College.
	Care and support for each other	✓ Work together to create a happy, safe and caring College community.
Achievement	High Expectations	✓ Challenge and assist each other to achieve our best.
	Set goals and take risks	✓ Act on the goals we set for our learning in a positive and constructive fashion.
	Seek feedback to reflect and improve	✓ Listen to and act in a positive manner to feedback about our learning.
	Celebrate our successes	✓ Acknowledge the achievements of other students in all walks of College life.
Respect	Listen to one another with an open mind	✓ Listen to, and appreciate other points of view in a non - critical manner, even if we don't necessarily agree.
	Value our diversity	✓ Work as a team in a supportive and cooperative manner.
	Treat everyone with honesty and empathy	✓ Treat others as we would like to be treated ourselves.
	Take responsibility for our actions	✓ Learn from our mistakes and are honest in accepting responsibility for our actions and behaviour.
Life Long Learning	Open minded and flexible with our learning	✓ Be open to new ideas and ways of learning.
	Inquisitive and seek out new knowledge and skills	✓ Take an active role in our learning and are receptive to working and learning together in different ways.
	Enterprise, initiative and creative abilities	✓ Be open to exploring different ways of overcoming obstacles to our learning.
	Not afraid of making mistakes and constantly seek to improve	✓ Learn from our mistakes and setbacks and continually seek to improve.