

1.01 Policy for Managing Complaints

Name	Policy for Managing Complaints
Policy No.	2.14
Approved by Council	
Reviewed	2014
Next Review	2017

Preamble

Mercedes College has an established process to deal with grievances according to the requirements of both Commonwealth and State Government Acts, as administered by Catholic Education SA, which govern equal opportunity and discrimination. (The Policy for Responding to Concerns, Complaints, Grievances and Allegations of Misconduct, Policy number 2.07).

This policy serves to clarify the distinction between complaints and grievances and outlines the procedures available to all members of the College community and the wider community, to assist in the efficient and effective resolution of complaints.

Policy Statement

Mercedes College is committed to providing a safe, fair and just learning and working environment, which is based upon positive personal relationships formed by open communication and founded upon the Mercy Keys:

- Compassion
- Integrity
- Justice
- Loyalty
- Mutual Respect
- Responsibility

Complaints regarding policy, procedure and practice will arise from time to time and Mercedes College is committed to their effective resolution in a positive, respectful atmosphere. Complaints management procedures will ensure that complaints are addressed in a confidential, serious, expeditious and sensitive manner, showing due regard for person, privacy and the normal day to day operations of the College. Thorough record keeping is a key component.

All members of the College community and the wider community have available to them, avenues of assistance to lodge and have expeditiously resolved any serious complaint, in regard to College policies, procedures and practices.

Less serious matters of concern are to be referred directly to the person about whom the concern relates, or the appropriate Position Of Responsibility within the defined organisational structure of the College.

Definition

Complaints relate to matters in which policy, procedure and practice guidelines may have been breached by staff or student conduct and may arise from any of the following:

- A behaviour, act or perceived intention by a member of the College community (staff, student, parent or volunteer) which has, or is likely to have, a significant and serious negative impact upon the capacity of another member of the College community to undertake their work, duties, or study.
- A conflict of interest.
- Discriminatory or unprofessional behaviour or conduct by any member of the College community.
- A serious breach of College Policy.

Grievances can be formally lodged when policies and procedures have not been applied in an equitable and lawful manner and a member of the College community believes that they have been placed at a disadvantage as a consequence.

Complaints Management Principles

The following principles will apply to the lodging and investigation of a complaint:

- All members of the College community are entitled to lodge a complaint.
- The health, safety and wellbeing of all members of the College community will remain the highest priority.
- Serious complaints will be lodged in good faith and without malicious or vexatious intent.
- Principles of procedural fairness will apply.
- Privacy principles will apply.
- The complaint will be heard promptly and taken seriously, without prejudice.
- The principles of Natural Justice will be upheld, including the opportunity for a right of reply by the person(s) about whom complaints are lodged.
- The resolution process will take into consideration different perspectives and will occur under the principles of impartiality and protection from victimisation.
- While anonymous complaints can be taken and pursued to the extent possible, a thorough investigation may not be possible to undertake and a full outcome may not be reached, if the complainant does not wish to identify themselves or does not want information to be relayed to relevant staff. Complainants will therefore be asked to identify themselves.
- All options for resolving a complaint will be pursued. Internal options will be first considered, followed by external mechanisms such as mediation, should the matter not be resolved by internal mechanisms.
- Each party to the complaint is entitled to personal and professional advice, support and representation.
- Each complaint will be dealt with on its particular merits and agreements reached will not constitute any binding precedent for future cases.
- A complaint can be withdrawn at any time and the matter will be deemed closed.

Complaints Management Procedures

Refer to the following flow chart (Mercedes College Process for Handling Complaints).

Documentation and Confidentiality

Appropriate documentation will be maintained according to the specific nature of the complaint and will include details such as dates, names, contacts, statements, staff involved and outcomes. Records will be kept in secure files.

While privacy principles will be applied, the complainant should not assume that all information provided will be kept confidential. The College reserves the right to disclose details of the matter to other persons / organisations (e.g. Mediators) who may be able to assist with the resolution of the complaint. Given the mandated responsibilities of staff and volunteers, where appropriate, notifications will be made to Families SA.

Monitoring and Follow Up

Good practice in responding to a complaint will include:

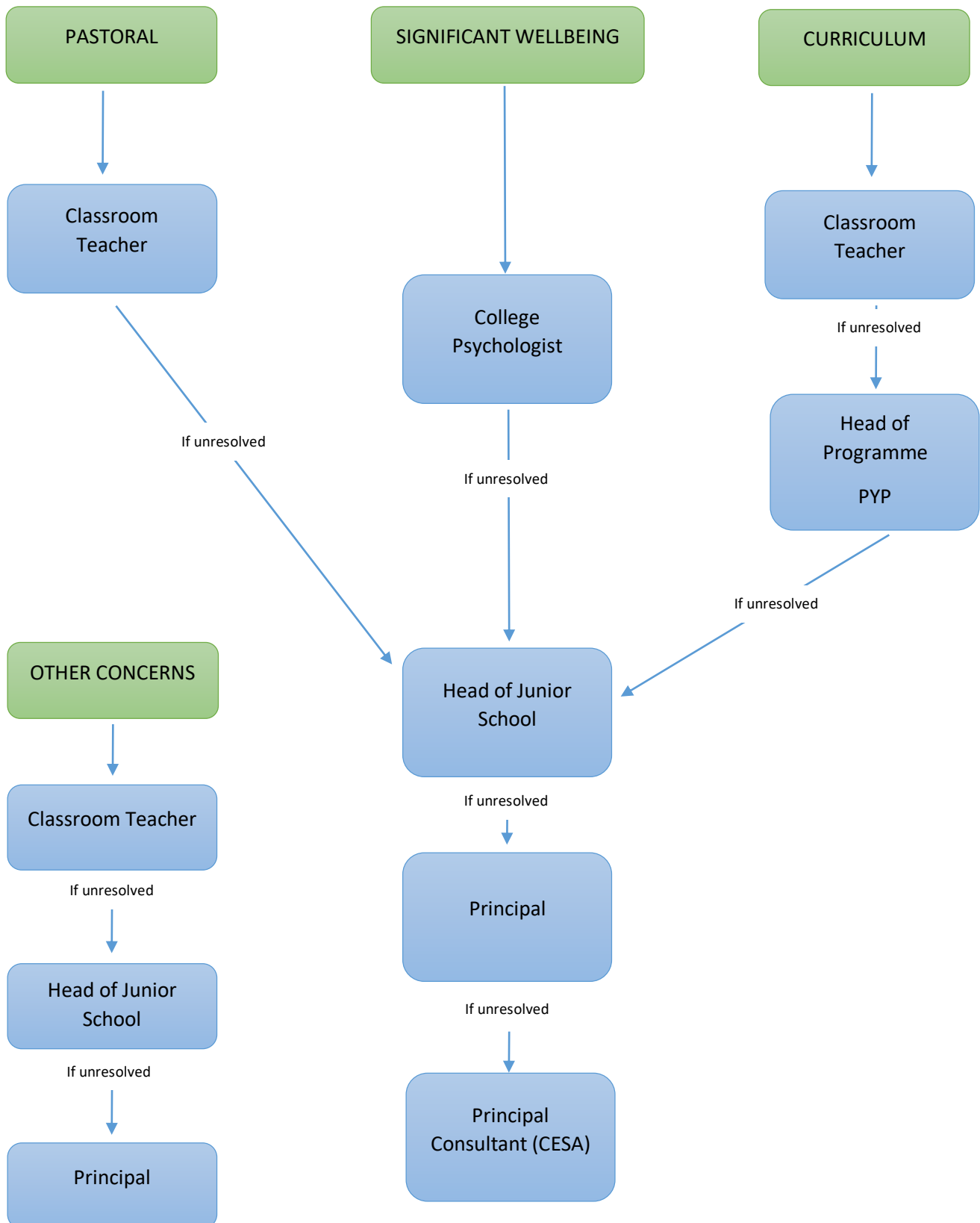
- Allowing the complainant a fair hearing.
- Responding in accordance with the merits of the complaint, along with the ethos of Mercedes College and / or legal advice.
- Meeting agreed timelines.
- Providing reasons for decisions reached.
- Follow-up will be undertaken by the designated staff member to ensure effective action has occurred.
- Where a complainant is not satisfied with the action that has occurred, a review can be requested to be undertaken by the Principal or the Catholic Education SA, Principal Consultant.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on a two year cycle.

GENERAL SCHOOL CONCERN – JS

(Complaints Procedure)



GENERAL SCHOOL CONCERN – MS/SS

(Complaints Procedure)

