

COMPLAINTS POLICY



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RATIONALE

Plenty Valley Christian College recognises that there are times where members of community may have concerns and complaints in relation to a decision taken or an action or activity for which the college is responsible. Where possible the college encourages such concerns to be resolved speedily and informally; the complaints policy is designed to apply when that proves more difficult and a formal process is required.

The college believes that staff, parents and students are committed to working closely together to provide the best educational opportunities for every child. The college is committed to the development of professional, trusting and cooperative relationships between the college, parents and the school community.

SCOPE

This policy relates to complaints brought by parents, carers, students or members of the college community and applies to all matters relating to our college.

POLICY

The college believes that complaints are an important way in which parents and the school community can provide the college with feedback and so form the basis for future improvements. The college will undertake to respond to both the specific and (where applicable) the systemic issues raised by the complaint.

The college is committed to child safety and has a zero tolerance of child abuse. In the context of this policy, the response to a complaint relating to child safety, particularly any in relation to indigenous children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, will be given the highest priority and attention.

The complaints policy and procedures are intended to be conciliatory, non-adversarial and non-legal. The college values and encourages 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 college.

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

- raise and discuss issues in a courteous and respectful manner
- acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome that is in the affected student's best interests and acceptable to all parties
- act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- recognise that all parties, including the broader school community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced
- recognise that the college may be subject to legal or circumstantial constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

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COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Plenty Valley Christian 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 your child's homeroom or subject teacher. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to a head of sub-school, or the executive team.

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

- **Complaint received:** Please either telephone, email or arrange a meeting through the General Office with the appropriate head of sub school (or member of the executive), to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are. We can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.
- **Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the 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.
- **Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged 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, we will work with you to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event you would like to take further action about it. In some circumstances, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
- **Timelines:** Plenty Valley Christian College will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within 2 business days) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Plenty Valley Christian College may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. We will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting where appropriate and possible within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, Plenty Valley Christian College will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

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RESOLUTION

Where appropriate, Plenty Valley Christian College may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- clarification of the circumstances and expectations
- an apology or expression of regret
- a change of decision
- a change of policy, procedure or practice
- offering the opportunity for student counselling or other support
- other actions consistent with college mission and values that are intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, Plenty Valley Christian College may also ask you 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.

Plenty Valley Christian College will put the resolution in writing to you when the complaint is finalised.

SUMMARY TABLE

A parent / guardian can raise concerns or complaints about any aspect of the college operations.

About what / issue	Who to contact	How
Classroom activities, class curriculum	Your child's subject teacher	Telephone, email, arrange an appointment
Friendship issues	Your child's homeroom teacher	Telephone, email, arrange an appointment
Complex student issues, student welfare	Head of sub school	In writing by email (or letter). Email or telephone to arrange an appointment
School curriculum, staff members - teaching	Key learning area leader for secondary; curriculum coordinator for primary	In writing by email (or letter). Email or telephone to arrange an appointment
School policy, school management	Principal	In writing by email (or letter). Email or telephone to arrange an appointment
School fees and payments	Finance manager	In writing by email (or letter). Email or telephone to arrange an appointment

COMPLAINTS POLICY



DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL RECORD

Name of document: Complaints Policy

Responsible officer: Principal

Approved by: Principal

Assigned review period: Biennial

Date of next review: April 2021

Category: Community

Version number	Version date	Responsible officer	Amendment details
0.1	11/04/2019	Deputy Principal	Implementation of new policy
1.0	23/04/2019	Principal	Reviewed and Signed
1.1	14/09/2020	Alison de Haan	Updated to comply with the updated Style Guide

Approved By:

Date: 14/09/2020



John Metcalfe

Principal