



ST BRIGID'S COLLEGE

International Students

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY

Issue Date: June 2014

Rationale

St Brigid's College aims to provide an effective and acceptable means for parents to bring problems and complaints concerning their child's education and/or well-being to the attention of the College. For that reason, a formal complaint procedure has been established for the benefit and use of parents and students.

Definition of Grievance

A grievance is any circumstance pertaining to the education or well-being of a student that a parent/guardian considers to be unjust or unfair, or thinks should be brought to the attention of the Senior Staff of the College.

The internal complaints and appeals processes are conciliatory and non-legal.

1) Complaints against other students

- a) Grievances brought by a student against another student will be dealt with under the school's Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct.

2) Informal Complaints Resolution

- a) In the first instance, St Brigid's College requests there is an attempt to informally resolve the issue through mediation/informal resolution of the complaint.
- b) Students should contact the Head of Year or Head of Boarding in the first instance to attempt mediation/informal resolution of the complaint.
- c) If the matter cannot be resolved through mediation, the matter will be referred to the Deputy Principal or College Principal and St Brigid's College's internal formal complaints and appeals handling procedure will be followed.

3) Formal Complaints Handling Procedure

- a) The process of this grievance procedure is confidential and any complaints or appeals are a matter between the parties concerned and those directly involved in the complaints handling process.

- b) The student must notify the school in writing of the nature and details of the complaint or appeal.
- c) Written complaints or appeals are to be lodged with the Principal.
- d) Where the internal complaints and appeals process is being accessed because the student has received notice by the school that the school intends to report her for unsatisfactory course attendance, unsatisfactory course progress or suspension or cancellation of enrolment, the student has 20 days from the date of notification in which to lodge a written appeal.
- e) Internal complaints and appeals processes are available to students at no cost.
- f) Each complainant has the opportunity to present her case to the Principal or member of school leadership team.
- g) Students may be accompanied and assisted by a support person or the Overseas **Student Conciliator** (see below for contact information) at all relevant meetings.
- h) The formal grievance process will commence within 10 working days of the lodgement of the complaint or appeal with the Principal.
- i) Once the Principal or member of school leadership team has come to a decision regarding the complaint or appeal, the student will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome.
- j) If the grievance procedure finds in favour of the student, St Brigid's College will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventative action required
- k) St Brigid's College undertakes to finalise all grievance procedures as soon as possible or within 21 working days
- l) For the duration of the appeals process, the student is required to maintain enrolment and attendance at all classes as normal.

4) External Appeals Process

- a) If the complaints procedure does not find in favour of the student or the student is dissatisfied with the result of the complaints procedure, she will be informed of the external complaints and appeals process available to them at minimal or no cost.
- b) The external body used for St Brigid's College's external complaints and appeals processes is the **Overseas Student Ombudsman** (see below for contact details).

5) Definitions

- a) Working Day – *any day other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday during term time*
- b) Student – *a student enrolled at St Brigid's College or the parent(s)/legal guardian of a student where that student is under 18 years of age*
- c) Support person – *a friend/teacher/relative not involved in the grievance*

Please note; Lawyers and/or Education Agents are not acceptable support persons during the school complaints process.

Independent Mediator/Conciliator for Overseas Student – internal process

The Department of Education Services offers a free mediation/conciliation service through the **Overseas Student Conciliator**. The conciliator assists to resolve disputes between overseas students and the College, as part of the internal complaints and appeals procedure. If either a student, parent or member of staff would like to discuss a particular case with an independent person, they may **contact conciliator** Ms Alison Miller either by telephone on (08) 9441 1929, facsimile (08) 9441 1901 or via email at alison.miller@des.wa.gov.au. The conciliator is able to discuss issues of concern at any stage of the internal complaints and appeals procedure. However, she will not become actively involved in the case until the parties have attempted to resolve the dispute themselves and that attempt has failed.

Overseas Students Ombudsman – external process

In the event of an overseas student being dissatisfied with the result or conduct of the internal complaint appeals process, the College will advise the student of his right to access the external appeals process by contacting the Overseas Students Ombudsman at **www.oso.gov.au or phone 1300 362 072**. This service is free and independent for external appeals and complaints about decisions made by the College.

