

LAVERS HILL K-12 COLLEGE CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support the promotion of a safe and respectful school environment and to manage and address concerns and complaints in a timely and professional manner which reflects the school's core values of:

- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment
- Building relationships between students, parents and staff
- Providing a safe working environment for staff

Definition of Concerns and Complaints

A concern or complaint may include the following:

- General issues of student behaviour that are contrary to Lavers Hill p-12 College's student engagement guidelines
- Incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard (refer to L.H anti bullying policy)
- Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- Communication with parents
- School fees and payments
- General administrative issues
- Any other school-related matters except as detailed below.

This policy does not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the *Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide*.

Those matters include:

- Student discipline matters involving expulsions
- Complaints about employee conduct or performance and complaints that should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action
- Complaints by the Departments employees related to their employment
- Student critical incident matters
- Other criminal matters

Implementation

Lavers Hill K-12 College will communicate the concerns and complaints policy to all staff and parents annually and review the policy every 3 years. Updated school policies will be published on the school's new website.

Expectations

The staff at Lavers Hill K-12 College expects a person raising a concern or complaint to:

- Operate in accordance with our safe, fair and friendly code of behaviour.
- Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint, preferably in writing
- Maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- Acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- Act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner

- Show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.

A parent raising an issue or complaint at Lavers Hill K-12 College can expect the staff to:

- Listen to the nature of the complaint and treat it with importance.
- Act courteously, efficiently, and fairly
- Deal with the issue promptly, or within the timeline agreed with the person with the concern or complaint
- Act in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's regulatory framework.
- Report back to the parent any resolution or outcome.
- Maintain the right to terminate or postpone any meeting where a parent chooses not to operate according to Lavers Hill's expected code of behaviour

Procedure for raising concerns or complaints

In the first instance, as soon as possible after a concern or complaint occurs, contact should be made to the school. The complainant should telephone, visit and/or write to:

- The student's classroom teacher about learning issues and incidents that happened in the class or group.
- The learning community leader or principal class if students from several classes are involved.
- The 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 you are not sure who to contact, contact the Principal on 52 373 213

Responding to Concerns

Where possible a **collaborative and restorative approach** will be adopted to resolve concerns using a 'no blame' approach and 'method of shared concern'.

Concerns can be addressed through regular feedback processes: for example

- Annual and Strategic College Plans involve review and consultation processes.
- Review of the College Learning Program done in Term 3 of each year
- Parent, staff and student DET surveys and reflections on survey data
- Input and Feedback on the development and review of College Policies

Procedure for addressing concerns and complaints

1. Staff who receive concerns or complaints are required to bring this information to the attention of the principal, so all concerns and complaints can be recorded and monitored.

2. Lavers Hill K-12 College will 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

- 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.

3. The resolution or outcome for the complaint will be communicated to the parent within the agreed time frame.

4. If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, Lavers Hill K-12 College will offer an appropriate remedy.

Help with raising concerns or complaints

Personal support is most appropriate in situations where the complainant and others involved in the complaint process have emotional issues related to the complaint.

Complainants can seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are unable to express their concern clearly. An advocate can be a friend or someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation who does not receive a fee for service.

All parties involved in addressing a complaint may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty coming to an agreement.

The school will ensure that the complainant is aware of these supports. A complainant who wishes to use these support services should ensure the person addressing the concern or complaint is aware of their intention and is in agreement

Addressing serious concerns or complaints

Lavers Hill K-12 College will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the Department of Education and Training

Lavers Hill K-12 College will determine whether a concern or complaint should be managed through the school's concerns and complaints process or through other complaints processes of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Should the complaint involve complex issues, Lavers Hill K-12 College might need to take advice from the Department of Education and Training regional office? The school will inform the complainant of the expected timeline for addressing the complaint and the reasons for any delays.

In all cases, the school will try to resolve a concern or complaint within 20 days.

Referral of concerns or complaints

If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, they should contact the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's appropriate regional office.

The officer from the region will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and the complainant's opinion about why the school did not resolve it to their satisfaction.

If the complaint cannot be resolved by the complainant, school and regional office working together, the regional office may refer it to the Department's Group Coordination Division. The Division will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and complainant's

opinion about why the school and regional office did not resolve it to their satisfaction and will ask the complainant to outline their view on the course of action required to resolve the complaint. Where the complainant is unable to provide a written account the officer from Group Coordination Division should act on the information provided.

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

This Policy was ratified by School Council on- November 21, 2016

This policy will be reviewed every three years, with recommended changes to be presented to College Council.

Reviewed: November 2016

Date of next review: 2019