

Complaints Handling Policy

St Martins Lutheran College welcomes feedback from all members of the College community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously. This Complaints Handling Policy is designed to assist you to understand how to make a complaint.

For the purposes of this policy, we use the terms “staff” and “staff member” to include any adult who has a connection to the College. This includes all current or past teaching and non-teaching staff, College Council members, volunteers, contractors, professional service providers, other paid education and care participants, tertiary students and supervisors, and any other adult who has engaged with children and young people enrolled at the College.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to St Martins Lutheran College, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

You may choose to make a complaint if you believe that the College has:

- done something wrong;
- failed to do something we should have done;
- acted unfairly or impolitely.

Your concern or complaint may be about:

- the type, level or quality of services;
- the behaviour and decisions of staff;
- a policy, procedure or practice.

Complaints about:

- breaches of the Child Safe Codes of Conduct by current or former staff members, current or former students or other people on College premises or at College events
- conduct by a staff member that places any child or young person at risk, regardless of whether or not the child or young person is a student
- inappropriate behaviour or sexual misconduct by a staff member or by another person on College premises or at College events

are managed differently to other complaints.

Refer to the section at the end of this policy – Complaints About Child Safety Incidents or Concerns at or Involving the College or its Staff Members – for more information.

St Martins Lutheran College’s Commitment

St Martins Lutheran College is committed to handling complaints effectively and efficiently. To manage complaints effectively, we have established a Complaints Handling Program in line with:

- Principle 6 of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, using the Office of Child Safety’s “Complaints Handling Guide: Upholding the Rights of Children and Young People”
- the international complaints handling standard (ISO 10002:2018 Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations), and

- the Australian/New Zealand complaints handling standard (AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations).

Our internal complaints handling process is available at no cost.

Complaints may be about something we have to do because of legal obligations. In such cases we will talk to you and help you understand the requirements and why they exist.

Our Complaints Handling Program includes the establishment of an online complaints management system which allows us to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints.

Regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of rectification action, where deficiencies are identified, are key to the College's commitment.

Informal Complaints Resolution

The vast majority of issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. We therefore ask that, where appropriate, you first raise your concern directly with the relevant staff member. Even if the issue is resolved informally, all staff are required to log issues through our complaints management system so we are able to identify any systemic issues arising, and take appropriate rectification action.

How do I make a Formal Complaint?

If you have been unable to resolve a matter informally, or simply wish to make a formal complaint you can do so by any of the following means:

1. Sending an email to complaints@stmartins.sa.edu.au
2. Writing a letter to the College addressed to "The Complaints Manager"
3. Telephoning the College and asking to speak to the student's Head of School

All formal complaints will be logged into our online complaints management system and managed in accordance with the following procedure.

Note that neither the Minister for Education nor the Department for Education has any power to directly intervene in any complaints relating to the operations of the College.

Our Internal Complaints Handling Process

Step 1 – All formal complaints are logged through our online complaints management system where they are screened by our Complaints Officers, or in the case of complaints against the Principal by the Chair of the College Council.

Step 2 – All valid complaints will be acknowledged in writing, as soon as practicable, and allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is our policy, where possible, to resolve all disputes within 14 days.

Step 3 – The Complaints Officer will conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.

Step 4 – Following the determination, if appropriate, the Complaints Officer will formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

Step 5 – Internal reviews: If the initial response is not acceptable the matter will be reviewed internally by the Principal or the Principal's delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Principal or their delegate seek to resolve all disputes within 14 days from the

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date that the review process is initiated. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal, or their delegate, is accepted.

Step 6 - All complaints received will be entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

Step 7 - If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and, if relevant to a person against whom a complaint is made. The College is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process.

Personally, identifiable information about a complainant will only be made available for the purpose of addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) will be actively protected from disclosure.

Complaints About Child Safety Incidents or Concerns at or Involving the College or its Staff Members

Complaints about or allegations of:

- breaches of the Child Safe Codes of Conduct by current or former staff members, current or former students or other people on College premises or at College events
- conduct by a staff member that places any child or young person at risk, regardless of whether or not the child or young person is a student
- inappropriate behaviour or sexual misconduct by a staff member or by another person on College premises or at College events

are managed by the College in a different way to other complaints.

This is because of the additional confidentiality and privacy requirements surrounding these kinds of matters.

We refer to these as child safety-related complaints.

If your complaint is a child safety-related complaint, please make your complaint to the Principal, email: principal@stmartins.sa.edu.au or if the Principal is the subject of your complaint please notify the Chair of the College Council email: collegechair@stmartins.sa.edu.au.

For information about how the College manages child safety-related complaints, as well as any child safety incidents or concerns at or involving the College or its staff members, please refer to our **Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns at or Involving the College or its Staff Members**, available on our public website.

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