

	POLICY LOCATION: Online – Staff Policy & Procedure
	POLICY NUMBER: RM010
	POLICY AREA: Risk Management
POLICY TITLE: Complaints Handling Policy	

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that complaints and disputes are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective, open, honest and transparent way in accordance with the principals of natural justice.

This policy also serves to demonstrate that our complaints process is accessible and is integrated into the College's continual improvement process.

2. SCOPE

The policy applies to complaints made by students, parents, contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements. This policy shall also apply to any person external to the College.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Riverside Christian College (**The College**) is committed to ensuring that student, parent and external complaints are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair way.

The College view complaints as part of an important feedback, accountability and continual improvement process.

The College acknowledges the right of students, parents, and other College community members to raise concerns when dissatisfied with an action, inaction or decision of the College and The College encourages constructive feedback.

The College recognises that time spent on handling complaints can be an investment in better service delivery to students, parents and employees and serves to improve relationships and processes.

3.1 Complaints That May Be Resolved Under This Policy

The College encourages students, parents and any other person, to lodge promptly any concerns that include areas as described below.

- The College, its employees or students having done something wrong.
- The College, its employees or students having failed to do something they should have done.
- The College, its employees or students having acted unfairly or impolitely.
- Issues of student or employee behaviour that are contrary to their relevant Code of Conduct.
- Issues related to learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning.

- Issues related to the process undertaken to deal with student behaviour management.
- Issues related to communication with students or parents from employees.
- Issues related to College fees and payments.
- Any general administrative issue.
- Issues relating to non-compliance with a process outlined in school policies or procedures, for example the child protection policy, discrimination policy, or privacy policy.

Student complaints may be brought by students or by parents on behalf of their children, as appropriate in the circumstances.

3.2 Issues Outside This Policy

The following matters are outside the scope of this policy and should be managed as per the following protocols.

- Child protection concerns or risks of harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the law and the College's Child Protection Policy.
- Staff grievance, discipline and staff complaints should be dealt with in accordance to the Developing Staff Performance Policy
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the Care and Conduct Policy.
- Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the Care and Conduct Policy.
- Disputes between Board members, between Riverside Christian College members and Board members should be dealt with in accordance with the College company Constitution, Board Charter and Board Code of Conduct.
- Student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the Principal who will involve the Police as appropriate.
- Formal legal proceedings shall be managed by exception by the Principal in close communication with the Board.

3.3 Complaints Handling Principles

The College is committed to managing complaints according to the following principles:

- Provide and promote a complaints process that is transparent, consistent and timely.
- Complaints shall be resolved swiftly and comprehensively with as little formality and disruption as possible.
- Complaints shall be taken seriously.
- Anonymous complaints shall be treated on their merits. Complaints shall be dealt with fairly and objectively and in a timely manner.
- The College shall determine the appropriate person to deal with the complaint in the first instance. Complaints should be resolved with as little formality and disputation as possible.
- Mediation, negotiation, and informal resolution shall always be considered as optional alternatives.
- Procedural fairness shall be ensured wherever practicable, including the right of

interested parties for the complaint to be heard and reflects principles of natural justice.

- Confidentiality and privacy shall be maintained as much as possible.
- All parties to the complaints shall be appropriately supported.
- The College shall give reasonable progress updates as considered appropriate regarding the outcome of investigations relating to the complaint.
- Appropriate remedies shall be offered and implemented.
- Provide a review pathway for parties to the complaint if warranted.
- Complainants, respondents, and people associated with them shall not be victimised as a result of lodging the complaint.
- The College shall keep records of complaints and how they have been responded to.
- The College's insurer shall be informed if a complaint could be connected to an insured risk.
- Ensure complaint information is integrated into the College's continual improvement process.
- Communication of the outcomes of the complaint will seek to be promptly communicated to the complainant.

3.4 Implementation

- The College is committed to raising awareness of the procedure for resolving complaints at The College, including the development and implementation of this policy and related procedures, and via the clear support and promotion of the policy and procedures.
- The College is also committed to appropriately training relevant employees (especially senior staff) on how to resolve complaints in line with this policy and the related procedures.
- The College will keep appropriate records of complaints, will monitor complaints and their resolution and will report material issues to The College Board through the relevant Board committee if applicable.
- The College will act to encourage students, parents and employees to contribute to a healthy school culture where complaints are resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.
- The Riverside Christian College Complaint Form.pdf may be used. Alternatively, a complaint can be captured via an email, a telephone conversation, in writing or verbally.

In the event that the person who made the complaint has a concern that the processes within this Complaints Handling Policy and procedures have not been followed, then the person is able to request an internal review.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

College

The College has the following role and responsibilities.

- Provide a complaints process that is open, effective, and easy to use.

- Develop, implement, promote, and act in accordance with The College's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures.
- Appropriately communicate The College's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures to students, parents, and employees.
- Ensure that the Complaints Handling procedures are readily accessible by staff, students and parents.
- Upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the Complaints Handling procedures and is dealt with as swiftly and comprehensively as possible.
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided to all parties to a complaint.
- Take appropriate action to prevent victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.
- Appropriately implement remedies and evaluate effectiveness.
- Assess the level of risk the complaint represents and refer to the College Risk Register if required.
- Appropriately train relevant employees.
- Maintain records of complaints.
<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=V5Uohaaj2U-6A59yURdEeRVM5Ve3eA1EryZIDqHiZU5UMINSTTJEU09PME5CQIBCREpZRk1CME41Sy4u>
- Conduct a regular review/audit at executive level, of the Complaints Register held in here. The register can only sit with the Principal and will be tabled by the Principal before the Risk & Compliance Committee (and Board) at least once per year
- Review the effectiveness of the Complaint Handling process.
- Monitor and report to the governing body on complaints.
- Report to The College's insurer when that is relevant.
- Report as necessary to external bodies as required.
- Refer to The College's governing body immediately any claim for legal redress.

All Parties to a Dispute

The complainant and respondent both have the following role and responsibilities:

- Apply and comply with The College's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures.
- Lodge the complaint as soon as possible after the issue arises.
- Expect that the complaint will be dealt with fairly and objectively, in a timely manner, with procedural fairness wherever practicable.
- That confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible.
- Provide complete and factual information in a timely manner.
- Do not provide deliberately false or misleading information.
- Do not make frivolous or vexatious complaints.
- Act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner.

- Act in a non-threatening manner.
- Be appropriately supported.
- Acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve a reasonable outcome committed to the wellbeing and good educational outcomes for our students acceptable to all parties.
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.
- Maintain and respect privacy and confidentiality of all parties as much as reasonably possible.
- Do not victimise any party to the dispute or any person associated with them.

Employees Receiving Complaints

Employees receiving complaints have the following role and responsibilities:

- Any staff member who receives a complaint is to seek to assist the complaint maker in taking next steps to have the complaint escalated to the right staff member.
- The complaint maker is to be treated with respect and dignity.
- Act in accordance with The College's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures.
- Inform the party lodging the complaint of how complaints can be lodged, when they should be lodged and what information is required.
- Provide the complainant with information about any support or assistance available to assist them in lodging their complaint.
- Provide the complainant with a copy of The College's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures, providing awareness of how their complaint will be handled.
- Advise complainants of how feedback will be given and within what timeframes.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Keep appropriate records by immediately completing the complaints lodgment form or making a typed file note of the conversation and completing the complaints register form (and submit the file note with it).
- Forward complaints to more senior employees, including the Principal, as appropriate.
- Not victimise the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

5. DEFINITIONS

Informal Complaint: Simple and minor complaints that can be resolved by the person receiving the complaint with the complainant.

Formal Complaint: Escalation of a simple complaint that could not be adequately resolved. Complaints deemed to be of a serious nature (including serious complaints concerning staff) shall also be known as formal complaints.

Complaint An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the school, related to the school's services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

Complainant The person, organisation or their representative making a complaint.³

Respondent The person who is referred to in a complaint by a complainant as the person responsible for their concerns or who can best respond to their concern.

6. REFERENCES

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2017

- Australian Education Regulations 2013
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 2991 (Qld)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 2986 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1981 (Cth)
- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Australian Standard 10002:2014 Guidelines for Complaints Management In Organisations
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Complaints Handling Procedures

Care and Conduct Policy

Parent Code of Conduct

Developing Staff Performance Policy

[Riverside Christian College Complaint Form.pdf](#)

Riverside Christian College Work Health and Safety Policy

Riverside Christian College Anti- Discrimination Policy

Riverside Christian College Sexual Harassment Policy

Riverside Christian College Disability Discrimination Policy

Riverside Christian College Privacy Policy

POLICY APPROVAL

Name	Position	Date
M Gouge	Principal	March 2024

Version No:	Document Revision Date	Description of Change	Document Owner/ update author	Position Title	Next Review Date
2.1	20/5/2019	First Draft	Board of Directors	Board Members	Annually
2.2	24/4/2020	New format and new policy number	David Jeffs	Principal	Annually
3	02/08/2022	Review and amendments	Board of Directors	Board Members	Annually
4	08-02-2024	Review and Amend	Michelle Gouge	Principal	Annually