



Policy Statement

Lyndhurst Secondary College recognises the importance of the partnership between schools and parents to support student learning, engagement and wellbeing. We share a commitment to, and a responsibility for, ensuring inclusive, safe and orderly environments for young people.

In collaboration with the College School Council, we have developed clear procedures to manage and resolve the concerns and complaints of affected people about their child's education. We commit to addressing and resolving such concerns or complaints promptly, consistently, fairly and in accordance with relevant legislation. Concerns and complaints are best addressed in partnership between students, parents, teachers, principals and support staff.

The College's approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on the importance of:

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

When addressing concerns and complaints, Lyndhurst Secondary College and the Department of Education and Training (DET) expects that all parties:

- Maintain the confidentiality of all parties, in line with Departmental policy and legislative requirements
- Acknowledge that their 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.

Procedures

Raising concerns or complaints:

In the first instance, affected people who may wish to raise a concern or make a complaint, should always discuss this with the College, as concerns are best resolved at the College level. Any complaint raised with regional or central office that has not been previously raised with the College will be referred back to the College for resolution (unless there are special circumstances which prevent the school from managing the complaint).

A ‘Parent Complaints’ General Information sheet is available at the following link:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx>

These procedures cover general concerns and complaints, such as:

- General issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the College’s expectations
- Incidents of bullying or harassment
- Issues relating to staff members
- Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- Communication with parents
- School fees and payments
- General administrative issues.

These procedures do not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the *Victorian Government School Reference Guide*. The College Principal will determine whether a concern or complaint should be managed through the College’s Concerns and Complaints process, or through other complaints processes of the Department.

Complainants can seek the service 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. The College may assist the complainant to establish who would be an appropriate support. A complainant who wishes to use a support (or support service) should ensure the person addressing the concern or complaint is aware of the intention and is in agreement.

Addressing your concern to the right person:

When making a concern or complaint, contact the relevant staff member via telephone, in writing, or request a meeting.

Who is the right person?

- For concerns/complaints directly related to an incident in one class, then the classroom teacher should be contacted
- For concerns/complaints covering several classes, or for more complex student issues, then the Team Leader or Sub-School Leader should be contacted. In some circumstances, the Assistant Principal may be the more appropriate person, particularly with regard to issues relating to more complex or serious issues.
- For concerns/complaints relating to College policy, school management or staff members, then the College Principal Team (either Principal or Assistant Principal) should be contacted.

If you are unsure about the person you should contact, phone the General Office on 5996 0144 for advice as to who the most appropriate person would be.

Expectations:

Lyndhurst Secondary College commits to addressing and resolving concerns or complaints promptly, consistently, fairly and in accordance with relevant legislation.

The College expects a person raising a concern or complaint to:

- Do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs
- Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
- 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.

The Department expects the College will address concerns and complaints received from those affected:

- Courteously
- Efficiently
- Fairly
- Promptly, or within the timeline agreed with the person with the concern or complaint
- In accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Departments regulatory framework.

Managing concerns and complaints information:

Staff detailing and managing concerns and complaints should record the following:

- 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, in writing, via email or telephone)
- A brief description of the concern or complaint
- Details of the staff member responding to the concern or complaint
- Recommendations for amendments to College policy or procedures (if appropriate)
- An outline of any actions taken to resolve the concern or complaint.

However, if in the first instance a complaint is easily resolved in a telephone call, a brief written note in the relevant staff member's files recording the issue and resolution may be all that is necessary.

At the conclusion of the review of the concern or complaint, the relevant staff member will contact the complainant to discuss the resolution. If a concern or complaint is deemed to be substantiated, in whole or part, the College (at its discretion and depending on the circumstances), may offer an appropriate remedy. For example:

- Provision of explanation or further information about the issue
- Mediation, counselling or other support
- Expression of regret
- Change to policy, procedures or practices
- Disciplinary action in line with Department guidelines, if deemed appropriate.

If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the College, they should contact the South Eastern Victoria Regional Office on 8765 5600.

About the policy and procedures

This policy and accompanying procedures:

- Were developed in accordance with relevant DET guidelines and legislation
- Will be published on the Lyndhurst Secondary College website
www.lyndhurst.vic.edu.au
- Are available in print form upon request
- Are to be used by staff, in conjunction with relevant training and/or support as required
- Will be reviewed by school council as part of its cyclic policy and procedures review schedule.

Key Stake Holders/persons affected

School Community

Person/Group responsible for Review

Principal Class, School Council

Review Cycle

Biannually

Last Reviewed: October 2017

Next Review: October 2019

Associated Support Documentation

https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/commrel/contacts/POLICY_AND_GUIDES_Addressin...ts_concerns.pdf

Lyndhurst Secondary College Statement of Values