



Complaints Handling Policy

Harkaway Hills College is a family school, where the educational rights of the family come first. The College has the dual role of providing for the overall development of the students as well as assisting parents to be more effective educators of their children.

Our vision is a happy and vibrant School, highly regarded as a centre of excellence, where every child is encouraged to be the very best person she can be. Parents, staff and students work as a united team for the pursuit of character and academic success, with a commitment to service and a life of faith.

As a family school that places high importance on unity between parents and staff, Harkaway Hills College has an open-door policy regarding feedback from all members of the College community. The College understands that from time to time there will be disagreements or concerns about College services or operations, and parents and staff are encouraged to direct all concerns directly to the Principal so that every issue can be handled with immediacy and with urgency. The College takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously.

What is a complaint?

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

Harkaway Hills College's Commitment

Harkaway Hills College is committed to handling complaints effectively and efficiently. 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. In most cases these issues can be resolved through informal discussions with appropriate families and/or staff members.

Even if an issue can be resolved informally, staff are requested to log issues through our Complaints Handling Form, so we can identify any systemic issues arising and take appropriate rectification action.

The **Complaints Handling Form** is stored in Google Drive (for staff access) and on the School website (for parent access).

How do I make a formal complaint?

We ask that, where appropriate, you first raise the matter directly with the relevant staff member. 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:



- Completing the **Complaint Form**: <https://forms.gle/a2XC86baUaQPfAWB8> (kindly send an email to the Principal noting this form has been completed to ensure immediate attention.)
- Sending an email to the Principal marybroadsmith@harkawayhills.vic.edu.au, or if the complaint is about the Principal, to the Chairman damiemburger@harkawayhills.vic.edu.au
- Writing a letter to the College addressed to "The Principal"
- Telephoning the College and asking to speak to the Principal

All formal complaints will be managed in accordance with the following procedure.

Our Internal Complaints Handling Process

Step 1 - All formal complaints are saved internally and screened by the Principal, or in the case of complaints against the Principal, by the Board Chair.

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 Principal (or if necessary, Board Chair) shall conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.

Step 4 - Following the determination, if appropriate, the Principal (or Board Chair) shall formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

Step 5 - If the initial response is not acceptable the matter will be reviewed internally by the Principal or the Board Chair, 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 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.

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