



Northholm Grammar

POLICY FOR REPORTING COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

At Northholm Grammar, students and parents are encouraged to maintain close contact with the school so that complaints and grievances are dealt with in a fair, open, timely and transparent manner.

Northholm Grammar is required to have in place and implement policies and procedures in relation to complaints and grievances, with specific reference to processes for raising and responding to complaints raised by students and/or parents/carers.

Parents/carers and students may raise a complaint about something that appears to be unsatisfactory or unreasonable. This may include a decision, behaviour, practice, procedure or omission. Complaints received by the School may be oral or written and written complaints include those delivered in person or sent by letter or email. This policy and procedure provides a guide to the management of general complaints from students, parents/carers or the external community.

Please note that specific complaint procedures are in place for matters concerning child protection, workplace bullying, harassment, enrolment and employment relations. Complaints regarding these matters will be dealt with as per the relevant School policies and procedures and related legislation.

Parents/carers and students are encouraged to identify whether they are raising a concern or a complaint, as most issues of concern can be readily resolved through direct contact with relevant members of the community. An official complaint will be managed in accordance with this policy.

Complaints will be responded to in a courteous, respectful and timely manner and staff will work together with parents/carers and students to resolve the complaint. It is expected that parents/carers and students will be both realistic and reasonable about the action required to resolve their complaint. Complaints will be resolved at the lowest level of management necessary for their appropriate resolution with an assumption that complaints are made in good faith with an intention for resolution.

Complaints should be communicated directly to the staff member responsible:

- Subject issues in a particular academic area: Class Teacher and/or Head of Department
- Pastoral matter in a particular House: Tutor and/or Head of House
- Academic and pastoral matters including discipline and bullying issues Years K to 6 (Primary Years): Class Teacher/Primary Years Curriculum Coordinator or Primary Years Wellbeing Coordinator
- Academic and Pastoral matters including discipline and bullying issues Years 7-12: HOD/Deputy Principal, HOH/Deputy Principal

- Co-Curricular issues: Sport and Coaching Coordinator or Head of Operations (sports, music, arts, debating, etc.)
- General school issues and particular cases for the School's attention: Principal

The Principal welcomes direct contact with parents and students on any issues requiring immediate attention or particular investigation. The School aims to take prompt action to address a problem and prefers to be pro-active in its approach rather than allowing an issue to escalate.

Complaints and grievances are considered as important feedback to be investigated carefully and with procedural fairness to both students and teachers.

The school requests that complaints are reported promptly so that appropriate action can be taken for the welfare of all involved. Parents should contact the school as soon as possible to deal with particular issues that arise for a student, especially any incident of bullying or harassment.

Guiding Principles

There are four guiding principles that underpin the Complaints Policy:

Time

- complaints should be dealt with in a timely manner
- all parties should be advised if a delay occurs

Process

- all parties have a right to be heard
- impartiality
- confidentiality
- procedural fairness
- the well-being of all parties involved or affected by the complaint

Transparency

- Staff members have a right to be informed of formal complaints that are made relating to them and have the right of reply. The exception to this would be if the complaint related to child protection issues or other legislative areas where the Principal would follow the processes outlined in the relevant policies such as the Child Protection Policy
- if a meeting is required, the staff member concerned must be told in advance the purpose of the meeting and who will be attending the meeting
- both the complainant (person making the complaint) and the complainee (the person complained about) may access support

Resolution

- the results of the investigation and any relevant outcomes are communicated to all parties concerned as soon as possible
- all reasonable evidence is considered prior to decision-making
- an expectation that differences are resolved amicably
- a resolution can require compromise from all parties

PROCEDURES

- a) Following notification of a complaint or grievance, the staff member to whom the report is made will speak with the parent or student making the notification to ascertain the details involved.
- b) Appropriate investigations will be made using principles of procedural fairness and the level of confidentiality relevant to the matter.
- c) Information will be gathered that allows all parties to state their views and to provide any needed evidence.
- d) After a fair and transparent process of investigation, a preliminary finding will be made by the School (by staff, Deputy Principal, Principal, as relevant) and communicated to the person who has notified the matter.
- e) Further comment will be invited on the preliminary finding and any additional information considered carefully and fairly.
- f) A final finding will be made by the School and communicated to relevant parties. Appropriate actions to address the situation will be undertaken depending on the nature of the complaint or grievance.
- g) If a parent or student is unhappy with the finding made by the School, they have the option of writing about the matter to the Principal or, if still unsatisfied, to the GARM Committee (Governance and Risk Management) of the School Council and the Chair of the School Council for further deliberation.

Christopher Bradbury
Principal