ALL SAINTS' COLLEGE

STUDENT CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

Purpose

As a College, we recognise that 'empowering children and young people to understand their rights, to report problems and concerns and effectively support them to address the issue raised is critical. Taking children and young people seriously if they raise a matter of concern and ensuring that staff have appropriate training and processes to ensure that such matters are dealt with effectively' is of paramount importance.

This policy sets out the ways in which All Saints' College seeks to make sure that our students' views are heard, their rights respected and their safety and wellbeing are prioritised through our system of managing concerns and complaints. In order to allow this system to be accessible and responsive to the needs of children and young people this policy outlines simple ways in which students of the College can safely raise concerns and complaints.

Scope

This policy includes all students of the College and relates to the roles and responsibilities of staff as they work with parents and students to create a positive and safe environment where students are empowered to raise any concerns or complaints that they may have at the College.

In the terms of this policy a concern or complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. A complaint may be made if a student thinks that the College has, for example:

- Done something wrong;
- Not done something they should have done; or
- Acted unfairly or discourteously.

A complaint may be made about the College as a whole, about a specific department in the school, about an individual member of staff or about another student.

College Policy

The College welcomes suggestions and comments from students and takes seriously concerns and complaints that they may raise. The College recognises the right of a child or young person to raise a concern or make a complaint.

Where a student raises a concern or complaint, All Saints' College will endeavour to work with them to resolve that concern or complaint in an open and fair manner.

If the issue is unable to be resolved, the student raising the complaint is encouraged to speak with their parents or an advocate, should they not have previously done so, and may forward a written complaint to the Principal. The Chair of the governing body will handle a complaint lodged against the Principal. An Independent Arbitrator will handle a complaint lodged against the Chair of the College Board.

The Director General of the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the school observes the registration standards, including the standard about its complaints handling system. Any student, parent or community member is entitled to contact the Director General with concerns about

how the school has dealt with a complaint. Information is available on the Department of Education website (www.education.wa.edu.au/non-government-school-complaints). While the Director General may consider whether the school has breached the registration standards, she does not have power to intervene in a complaint or override the school's decision.

For specific information about complaint and concerns from students or parents regarding grooming, child abuse or other behaviour that is not permitted by the code, please see the section on child abuse and grooming below.

Information for Students

How can a student raise a concern or make a complaint?

- By talking about it – or by writing it down if you find that easier.
- You can do it by yourself, or as part of a group, or through your parents.

To whom?

- To any staff member with whom you feel comfortable.

Does it matter what the issue is?

- No, it can be a big problem or a small one. By discussing it, you may come up with some positive ideas.

What will happen next?

- If possible, the staff member to whom you have made the complaint will deal with it in person. If not, they will go on your behalf to someone who can help. If this happens, the staff member will let you know that they are seeking assistance to resolve your concern or complaint and to whom they will be speaking.

Do others have to know?

- If you are worried about confidentiality, tell the staff member - they will understand. Even if you find the issue hurtful or embarrassing, don't worry – it will only be discussed by staff, who can help you.

Where can I find out how to raise a concern or make a complaint?

- The Student concern and Complaints Policy is available from the College website at www.allsaints.wa.edu.au and outlines how to raise a concern or make a complaint, as well as providing other helpful information about this process. Students are welcome to ask any staff member where to get this information and they will be able to tell you where it can be found.

Further Information for Students who have a Concern or Complaint

You will be dealt with Respectfully.

The College recognises your right as a student of All Saints' College to raise a concern or make a complaint. Where you raise a concern or complaint, All Saints' College will endeavour to work with you to resolve that concern or complaint in an open and fair manner.

Your concern or complaint with be treated with Integrity.

The College understands the need to be fair in its complaints handling processes and will act with a lack of bias. People whose interests will be affected by the decision will be given a chance to respond before a decision is made, but after all important information has been gathered.

The College will treat all complaints in a confidential manner and with respect. Complaints made by students should not cause them, or other students, difficulty.

Should you need support, it will be given to you.

If you ask for help in making a complaint, the College will provide you with the support needed to write and submit a complaint. The College will also provide support for staff against whom a complaint is made.

The College will deal with your concern or complaint as quickly as is possible.

Concerns and complaints will be dealt with quickly and efficiently and if you are the one who has raised them, we will make sure that you are kept informed about progress.

If others have made the same complaint.

Recurring complaints will be identified, analysed and addressed.

The College will act with Courage in making changes.

Where a complaint results in the identification of changes that need to be made to College procedures, those changes will be made, and we will contact the students who raised the concern or made the complaint in order to let them know that action has been taken. The College may not inform students of the details of the action taken where that is not appropriate or respectful to others involved.

We need to keep records.

The College will maintain clear confidential records of the complaint, the actions taken and the outcome because:

- It may become the cause of future legal action;
- Patterns in the record may indicate a need for action;
- The Principal should be able to check the record if necessary

The record should contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised;
- Name of the student;
- Brief statement of issue;
- Simple but clear notes of all conversations about any source of dissatisfaction;
- Location of detailed file;
- Member of staff handling the issue; and
- Brief statement of outcome.

There are lots of different people you can get help from to raise a concern or make a complaint.

There are many people ready and willing to talk to students about their worries. Students can choose anyone from the list below (which is *not* in priority order), or someone else, to discuss their concerns. Students are advised to choose the person with whom they are most comfortable. If it is helpful, a student can take along another student. Hopefully, the staff member with whom they speak will be able to help them to resolve their concern or complaint. Should they not be able to help, the staff member will let them know that they are seeking assistance to resolve their concern or complaint and to whom they will be speaking.

Junior School students may like to speak to:

A class teacher, specialist teacher, school Psychologist, the Chaplain, an Assistant Dean of the Junior School, the Director of the Junior School or the Principal.

Senior School students might like to speak to:

A trusted peer, a peer support leader, a student leader, Student Services, Tutor, class teacher, specialist teacher, Head of Transition or Year Coordinator, Head of House, school Psychologist, the Chaplain, Director of Senior School (Student Wellbeing), Director of Senior School (Teaching and Learning), Vice Principal or Principal.

Concerns or Complaints about Grooming or Child Abuse

The College acknowledges that protecting students from sexual abuse is fundamental to maximising their personal wellbeing and academic potential and recognises that the safety and protection of its students is paramount and has priority over all other interests.

Furthermore, All Saints' requires its teachers, staff and volunteers to ensure that, at all times, their behaviour towards, and relationships with, students reflect proper standards of care and do not breach the College's policies or employment requirements, or the law.

If a **student** has a concern or complaint about grooming, child abuse or other behaviour that is not permitted by the code they are encouraged to speak with their parents or any adult at the College with whom they feel comfortable.

Junior School students may like to speak to:

A class teacher, specialist teacher, school Psychologist, the Chaplain, an Assistant Dean of the Junior School, the Director of the Junior School or the Principal.

Senior School students might like to speak to:

A trusted peer, a peer support leader, a student leader, Student Services, Tutor, class teacher, specialist teacher, Head of Transition or Year Coordinator, Head of House, school Psychologist, the Chaplain, Director of Senior School (Student Wellbeing), Director of Senior School (Teaching and Learning), Vice Principal or Principal.

If a **parent** has a concern or complaint about grooming, child abuse or other behaviour that is not permitted by the code, they are encouraged to speak to the Principal or, in their absence the Vice Principal, the Director of the Junior School, the Director of Senior School (Student Wellbeing), the Director of Senior School (Teaching and Learning), or the Director of Personnel and Policy. If the allegation is against the Principal, the matter can be reported to the directly to Chair of the Board.

A concern or complaint raised with any member of staff will be directly reported to the Principal who, in turn will report the matter to the Chair of the Board.

The Principal is also required to notify the Director General of Department of Education on receipt of an allegation of child abuse.

If the allegation is against the Principal, the matter will be reported to the Chair of the Board.

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