



## **POLICY STATEMENT:**

Ballarat Grammar is committed to ensuring that student, parent, employee, exchange student and other stakeholder complaints are dealt with in an efficient, effective and responsive way which reflects the School's values. The School acknowledges that students, parents, employees, exchange students and other stakeholders have the right to complain when they are dissatisfied.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Ballarat Grammar recognises that:

- Effective handling of complaints can lead to improved student outcomes and the quality of educational services.
- Efficient handling of complaints can enhance the parent – student – community partnership.
- Sensitive handling of complaints can impact positively on public perceptions of Grammar.
- Careful complaint handling should reinforce staff trust in the management of the School.
- Effective handling of complaints can continually improve the School's internal systems and controls.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

**Complaint-** includes any concern raised by a student, parent/caregiver, member of the wider School community or the public about the School's services or operations.

## **DETAIL:**

### **Part 1- Informal Complaints Procedure**

1. In the first instance, Ballarat Grammar requests that there is an attempt to resolve an issue informally. Often, a telephone call or email contact can clarify matters to the point where mutual understanding is sufficient to defuse an issue.
2. A call to Reception (5338 0700) or Admissions (5338 0830) would direct a complainant to the best person to discuss concerns.

### **Part 2- Formal Complaints Handling Procedure**

#### **1. Internal Procedure**

- 1.1. The process of this grievance procedure is confidential, and any complaints or appeals are a matter between the parties concerned and those directly involved in the complaints handling process.
- 1.2. The complainant must notify the School in writing that a formal complaint is being lodged, giving the nature and details of the complaint or appeal.
- 1.3. Written complaints or appeals are to be lodged with the Head of Senior School, Head of Middle School, Head of Junior School or Director of the CEED at 201 Forest Street, Wendouree Victoria 3355 or to [complaints@bgs.vic.edu](mailto:complaints@bgs.vic.edu). The Headmaster will be advised of the complaint.
- 1.4. Complainants may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at all relevant meetings.
- 1.5. Once a decision has been made regarding the complaint or appeal, the complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome.
- 1.6. Any complainant not satisfied with a decision regarding a complaint may appeal to the Headmaster.





## 2. External Appeals Process

- 2.1. The external body used for Ballarat Grammar's external complaints and appeals process is to the Director of Professional Standards, Anglican Diocese of Melbourne. It would be expected that a reasonable attempt is made to resolve an issue with the School before going to an external appeal.
- 2.2. Ballarat Grammar is committed to respecting decisions from this agency and taking any corrective action required. The complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome and a copy of all documentation will be kept on file.

## 3. General

- 3.1. The School acknowledges that these procedures may not be appropriate in every circumstance and maintains the discretion to apply a different process if it is more appropriate to the situation.
- 3.2. While parents will often wish to raise issues on behalf of their children, there are other issues which students may choose to raise on their own behalf, and which are best raised by them.
- 3.3. Anonymous complaints might not be pursued.
- 3.4. It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents should not adversely affect their children.
- 3.5. The School recognises that the essential elements of effective complaints handling are as follows:
  - 3.5.1. Fairness – the need to be fair: impartial, confidential and transparent.
  - 3.5.2. Accessibility – community must be aware of process and procedures must be accessible to all.
  - 3.5.3. Efficiency – complaints must be dealt with promptly and courteously.
  - 3.5.4. Responsiveness – response to the complainant should be clear and informative, indicating a capacity to implement remedies.
  - 3.5.5. Data collection – appropriate systemic recording of complaints and their outcomes.
- 3.6. All complaints and relevant details are recorded in the School's Complaints Register.
- 3.7. The School will commence assessment of the complaint or appeal within ten (10) working days and finalise the outcome as soon as practical.
- 3.8. Where a complaint is made by an exchange student, either incoming/external or outgoing/internal:
  - 3.8.1. The exchange student can contact VRQA if they or their parent or guardian is concerned about the conduct of the Student Exchange Organisation;
  - 3.8.2. They should be aware that this complaints-handling and appeals process described in this policy does not prevent an exchange student from exercising the student's rights to other legal remedies.

## 4. The Board

- 4.1. Ensures that there are adequate mechanisms to deal with complaints about any aspect of the School in an open, transparent and timely manner.
- 4.2. Ensures that the complaints handling mechanism provides monitoring data for management, and when required, the Board.

## 5. The Head:

- 5.1. Makes students, staff and parents aware of the School's complaints policy and grievance resolution process.
- 5.2. Encourages reporting of practices which are illegal, unethical, improper or unsafe, providing appropriate protection for a person making any such report.

