



POLICY STATEMENT:

Ballarat Grammar is committed to ensuring that student, parent, employee, exchange student and other stakeholder complaints and compliments 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 and compliments 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.
- Communication regarding compliments can ensure the School and its staff and volunteers are aware of areas that they are doing well in.

DETAIL:

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.

Compliment- includes any expression of praise, encouragement or gratitude directed towards the School, its staff of students, or any of its services or operations.

Student- Includes days students, boarding students, exchange students and international students.

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), Admissions (5338 0830), or the CEEd front desk (5338 0896) 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 the Director of CEEd at 201 Forest Street, Wendouree Victoria 3355 or to 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. This is because it can be challenging for the School to have the relevant information to effectively follow up the complaint. Where possible, the School will endeavour to pursue all avenues available.
 - 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, in addition to the procedure set out in Part 2 clause 1 and clause 2:
 - 3.8.1. The School will ensure the exchange student is provided an opportunity to formally present their case in writing or in person at no cost and be accompanied by a support person at any relevant meetings.
 - 3.8.2. The exchange student can contact VRQA if they or their parent or guardian is concerned about the conduct of the Student Exchange Organisation;
 - 3.8.3. 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.



Part 3- Complaints relating to the CEEd

1. When a complaint has been assessed as 'notifiable', the School must notify the Department of Education (DE) of the complaint. The School will investigate the complaint and take any actions deemed necessary, in addition to responding to requests from and assisting with any investigation by the DE.
2. There may be occasions when the complainant reports the complaint directly to the DE. If the DE then notifies the School about a complaint they have received, the School will still have responsibility for investigating and dealing with the complaint as outlined in this policy, in addition to co-operating with any investigation by the DE.
3. DE will investigate all complaints it receives about the CEEd, where it is alleged that the health, safety or wellbeing of any child within the CEEd may have been compromised, or that there may have been a contravention of the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Part 4- Compliments Procedure

1. Compliments are expressions of praise, encouragement or gratitude about service, staff, management and/or a program.
2. Compliments provide valuable feedback about the level of satisfaction with service delivery and are a valuable indicator of the effectiveness of a service.
3. Compliments impart useful insights about aspects of the School that are meaningful to students, families, and the wider community.
4. Compliments provide an opportunity to recognise the efforts of staff, foster a culture of excellence and boost morale.

Part 5- Implementation

1. This policy is implemented through a combination of:
 - 1.1 Effective communication and incident notification procedures;
 - 1.2 Effective record keeping procedures; and
 - 1.3 Initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

Part 6- Review

1. Ballarat Grammar is committed to the continuous review and improvement of all its operations, including this policy.
2. It is the responsibility of The Headmaster to regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of this Policy to ensure it is working in practice and revise the policy when required.

Part 7- Breach of Policy

1. All staff employed by Ballarat Grammar are expected to enact all policies in support of student and community learning, health, safety and wellbeing.

