



# Complaints and Compliments Handling Procedure

## PURPOSE

Ballarat Grammar is committed to ensuring that all complaints and compliments from students, parents, staff, exchange students, international students, and community members are addressed in an efficient, effective, respectful, and culturally safe manner. The School acknowledges the right of all stakeholders to provide feedback and ensures that complaints are managed in a way that promotes transparency, accountability and continuous improvement.

The School 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 all students (including international students and exchange students), parents, employees, and other stakeholders have the right to complain when they are dissatisfied.

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.

## SCOPE

This procedure applies to all members of the Ballarat Grammar community including:

- Students (day, boarding, exchange and international)
- Parents and carers
- Staff (teaching and non-teaching)
- Volunteers
- Contractors and service providers
- Alumni and members of the broader School community

It covers:

- Informal and formal complaints related to any aspects of the School's operations, services, programs, staff conduct, or student wellbeing.
- Compliments and positive feedback directed to staff, programs, services, or the School generally.
- Complaints or compliments arising in all settings of the School, including early childhood education and care (CEEd), Junior, Middle and Senior Schools, boarding, co-curricular programs, and off-campus activities (e.g. camps, exchanges).
- Feedback relevant to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in alignment with the Child Safe Standards and VRQA Minimum Standards.

**This procedure is not intended to replace specific mechanisms that exist for reportable conduct, mandatory reporting, or whistleblower disclosures, which are addressed under separate governance documents.**



**DEFINITIONS**

| Term                  | Definition  |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Complainant</b>    | The individuals making the complaint.   |
| <b>Complaint</b>      | Includes any concern raised by a student, parent/caregiver, staff member, volunteer, contractor or any other member of the wider School community or the public about the School's services or operations.  |
| <b>Compliment</b>     | Includes any expression of praise, encouragement or gratitude directed towards the School, its staff of students, or any of its services or operations.   |
| <b>DE</b>             | Department of Education (National)  |
| <b>Student</b>        | Includes day students, boarding students, exchange students and international students.   |
| <b>Support Person</b> | <p>A person who accompanies a complainant during any stage of the procedure. May be internal or external to the School and should not be acting in a legal capacity.</p> <p>All parties have the right to a support person during any stage of the complaints process. The support person may be internal or external to the School and should not be legally trained, or if they are, not be acting in any legal capacity to represent them during the complaint process. A support person is primarily an observer and may speak where invited to do so by the person responsible for conducting the relevant meeting or discussion, or with the express consent of the student.</p> <p>If a student identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, they have the right to an appropriate cultural support person as an additional advocate.</p> |
| <b>VRQA</b>           | Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority   |

**PROCEDURE STATEMENT****General**

- 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.
- 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.
- All students and parents/guardians/carers can raise student safety concerns, including child-safety issues, by:
  - Completing a confidential *Student Safety Concern Form* available online or from any Reception desk;
  - Speaking with a trusted staff member such as a Student Safeguarding Officer, Head of School, Head of House, Mentor, Homeroom Teacher or Classroom Teacher; and/or
  - Contacting the Headmaster directly by phone or email on [headmaster@bgs.vic.edu.au](mailto:headmaster@bgs.vic.edu.au).
  - Emailing [complaints@bgs.vic.edu.au](mailto:complaints@bgs.vic.edu.au) or [studentsafety@bgs.vic.edu.au](mailto:studentsafety@bgs.vic.edu.au)
- All child-safety concerns are reviewed in accordance with the School's Student Safety Program and the procedures set out in this document.
- 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.
- Any complaints made by parents should not adversely affect their children.
- The School recognises that the essential elements of effective complaints handling are as follows:
  - Fairness – the need to be fair, impartial, confidential and transparent.





- Accessibility – community must be aware of process and procedures must be accessible to all.
- Efficiency – complaints must be dealt with promptly and courteously.
- Responsiveness – response to the complainant should be clear and informative, indicating a capacity to implement remedies.
- Data collection – appropriate systemic recording of complaints and their outcomes.
- All complaints and relevant details are recorded in the School's Complaints Register.
- The School will commence assessment of the complaint or appeal within ten (10) working days and finalise the outcome as soon as practical.
- The School will take into consideration and offer support to the complainant and/or their support person as required which consider any individual circumstance including but not limited to any language barrier or time difference for exchange or international students. Supports may include but not be limited to offering online platforms, outside of working hours meeting times, cultural support person or interpreters.
- Where a complaint is made by an exchange student, either incoming/external or outgoing/internal, in addition to the procedures set out for informal and formal complaints:
  - 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.
  - An exchange student can contact VRQA if they or their parent or guardian is concerned about the conduct of the School as a Student Exchange Organisation.
  - They should be aware that the complaints handling process described in this procedure does not prevent an exchange student from exercising the student's rights to other legal avenues.

### Compliments

- Compliments are expressions of praise, encouragement or gratitude.
- Compliments provide valuable feedback about the level of satisfaction stakeholders have and are a valuable indicator of the services that are provided by the School. They impart useful insights about aspects of the School that are meaningful to students, families, and the wider community. Compliments provide an opportunity to recognise the efforts of staff, foster a culture of excellence and boost morale.
- Ballarat Grammar community members are welcome to provide compliments on the actions of individuals or teams which will be passed on to recognise their good work and efforts.

### Roles

- The Board
  - Ensures that there are adequate mechanisms to deal with complaints about any aspect of the School in an open, transparent and timely manner.
  - Ensures that the complaints handling mechanism provides monitoring data for management of all aspects of the School including, if required, the Board.
- The Headmaster
  - Makes students, staff and parents aware of the School's complaints procedure and grievance resolution process.
  - Encourages reporting of practices which are illegal, unethical, improper or unsafe, providing appropriate protection for a person making any such report.

### REVIEW

Ballarat Grammar is committed to the continuous review and improvement of all its operations, including this procedure (*please refer to the Office Use Only section for specific review dates*). It is the responsibility of the Deputy Head – Residential and Operations to regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of the Complaints and Compliments Handling Procedure, ensure it is working in practice and revise the document when required and after any related significant incident.





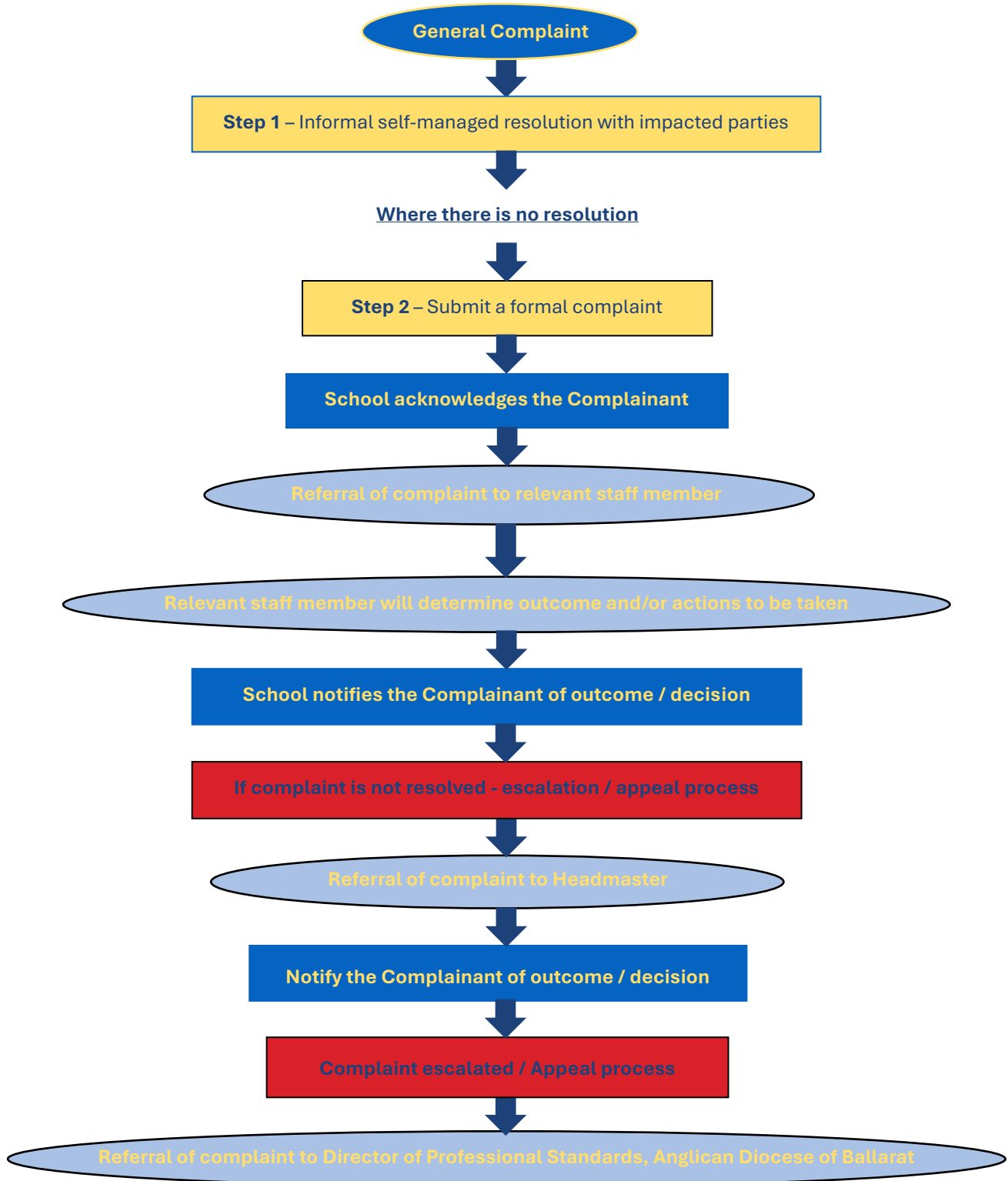
## **GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMUNICATIONS**

All documentation within the Governance Framework will be communicated throughout the School including, but not limited to, internal communications such as Nexus posts, staff emails, staff inductions and documentation distribution.

Document Owners are responsible for identifying and managing information-related risks and issues for their assigned information entities and for escalating these to Approval Authorities accordingly. Owners of Governance Documents are accountable for their respective procedures, manuals and work instructions in alignment with their position descriptions.



## Appendix A – Summary of Complaints Procedure





## Appendix B – Informal Complaints Procedure

|   | Actions  | Responsibility  | Steps   |
|---|--|---|---|
| A | Informal complaint identified  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Complainant</li></ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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 resolve an issue.</li></ul> |
| B | Contact made via phone - Reception (5338 0700), Admissions (5338 0830), or the CEEd front desk (5338 0896) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reception</li></ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The receiver will determine who is best person for the complainant to be directed to in order to discuss concerns.</li></ul>  |
| C | Contact made via email to individual staff member  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Receiver of email</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The receiver will communicate directly with the complainant and discuss their concerns.</li></ul>   |



## Appendix C – Formal Complaints Procedure

|   | Actions                | Responsibility   | Steps  |
|---|------------------------|--|--|
| A | Complaint lodged       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complainant</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If a complainant is unable to resolve a matter informally, or informal resolution is not appropriate in the circumstances, they may submit a formal complaint.</li> <li>The complaint must clearly set out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>details of the concern or issues which the complainant wishes to raise, including relevant actions, dates and persons concerned;</li> <li>what steps (if any) that the complainant has taken to attempt to resolve the concern;</li> <li>the outcome which the complainant is seeking; and</li> <li>all relevant documents/attachments.</li> </ul> </li> <li>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 <a href="mailto:complaints@bgs.vic.edu">complaints@bgs.vic.edu</a>. The Headmaster will be advised of the complaint.</li> </ul> |
| B | Complaint acknowledged | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deputy Head – Residential and Operations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within (2) days of the submission of a formal complaint, the School will acknowledge the complaint and advise who the complaint has been referred to.</li> </ul>  |
| C | Complaint response     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant staff member</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relevant staff member may take such steps that they believe may assist in resolving the concern. The steps may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meeting or talking with the complainant and/or other persons referred to in the complaint;</li> <li>gathering information relevant to the complaint;</li> <li>referring the complaint to another staff member who can assist to resolve the complaint;</li> <li>consulting with subject matter experts</li> </ul> </li> <li>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.</li> <li>Complainants may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at all relevant meetings.</li> </ul>   |



|   |                                    |  |  |
|---|------------------------------------|--|--|
| D | Complaint outcome                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relevant staff member</li><li>• Deputy Head – Residential and Operations</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li></ul>   |
| E | Complainant opportunity for appeal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complainant</li><li>• Headmaster</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A complainant not satisfied with a decision regarding a complaint may appeal to the Headmaster.</li></ul>  |
| F | External Appeals                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complainant not satisfied with the decision regarding the complaint</li></ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If a complainant is unable to resolve a complaint following reasonable attempts to resolve an issue with the School, they may lodge an appeal to:<br/>The Director of Professional Standards, Anglican Diocese of Ballarat via email – <a href="mailto:dps@ballaratanglican.org.au">dps@ballaratanglican.org.au</a> or phone – 1800 377 842.</li><li>• 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.</li></ul> |





## Appendix D – CEEd Notifiable Complaints Procedure

|   | Actions              | Responsibility  | Steps   |
|---|----------------------|---|---|
| A | Notifiable complaint | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Head of Early Years</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>When a complaint has been assessed as 'notifiable', the School must notify the 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.</li><li>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 procedure, in addition to co-operating with any investigation by the DE.</li><li>The 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 <i>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010</i> and the <i>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011</i>.</li></ul> |



## Office Use Only

| Document Control / History           |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Document Code                        | CGS-005  |
| Approval Authority                   | Headmaster   |
| Document Owner / Responsible Officer | Deputy Head – Residential and Operations   |
| Original Approval Date               |  |
| Current Version Date                 | May 2025   |
| Scheduled Review Date                | May 2026   |
| History                              | May 2025 – Review as part of Policy Rejuvenation Project; addition of Student Safety Complaints Form |

| Supporting Documents   |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CGS-001 - Corporate Governance &amp; Sovereign Risk Policy</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CGS-015 – Whistleblower Procedure</li> <li>IDG-003 – Privacy Policy</li> </ul> |

| Student Lifecycle / Pillars / Values / IDEALS / IB PYP Attributes   |  |  |  |   |   |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| Student Lifecycle   | Student Lifecycle Subsection   | Pillars  | Values   | IDEALS  | IB PYP Attributes   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Recruitment</li> <li>Delivery of Education Programs</li> <li>Graduation &amp; Community</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing &amp; Advertising</li> <li>Enrolments &amp; Offers</li> <li>Finance</li> <li>Teaching &amp; Learning</li> <li>Assessment</li> <li>Experiences</li> <li>Careers / Work Experience</li> <li>Graduation</li> <li>Old Grammarians / Alumni</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governance &amp; Leadership</li> <li>Legislative &amp; Regulatory Compliance</li> <li>Complaints &amp; Compliments</li> <li>People &amp; Culture</li> <li>Finance</li> <li>Community Engagement / Foundation</li> <li>Property &amp; Maintenance</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrity</li> <li>Aspiration</li> <li>Courage</li> <li>Compassion</li> <li>Responsibility</li> <li>Hope</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internationalism</li> <li>Democracy</li> <li>Environmentalism</li> <li>Adventure</li> <li>Leadership</li> <li>Service</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inquirers</li> <li>Knowledgeable</li> <li>Thinkers</li> <li>Communicators</li> <li>Principled</li> <li>Open Minded</li> <li>Caring</li> <li>Risk Takers</li> <li>Balanced</li> <li>Reflective</li> </ul> |

| Legislative Context  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Code of Practice for Providers of Education &amp; Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018) <a href="#">Federal Register of Legislation - National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018</a></li> <li>Education &amp; Care Service National Law Act 2010 <a href="#">Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010   legislation.vic.gov.au</a></li> <li>Education &amp; Care Services National Regulations 2011</li> </ul> |

| Regulatory Context  |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| VRQA  | CRICOS / National Code / ESOS Act   | ACECQA / Department of Education  | International Baccalaureate   | Other  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VRQA Minimum Standards 2.2; 3,6; 5.1; 9.1; 11.1</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Code of Practice for Providers of Education &amp; Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018) – Standard 5, 6, 8</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education &amp; Care Service National Law Act 2010</li> <li>Education &amp; Care Services National Regulations 2011</li> <li>Child Safe Standards (ECEC settings)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IB Learner Profile – Principled, Caring, Open-Minded</li> <li>School Community Engagement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul> |

