



COMMUNICATIONS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

- A. General Considerations**
 - B. Policy and Procedures: Concerns and Complaints**
 - C. Communications Structure**
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INTRODUCTION

The following policy and procedures have been developed by the College Executive to assist parents in communicating with the College. We have updated and consolidated this information:

1. In recognition of the increased availability of multi-mode and immediate communications sources, especially mobile phones and email;
 2. In recognition of social practices assuming more immediate communications and responses;
 3. To assist parents in readily locating the most appropriate person in the College to contact relating to matters affecting their daughter's schooling.
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A. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS IN COMMUNICATIONS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

1. All staff are committed to assisting parents in providing information or addressing issues related to students' schooling at Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College.
 2. Teaching staff will respond to parents' enquiries and requests as soon as availability allows them to do so. Parents need to understand that such responses may not be immediate:
 - 2.1 For teaching staff, their desk is not their main place of work
 - 2.2 Teaching staff cannot always be instantly available, particularly with established College commitments
 - 2.3 Staff may not immediately respond as they are gathering data to make an informed response
 3. For urgent matters, parents are encouraged to speak with administration/reception staff, who are able to offer assistance, especially in locating appropriate staff members.
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This information is also available on the College website: www.monte.nsw.edu.au

B. POLICY FOR DEALING WITH CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS (Information for Parents and Community Members)

PURPOSE

To provide information about the principles and procedures pertaining to the making of and response to concerns and complaints from parties outside the College.

This Policy is established as a set of procedures and guidelines for concerns and complaints within the context of Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College parents, students, the College Community (including Board or other formal committee) or the public.

DEFINITION OF CONCERN

A concern is a verbal or written inquiry or question relating to College policies, procedures, practices; or specific instances or occurrences requiring a response from a College employee.

DEFINITION OF COMPLAINT

A complaint is a verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction relating to policies, procedures, practices, services, facilities or behaviour, where the complainant is seeking a response, conclusion or remedy.

A concern or complaint may be expressed by a:

- Parent
- Carer
- Student
- Member of the extended College community (including Board and Committee members)
- Member of the public
- External provider of educational or other services to the College
- Member of staff (not directed towards another College employee)

A concern or complaint can include any matter pertinent to:

- The education of a student
- The pastoral care of a student
- The delivery of education by a member of staff or external provider
- The pastoral care given by a member of staff
- College organisation and management
- The behaviour of a student, member of staff or parent, volunteer or external provider when engaged in school-related activities

COMMUNICATION OF A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

A concern or complaint may be communicated initially by a variety of means, such as:

- Telephone
- Face-to-face discussion
- Email
- Letter

CONCERN OR COMPLAINT COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE

Initially, concerns or complaints are directed to the staff member directly concerned with the nature of the issue. If the matter remains unresolved at this level, then either party may escalate it to the next level of management until the matter is resolved or the parties accept that it is not possible, in the circumstances to be resolved.

The attached communication structure provides a guide to the most appropriate staff member to approach with a concern or complaint:

SPECIFIC PROCEDURES: HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS

1. A complaint is handled by the appropriate person

- 1.1 In the first instance the resolution of a complaint may be attempted by the staff member initially contacted, but the matter may be directed to the appropriate staff member (as per the "Communications Structure")
- 1.2 If a member of middle or senior management is approached first, he/she may ask the complainant to speak to the appropriate staff member directly.
- 1.3 Where there is no satisfactory resolution with the appropriate staff member, s/he may contact the next appropriate person in management. For example, a Head of Department is contacted about a subject-related matter; a Head of Year is contacted about a pastoral care matter.
- 1.4 Complaints made anonymously or from complainants requiring their identity to be concealed from a respondent will not be investigated.

2. Members of staff are informed of a complaint

- 2.1 If a complaint is made about a member of staff to a member of middle or senior management, the member of staff is informed of the nature of the complaint and name(s) of the complainant as soon as possible.
- 2.2 The member of middle management or senior management will discuss the appropriate response strategy with the staff member concerned.
- 2.3 Information relating to the complaint is only given to those members of staff who are directly involved as staff may be in the process of gathering data to make an informed response.
- 2.4 Staff members ensure that information gained as a result of either the complaint or staff disclosure, while a matter of record, remains confidential under the terms of Privacy Legislation.
- 2.5 Where necessary a Deputy Principal or Principal may become directly involved with the complaint procedures.

3. A complaint is expressed and received in an appropriate manner

- 3.1 If the College deems it necessary, the complainant may be asked to express her/his concerns in writing in order for matters raised to be clarified and addressed appropriately.
- 3.2 Complainants should be encouraged to address the issue and not the person.
- 3.3 Complainants and members of staff will address the complaint in a cooperative and collegial manner.
- 3.4 Complaints or concerns will be addressed as soon as possible. Where parents and community members lodge a complaint with a staff member, receipt of the complaint or concern is generally acknowledged within 3 working days.
- 3.5 Staff and complainants recognise that immediate solutions may not always be identifiable, relevant or possible but that the College will respond and aim to resolve all matters in the most suitable way.
- 3.6 Staff respond to complaints in a professional manner.

4. Certain kinds of complaint are addressed by specific processes

- 4.1 In resolution of a complaint, the appropriate College policy is used where it exists.
- 4.2 Child Protection allegations are subject to legislation and are immediately referred to the Principal.

5. Interviews are part of the resolution procedure

- 5.1 Where appropriate an interview is arranged to address, investigate and/or resolve a complaint.
- 5.2 An interview can have one or more purposes, for example:
 - To clarify or explain a complaint or response
 - To allow for mediation
 - To provide a forum for mutual understanding and restoration.
- 5.3 Interviews take place in a pre-arranged time and place.
- 5.4 The people in attendance at an interview can include: the complainant, the respondent, a support person for the complainant, a support person for the respondent, a member of middle or senior management.

6. Procedures are in place when a resolution cannot be achieved

- 6.1 Where resolution is not achieved, the member of middle or senior management may decide on one or more courses of action, for example:
 - Refer the matter to the Principal
 - Dismiss the complaint
 - Declare that a resolution is not possible
 - Uphold the complaint and implement specific action to address the concerns
 - Determine that both parties are at fault and clarify acceptable behaviours
- 6.2 Where a complaint or allegation is found to be false and there is evidence of malicious or vexatious intent by the complainant, the Principal will be informed. The Principal or delegate will take appropriate action.

7. Contact details of relevant staff

Specific contact details for key staff are found in the College Calendar distributed each year by the Parents and Friends Association.

The general College telephone number is (02) 9409 6200.

**C. COMMUNICATIONS STRUCTURE: CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES
(Summary Information for Parents and Students)**

	ISSUE	FIRST DIRECTED TO	NEXT LEVEL	FURTHER
1.	General complaint			
	o Campus Security	Facilities Manager	Director Finance and Resources	
	o Concerns regarding Specific Staff members	Relevant Middle Manager	Relevant Executive Member	Principal
	o Concerns regarding Facilities	Facilities Manager	Director Finance and Resources	
	o Concerns regarding Food Services	Food Services Manager	Director Finance and Resources	
	o Concerns regarding College Communications	Director, Development and Community Relations	Principal	
	o Concerns regarding Faith Formation	Head of Faith Formation and Liturgy	Director Mission	
	o Concerns regarding Health Centre	DP Pastoral Care		
	o Concerns regarding College Support Services, including IT, Facilities, Development Office	Relevant Executive Member	Director Staff Services	
2.	Academic Matters			
	o Curriculum/Subjects/Classes	HOD	DP Curriculum	Principal
	o IB MYP Program	Director Middle School		
	o IB DP Program	Director Senior School		
	o In class issues/behaviour	Subject Teacher	HOD	DP Curriculum
	o Homework	Subject Teacher	HOD	DP Curriculum
	o Student Marks	Subject Teacher	HOD	DP Curriculum
	o Treatment of Student	Subject Teacher	HOD	DP Curriculum
	o Subject Selection/ Timetable	DP Administration		
3.	Pastoral Matters			
	o Student behaviour – playground/absences	HOY	DP Pastoral Care	Principal
	o Student Responsibility Policy and Procedures	HOY	DMS/DSS	DP Pastoral Care
	o Whole Year activities – camps/dances/performances	HOY	DMS/DSS	DP Pastoral Care
	o Issues between students	Tutor	HOY	DP Pastoral Care
	o Welfare/well-being	Tutor	HOY	DP Pastoral Care
	o Student Concern with other staff member	Tutor	HOY	DP Pastoral Care
4.	Co-Curricular Programs			
	o Sport – general	Sports Program Manager	DP Pastoral Care	Principal
	o Sport – specific (netball, hockey, swimming, etc)	Sport Coordinator	Sports Program Manager	DP Pastoral Care
	o Physical Activity and Engagement	Head of Physical Activity and Engagement	Principal	
	o Music	Head of Music Performance	HOD	
	o Duke of Edinburgh	D of E Coordinator	Sports Program Manager	
	o Debating	Coordinator	DP Pastoral Care	
5.	College Organisation and Management			
	o College fees	Director Finance and Resources	Principal	
	o Invoices	Finance Manager	Director Finance and Resources	
	o Privacy	Principal		
	o Student Travel	College Reception		

ENDORSED BY:

COLLEGE EXECUTIVE

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY:

DIRECTOR STAFF SERVICES

DISTRIBUTION:

ALL STAFF

EFFECTIVE FROM:

2/3/2023