

### Definitions

Complaint	a formal statement expressing discontent or unhappiness about a situation which requires resolution
Grievance	a cause for complaint or resentment that may or may not be well-founded
Natural justice	See Procedural Fairness
Procedural fairness	Procedural fairness is also often referred to as 'natural justice'. It applies to any decision that can affect the rights, interests or expectations of individuals in a direct or immediate way and works to ensure that decision making is fair and reasonable. Justice should not only be done it should be seen to be done. In effect it means that bias (both real and perceived) is avoided and all parties are given a fair hearing
Reportable conduct	A complaint, either against process or person, which must be reported by law to the relevant body. It includes but not limited to dishonesty, unethical conduct, serious improper conduct, unsafe work practices, child abuse, illegal acts including theft, drug sale or use, violence or threatened violence and criminal damage against property, breaches of relevant laws, regulations, by-laws, and any other conduct which may cause loss to the College or be detrimental to the College.

### Exclusions

This policy does not apply to allegations of sexual abuse or harm to children which are dealt with in IND HS072 Child Protection Policy and Procedures. This is the only policy that matters in terms of Child Protection.

This policy does not deal with Reportable Conduct or Workplace Health and Safety Complaints. These should be referred to the Human Resources Department.

### Policy Statement

#### 1 General

The College recognises that from time to time, a member of the College or wider community may have a grievance they wish to voice concerning either a College system, an employee of the College or another student:

- If the grievance is of a serious nature it is considered to be a complaint; and
- If the grievance is not of a serious nature but is not satisfactorily resolved, it may escalate to become a formal complaint.

A formal complaint and its resolution should be documented in writing.

Complaints will normally fall into one of three categories: complaints against process, person or environment.

In keeping with the College's Christian values and pursuit of excellence, our grievance process has been designed to be equitable, robust, highly accountable and is aimed at securing supportive and mutually positive outcomes.

The focus of our grievance process is accountability and resolution rather than blame or retribution.

In keeping with this, the following aspects are vital:

- calm, courteous discussion / consultation;
- listening / responsiveness; and
- collaborative problem-solving / positive outcomes.

and in the case of complaints against a person:

- approaching the person directly as a first step (wherever possible).

Except in serious or urgent cases, complaints should be raised up through the hierarchy, accessing each level only where the process has broken down or the resolution unsatisfactory.

In serious cases or where the complainant does not feel comfortable or safe to approach the person directly, the complainant must use their discretion to raise the issue at the appropriate level within the College.

The College adheres to principles of natural justice. St Peters cannot and will not act on complaints against a person provided anonymously as to do so would contravene the basic principles of natural justice.

The procedures that are utilised in conjunction with this policy do not pre-empt, limit, prevent or delay the party's rights' to pursue other avenues for resolution of grievances such as those offered via the criminal, administrative and civil courts processes. Where external avenues of recourse are used, the internal process should cease, pending the outcome of the external avenue.

St Peters promotes and expects the highest standard of conduct from our students, parents, staff and visitors and in reciprocation, the College endeavours to ensure that all complaints are resolved satisfactorily, in a professional and timely manner.

St Peters acknowledges the need for complaints to be reviewed, where possible, by an independent person (i.e. a member of the College who was not involved in the matter complained about).

As part of our commitment to excellence, St Peters actively solicits and welcomes feedback concerning systems and processes from stakeholders and the community as we recognise that complaints can constitute a useful tool to instigate improvement within the College. The complaints process is therefore intended to work hand in hand with our Continuous Improvement Program.

Our intent is that the complaints handling process is made freely accessible and thus we undertake to provide all necessary information regarding the St Peters complaint resolution process to any person who approaches the College seeking such information.

Complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner and be treated with respect. Complaints and outcomes will be recorded, and the process has the capacity to determine and implement remedies.

## **2 Overseas students**

For overseas student studying under a visa, St Peters is bound to comply with the provisions detailed in the ESOS Act and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and training to Overseas Students 2007.

Once an overseas student has been advised by the College of the outcome of the complaint in writing, they have 20 working days in which to appeal the school's decision in accordance with the school's Grievance Procedure. The student should access the external appeals process within 10 working days of notification of the school's decision.

If an overseas student is unable to resolve a dispute internally, the student may seek external assistance from the Overseas Student Ombudsman (<http://www.oso.gov.au/>). See Grievance Procedure for more information.

This policy must be given to an overseas student before an Enrolment Contract is signed, and also within seven (7) days of the commencement of the course.

If a student/parent is concerned about the actions of this College they may approach the State Authority for CRICOS Registration (the Department of Education). The Director-General of the Department has the power to suspend or cancel the College's registration if a breach of the requirements of registration provision is proved.

Concerns or complaints (in writing) about the conduct of the College should be addressed to The Manager, International Quality (Schools) Unit, Department of Education, Training and Employment, LMB 527, Brisbane Qld 4001.