



WHITEFRIARS  
CATHOLIC COLLEGE FOR BOYS

# Parents/Guardians Concerns Resolution Policy

## Preamble

This Parents/Guardians Concerns Resolution Policy has been developed in the light of the Mission and Values Statement of Whitefriars College, in which we seek to live by and teach those values which the Catholic Church upholds and to celebrate our Catholic identity in the Carmelite Tradition. In line with the College vision “to educate and develop gentle men in the Catholic Carmelite tradition of contemplation, community, and service”, the College seeks staff who will be supportive of our faith community and be involved in the celebration of that community. It promotes a spirit of mutual trust and respects the gifts of others. It honours the contributions which each individual makes to the enrichment of the community. The College prioritises child safety and wellbeing, and a diverse community in which the contribution of each individual is encouraged, valued and respected. Whitefriars aims to develop and maintain a staff that is committed to the ethos of the College, professional in its approach to learning and teaching and diverse in the range and scope of the skills and experiences it provides. Whitefriars College acknowledges the Wurundjeri People, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the College resides, and pays respect to Wurundjeri Elders past and present as well as future generations.

## Purpose

Parents are one of the most influential role models in their child’s life. The College seeks support in promoting and upholding the core values of the school community and its culture of respectful relationships.

Whitefriars College recognises that from time to time families may wish to raise concerns with the school. Within this framework, it is the College’s desire and responsibility to manage and address parents/guardians’ concerns fairly, efficiently and effectively. The College expects that any concerns that parents have will be raised in a courteous and respectful manner.

## Scope

This policy is to ensure and maintain a safe and supportive learning environment, which encourages positive and productive relationships between students, parents/guardians and staff. It outlines Whitefriars College’s resolution process for external concerns and complaints from parents, guardians and carers. It is intended to guide parents in their dealings with staff, other parents, students and the wider school community. It articulates the College’s key expectations of both staff and parents with regard to respectful relationships and behaviours. It also specifies the College’s position with regard to unacceptable behaviours that breach the College’s culture of respect.

A **concern** is an issue of interest (because of its importance and effect) which is raised informally in order to improve or change a situation.

A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction, grievance or resentment where the complainant is seeking redress or justice, with an action taken, decision made, service provided or handling of an issue.

## **Policy Statement**

### **Among students, staff and parents the College strives to develop:**

- a respect for the innate dignity and worth of every person;
- an ability to understand the situation of others;
- a cooperative attitude in working with others;
- open, positive and honest communication;
- the ability to work respectfully with other people, trusting relationships;
- responsible actions.

### **In relation to parents/guardians' concerns, Whitefriars College:**

- Has high expectations of communication from all community members;
- Expects that parents will support the College Catholic ethos, tradition and practices, as well as the College efforts to maintain a positive teaching and learning environment;
- Is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment where everyone is treated with respect, procedural fairness and dignity at all times, treating staff and parents with respect and courtesy;
- Expects that in managing concerns from parents, all parties will be honest and hear concerns as delivered;
- Will at all times maintain and stress the confidentiality, protection of privacy and respect (levels of confidentiality will be maintained as appropriate to the situation);
- Believes that the common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties, in good faith and in a calm and courteous manner; and
- Expects all parties to show at all times respect and understanding of each other's point of view and perceptions, and refrain from approaching another student while in the care of the school.

Concerns will be addressed in a timely manner and with the intention to resolve with a positive outcome.

All members of Whitefriars College community have the right to feel safe and supported.

The College staff have the right to stop or refuse a concern conversation/request with a parent, should the concern be raised at an inappropriate time or if a level of mutual respect and courtesy is not being followed.

The College will address all concerns as follows:

- Courteously, efficiently and fairly with a timeline for investigation and resolution communicated;
- Maintaining confidentiality and respect for sensitive issues;
- Ensuring parents views and opinion are heard and understood;
- Promptly, within timelines agreed with the person with the concern;
- In accordance with due process, the principles of natural justice and relevant regulatory frameworks;
- After a concern has been followed up, the resolution/decision will be communicated to all parties in writing (usually by email).

In some situations, the College may not be able to fully address concerns that are made anonymously or without sufficient detail being provided to enable an investigation or resolution of the matter. To ensure procedural fairness, respondents have a right to know the particulars of the allegations being made, and be given an opportunity to respond to them.

The College places high value and priority on maintaining a safe and respectful working environment for staff. The College regards certain behaviours as harmful and unacceptable insofar as they compromise the safety and professional wellbeing of staff. These behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- shouting or swearing, either in person or on the telephone;
- physical or verbal intimidation;
- aggressive hand gestures;
- writing rude, defamatory, aggressive or abusive comments to/about a staff member (emails/social media);
- racist or sexist comments;
- damage or violation of possessions/property.

When a parent behaves in such unacceptable ways, the Principal or a senior staff member will seek to resolve the situation and repair relationships through discussion and/or mediation.

Where a parent's behaviour is deemed likely to cause ongoing harm, distress or danger to the staff member and others, the College may exercise its legal right to impose a temporary or permanent ban from the parent entering the College premises. In an extreme act of violence that causes physical harm to the staff member and/or his/her property, the matter may be reported to the police for investigation.

### **Concerns Procedure**

The following points outline how parents/guardians should go about communicating a concern to the College.

The College expects a person raising a concern to:

- Do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue is identified;
- Provide complete and factual information about the concern;
- Maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties;
- Acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties;
- Act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner;
- Show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame;
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.

In the first instance, it is the preference of the College that the concern be communicated by telephone to one of the following:

- The student's Pastoral Care teacher or subject teacher as appropriate;
- The House Leader or Director of Senior/Middle Years if it is a serious concern;
- The Deputy Principal – Students about issues relating to complex student issues involving students across houses;
- The Staffing, Operations and Timetabler about issues relating to professionalism of staff;
- The Principal about issues relating to College policy, College management, staff members or very complex student issues;

At no time should a parent/guardian approach a staff member in the College without first signing in at Main Reception.

If there is a College-related strategic observation or a concern about the Principal, this can be communicated directly to the Chair of the College Board, Mrs. Margaret McKenna at: [boardchair@whitefriars.vic.edu.au](mailto:boardchair@whitefriars.vic.edu.au)

Any such correspondence to the Chair of the Board will be treated as strictly confidential.

The Chair of the Board will subsequently consult with at least two Board Members before responding to an observation. All responses will be tabled at the earliest possible (next) Board Meeting. All subsequent responses by the Board will be made in writing, under the signature of the Board Chair.

## **Complaints Procedure**

If a parent or guardian has experienced the above process and feels that their concern has still not been addressed, they may wish to avail themselves of the Complaints Procedure as detailed below.

All complaints will be formally documented by the College, including:

- Name and contact details of the person who made the complaint;
- Date the complaint made;
- Form in which the complaint was received (such as face-to-face, by telephone, in writing, by email);
- Brief description of the complaint;
- Details of the school officer responding to the complaint;
- Action taken on the complaint;
- Outcome of action taken on the complaint;
- Any recommendations for future improvement in the College's policy or procedures.

The College will make every attempt to resolve a complaint as quickly as possible. If the complaint involves many students and a range of issues, the College will need more time to investigate and resolve it. Should the complaint involve complex issues, the College might need to take advice from Melbourne Archdioceses Catholic Schools (MACS), which may take more time.

A parent who has made a formal complaint and who is still not satisfied with the outcome determined by the College, is able to contact Melbourne Archdioceses Catholic Schools (MACS) – Eastern Regional Office. Please note that MACS is an advisory body to the college and a non-employer of staff within the College.

MACS regional offices will generally not respond to a complaint and/or become involved when:

- Issues have not been raised with the College;
- The College is continuing to address the issues with the complainant;
- Issues raised that are the responsibility of the school (e.g. school uniform, school parking);
- The issues raised should be able to be resolved at the school level.

MACS contact details:

Head Office:

228 Victoria Parade

East Melbourne VIC 3002

Ph: (03) 9267 0228

Eastern Regional Office:

39 Hewish Road

Croydon VIC 3136

Ph: (03) 9427 6400

Email: [manager.ero@cem.edu.au](mailto:manager.ero@cem.edu.au)

Whitefriars College is a child safe school and supports the Ministerial Order 1359 and Child Safe Standards to ensure protection of all children, believing all young people have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect. The College's current child safe policies can be accessed in our website.

**Approved by:** Principal Leadership Team

**Date:** 22 June 2022

**Last update:**

**Next review date:** 22 June 2025