



# Aquinas College

## Complaints Handling Management Guide

How to make a complaint

2019

## Introduction

Aquinas College (College) recognises that from time to time there might be instances where individuals or organisations disagree with the way the College or one of its schools has handled matters and may wish to lodge a complaint. Such individuals may include parents, students, suppliers, local residents, and other external bodies with whom the College or its schools have dealings.

The College encourages honest feedback and takes valid complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously. The College acknowledges that complaints present an opportunity to improve service delivery and is committed to resolving complaints in an efficient, fair and timely manner. The College recognizes that its complaints handling procedures must be fair to the complainant as well as the person about whom the complaint is made. The Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines are designed to assist people to understand our complaints handling processes.

## What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the College, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

## The College's Commitment

The College is committed to handling complaints in a manner consistent with The Charter for Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition, modelling the Gospel practices of forgiveness and reconciliation by the way conflict is resolved. This involves respecting, where reasonably appropriate, confidentiality and adopting the principles of natural justice.

To manage complaints effectively, we have established a Complaints Handling Program in line with both the international complaints handling standard (ISO 10002:2014 Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations), and the Australian/New Zealand complaints handling standard (AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations).

Our program includes the establishment of an online complaints management system which allows us to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints. Regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of rectification action, where deficiencies are identified, are key to the College's commitment.

Many issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. In most cases these issues can be resolved at the school level through informal discussions with appropriate staff members.

## How Do I Make a Formal Complaint?

If you have been unable to resolve a matter informally, or simply wish to make a formal complaint you can do so by any of the following means:

- Online Feedback form (Complaints) on the College website [www.aquinas.wa.edu.au/connect/contact-us/feedback-form/](http://www.aquinas.wa.edu.au/connect/contact-us/feedback-form/)
- Sending an email to [complaints@aquinas.wa.edu.au](mailto:complaints@aquinas.wa.edu.au)
- Writing a letter to Aquinas College Complaints Manager Locked Bag 11, Bentley DC WA 6983
- Telephoning the College on 08 9450 0600 to register your concern.

All formal complaints will be logged into our online complaints management system and managed in accordance with the following procedure.

The College will accept anonymous complaints and will investigate the issues raised, if sufficient information is provided.

## **Our Internal Complaints Handling Process**

### **Valid Complaint**

Each 'complaint' received by the College will be assessed by the College Complaints Manager or a Complaints Officer to determine if it constitutes a valid complaint.

If it is a valid complaint, the following steps apply:

#### **Step 1**

Valid formal complaints are promptly logged through our online complaints management system where they are screened by one of our Complaints Officers, or in the case of complaints against the College Executive, by the College Complaints Manager.

#### **Step 2**

Valid complaints will be acknowledged in writing, as soon as practicable (within 3 College business days), and allocated a status, priority and target resolution date.

#### **Step 3**

The Complaints Officer will commence an investigation (within 10 College business days of step 2) into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness and natural justice, and make a determination.

#### **Step 4**

Following the determination, if appropriate, the Complaints Officer will formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant (within 20 College business days of a determination in step 3). The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

#### **Step 5**

If the initial response is not acceptable, the matter will be reviewed internally by the College Headmaster (within 20 College business days of receipt of a written complaint about the determination in step 4), who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The matter will be closed if the response of the College Headmaster is accepted. If the response of the College Headmaster is not accepted by the complainant, the matter may, at the direction of the complainant, be referred to the EREA Regional Director.

#### **Step 6**

If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives such as external mediation or conciliation.

#### **Step 7**

Valid complaints received, either verbal or written, will be entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement (at a time appropriate under the circumstances).

### **Who Handles Complaints?**

At the College level against:

- A student, parent or volunteer – College Deputy Headmaster or their delegate;
- A teacher – College Deputy Headmaster or their delegate;
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team of a School – College Headmaster or their delegate
- College Headmaster – EREA Regional Director, or their delegate;
- Member of the School Board - College Headmaster and EREA Regional Director, who will work with the Chair of the College Board;
- Chair of the School Board – EREA Regional Director.

## **Complaints relating to Child Protection**

There may, at times, be concerns or complaints relating to the College's Child Protection Program, for example regarding the management of a child protection incident.

When a child protection-related complaint is received by the College, it must first determine if the complaint triggers mandatory reporting to the relevant police and/or child protection agencies relevant to each state & territory throughout Australia. If so, the College must undertake that report.

In formalising a mandatory report, the College will use reasonable endeavours to follow its Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Protection Incidents in that jurisdiction.

Child protection complaints that do not raise concerns of unreported abuse, or a risk of abuse at a College, will be managed in the same manner as other complaints received by the College. The complaints will be recorded to ensure that any further developments relating to the same incident or issue are monitored.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and, if relevant to a person against whom a complaint is made. The College will use its reasonable endeavours to maintain the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process.

Personal, identifiable information about a complainant will only be made available for the purpose of addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) will be actively protected from disclosure.

## **Related Information**

Aquinas College Complaints Handling Policy  
Aquinas College Complaints Handling Program – CompliSpace web-enabled content  
Aquinas College Privacy Policy and Annexure – with CompliSpace web-enabled content  
Aquinas College Conflict of Interest Policy and Guidelines  
EREA Code of Conduct

For further information, contact the College Complaints Manager via any of the following:

Emailing [complaints@aquinas.wa.edu.au](mailto:complaints@aquinas.wa.edu.au)

Phoning (08) 9450 0600

Writing to Aquinas College Complaints Manager Locked Bag 11, Bentley DC WA 6983

The College Complaints Handling Policy can be found at

[www.aquinas.wa.edu.au/explore/resources/policies/complaints-handling/](http://www.aquinas.wa.edu.au/explore/resources/policies/complaints-handling/)