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| <b>Policy Title</b>                       | Grievance/Complaint Resolution Policy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Date Policy Approved</b>               | July 2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Policy Owner &amp; Position</b>        | Principal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Team Responsible for Policy</b>        | Principal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Authorised by</b>                      | Board                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Who is the Policy for?</b>             | Staff, students, parents <sup>1</sup> and community                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Version Control</b>                    | Version 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Statutory/ Legislative Requirement</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privacy Act</li> <li>• Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration (VRQA)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Relevant cross references</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy</li> <li>• The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct)</li> <li>• Staff Code of Conduct)</li> <li>• Vision, Purpose, Objects &amp; Values, Child Safety Undertaking, Principles &amp; Statement of Faith</li> <li>• Duty of Care Policy</li> <li>• Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy</li> <li>• Student Engagement Policy</li> </ul> |
| <b>Include during Induction</b>           | Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Review Date</b>                        | July 2029                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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| <b>Purpose of the Policy</b> | <p>To provide a set of principles and procedures for the resolution of grievances, complaints or appeals, hereafter referred to as grievances.</p> <p><i>“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” Ephesians 4:3</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Policy Statement</b>      | <p>Ballarat Christian College is committed to building a strong Christian focused community, ensuring a harmonious, fair, just, working and learning environment. Matthew 18:15-17</p> <p>Staff, students, parents<sup>1</sup> and community will have access to processes that allow for grievances to be resolved.</p> <p>All grievances will be dealt with in a supportive environment without victimisation or intimidation of anyone connected with the grievance either during or subsequent to a grievance resolution procedure.</p> |

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| Recommended process for resolving grievances | <p>This document outlines steps to be taken by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Parents<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Members of the Community</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                              | <p>A copy of this policy will be given to the complainants as soon as a grievance is reported to the College. The policy is also available on the College's website.</p> <p><b>1. Informal Process</b></p> <p>As a first step, informal and private attempts at resolution or reconciliation should be undertaken between the parties concerned in accordance with Matthew 5:24, “... <i>first go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.</i>”</p> <p><b>2. Formal Process</b></p> <p>Once a formal process is commenced, mediation is an available option at any stage of the process. This will be facilitated by the College and conducted by a person mutually agreed upon by the parties to the dispute.</p> <p><b>a) <i>for student grievances</i></b></p> <p>Complainants may refer grievances to a Teacher in the first instance. If the complainant prefers, their grievance may be submitted in writing to the teacher. Upon receipt of the grievance, the Teacher will assess the situation and organise to meet with the complainant and/or other parties involved, to resolve the situation as quickly as possible in an informal manner. The complainant may request that a support person of their choosing accompanies them to any meeting regarding their grievance.</p> <p>The Teacher may determine if other members of the College Community need to be consulted, such as parents<sup>1</sup>, chaplain, counsellor or other independent experts. Mediation may need to be facilitated in some cases as a result of this consultation.</p> <p>At the conclusion of the grievance resolution process, both parties in the dispute will be asked if the matter has been satisfactorily resolved. If not, the complainant may refer the matter to Executive staff and/or the Principal for further discussion/resolution.</p> <p><b>b) <i>for grievances of staff, parents<sup>1</sup> and members of the community.</i></b></p> <p>The complainant must refer the grievance to the appropriate Head of School and/or Principal in writing.</p> <p>Upon receipt of the grievance, the Principal will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) ensure that the person against whom the complaint is made is informed and given reasonable time to respond.</li> </ul> |

- ii) organise to meet with the complainant and/or other parties involved to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

Both parties may request that a support person of their choosing accompanies them to any meeting regarding their grievance.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the result or handling of their grievance by Ballarat Christian College staff, the complainant may submit a formal complaint to the Chair of the Ballarat Christian College Board.

All meetings, discussions and outcomes will be documented and given a copy given to the complainant in writing. In the case of a student complainant, a copy will also be placed on the student's file.

**c) *for grievances against the Principal***

The complainant may refer the grievance to the Chair of the Board in writing.

Contact between the Principal and the Complainant would not occur (except in an exceptional circumstance) and the delegated Head of School would assume responsibility for school communication with the complainant.

The role of the Chair of the College Board is to:

- i) ensure the College Board is properly briefed and the individual members of the Board adhere to the mutually agreed guidelines.
- ii) ensure the Principal is accorded natural justice and the guidelines for the role of the Board are adhered to.
- iii) be responsible for controlling the publicity and communication to the whole College body, if required, when the complaint is filed and concluded.
- iv) The role of the Board is to ensure correct processes are observed along mutually agreed guidelines.
- v) Upon receipt of the grievance, the Chair of the Board will:
- vi) ensure that the Principal is informed and given reasonable time to respond.
- vii) organise to meet with the complainant and/or other parties involved to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.
- viii) Both parties may request that a support person of their choosing accompanies them to any meeting regarding their grievance.

**d) *Records***

Where the matter enters a formal process, it is expected that all parties, including the College, shall maintain documentary records of meetings, correspondence and steps taken to resolve the matter under these guidelines. At this time, parties involved should be asked for background information and notes will be taken of the information furnished. Furthermore, any records, once the formal complaint is resolved, will be kept securely and confidentially.

#### **e) *Natural Justice***

Both individuals who are the subject of a complaint and individuals making complaints have the right to be afforded natural justice.

A person who is the subject of a complaint has the right to:

- be informed of the nature of the allegations in the first instance
- respond to the allegations
- an impartial hearing, and fair and equitable treatment
- an understanding that all reasonable care will be taken to ensure the matter is handled confidentially
- engage the person or organisation of their choice to provide assistance and support throughout the course of the matter (e.g., assisting with the preparation of responses, representation, accompanying to meetings, etc.) at their own cost.
- access to any documentation to be relied on by any person in the hearing relating to the complaint (including the person hearing the complaint)

A person making a complaint has the right to:

- an understanding that all reasonable care will be taken to ensure the matter is handled confidentially
- an impartial hearing, respect, and fair and equitable treatment
- engage the person or organisation of their choice to provide assistance and support throughout the course of the matter at their own cost
- access to any documentation to be relied on by any person in the hearing relating to the complaint (including the person hearing the complaint).

### **3. Handling a Grievance or Complaint**

Ballarat Christian College is committed to building a strong Christ-focused community, ensuring a harmonious, fair, just, working and learning environment, where grievances and complaints are handled as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17.

- In the first instant an attempt should be made informally to resolve the issue with the other party concerned.
- However, if this attempt is unsuccessful and the grievance/complaint is unresolved a formal complaint should be lodged using the Complaint/Grievance Form - attached below.
- The Grievances/Complaints Form should be submitted to the Teacher, Head of School, Business Manager, or Principal (as appropriate - see section 2 above).
- Upon receiving a grievance/complaint, the College will acknowledge such in writing within 2 business days.
- The College shall keep the complainant informed of the progress of the grievance/ complaint, any proposed actions, and the expected timeframe for resolution.
- The aim is to resolve complaints or grievances in a timely manner, generally within 30 calendar days where possible.
- Where the College believes that more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or grievance, the College will inform the complainant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required and will regularly update the complainant on the progress of the matter.

#### 4. Appeals

Appeals to the decisions made by the College regarding any complaints or grievances lodged under the process may be appealed to the Principal of the College, or to the Board if the matter concerns the College Principal.

Appeals should be lodged using the Complaint/Grievance Form (attached below) - *please tick the **APPEAL** box in the top right corner*

- Submit all appeal forms (and any supporting or additional documentation) to the Principal at [principalpa@balcc.vic.edu.au](mailto:principalpa@balcc.vic.edu.au), or to the Board at [boardsecretary@balcc.vic.edu.au](mailto:boardsecretary@balcc.vic.edu.au)
- Upon receiving an appeal, the College will acknowledge it in writing within 2 business days.
- The College will keep the appellant informed of the progress of your appeal, proposed actions and the expected timeframe for resolution.
- Our aim is to resolve appeals in a timely manner, generally within 30 calendar days where possible.
- We will ensure that the investigation process is impartial and encompasses the Principles of Natural Justice. No assumptions will be made, nor any action taken, until all relevant information has been collected and considered.
- There will be no victimisation against anyone who lodges an appeal.

#### External Arbitration

At any stage the complainant can seek recourse to appropriate legal means at their own expense. The solution is then no longer in the hands of the complainants or the College.

We recognise the right of individuals to approach an external agency if the formal complaint or grievance has not resolved the issue to their satisfaction.

Our nominated external complaints resolution party is Dr Andrew Boutros, True Success. Ph 0418 755 711, 12 Leslie Avenue Boronia Vic 3155.

Should these previous avenues fail to resolve the matter, a complaint or grievance may be referred to the VRQA ([www.vrqa.vic.gov.au](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au)).

| Ballarat Christian College Grievance Policy                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                     |       |                          |           |                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| Source                                                                                          | Student                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Parent <sup>1</sup> | Staff | General Community Member | Anyone    | Mediation is available at any stage |
| Against                                                                                         | Any member of the Ballarat Christian College Community                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                     |       |                          | Principal |                                     |
| Contact/<br>Escalation<br>Procedure                                                             | Teacher                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                     | ↓     | ↓                        | ↓         |                                     |
|                                                                                                 | Head of School                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                     |       | ↓                        | ↓         |                                     |
|                                                                                                 | Principal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                     |       |                          | ↓         |                                     |
|                                                                                                 | Ballarat Christian College Board                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                     |       |                          |           |                                     |
| At any stage the complainant can seek recourse to appropriate legal means at their own expense. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                     |       |                          |           |                                     |
| The solution is then no longer in the hands of the complainants or the College.                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                     |       |                          |           |                                     |
| <hr/>                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                     |       |                          |           |                                     |
| Publication and Accessibility to Policy                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Provided to any complainant as soon as possible</li><li>✓ Included in Induction Course</li><li>✓ Available on College Website</li><li>✓ Annually reviewed with all staff</li><li>✓ Shared with students (P-12) at their level of understanding</li></ul> |                     |       |                          |           |                                     |
| Acknowledgement                                                                                 | The College acknowledges the permission of another Christian School to use the content of their policy in developing this document.                                                                                                                                                              |                     |       |                          |           |                                     |

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|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name: | Relationship with College (student, staff, parent <sup>1</sup> , community): |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Contact details: | Date of meeting:   |
| Phone: _____     | Date issue raised: |
| Address: _____   |                    |
| _____            |                    |
| Email: _____     |                    |

Who is the subject of the grievance/complaint?

Details of your grievance/complaint:

Have you received a copy of the Grievance/Complaint Resolution Policy?

☐ Yes

☐ No (available from the College or the College website at [www.balcc.vic.edu.au](http://www.balcc.vic.edu.au))

Action:

What actions have you taken already to resolve the problem?

What do you believe is needed now to solve the problem?

Action Plan:

What has been decided?

What is to be done?

By whom?

Review Dates(s):

Results of Action Plan:

I consider the grievance/complaint raised has been resolved to my satisfaction:

Yes ☐

No ☐

**Signed**

Complainant:

Person in Authority:

### College Use

|                          |                                    |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Logged: Entry date _____ | Acknowledgement sent: _____        |
| Number: _____            | Referred for further action: _____ |
|                          | Filed: _____                       |