



# RAISING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

## POLICY

### **Rationale**

Cohuna Secondary College recognises that involving parents in their child's education is critical to children's development and learning. We emphasise fostering positive relationships with parents and families and developing strong school community partnerships. We recognise that in all partnerships there will be times when there are disagreements and issues of concern that will need to be resolved. Our approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on our values of Respect, Commitment, Teamwork and Excellence.

### **Aim**

To respond to parent concerns and complaints in an effective and timely manner.

### **Implementation**

- These procedures cover concerns and complaints about:
  - General issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's code of conduct
  - Incidents of bullying and harassment in the classroom or the school yard
  - Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
  - Communication with parents
  - School essential education charges and payments
  - General administrative issues
- These procedures do not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the DET School Policies and Advisory Guide. Those matters include:
  - Student discipline matters involving expulsions
  - Complaints about employee conduct or performance and complaints that should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action
  - Complaints by the Department's employees related to their employment
  - Student critical incident matters
  - Other criminal matters
  - The College make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the Department
- The college expects a person raising a concern or complaint to:
  - Do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs
  - Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
  - Maintain and respect the privacy of all parties
  - Acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
  - Act in good faith, in a calm and courteous manner

- Show respect and understanding of each other's point of view, and view and value difference, rather than judge and blame
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced
- The college will address any concerns and complaints received from parents courteously, efficiently, fairly, promptly and in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework.
- A parent wishing to complain or raise a concern should telephone or write to or make an appointment to see one of the following people as appropriate:
  - The student's teacher
  - The Year Level Coordinator
  - Assistant Principal or
  - The Principal.
- Parents wishing to raise a concern or complaint can seek the services of an advocate if they feel they are unable to express their concern clearly. An advocate can be a friend or someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation who does not receive a fee for service.
- If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or in part, the school will offer an appropriate remedy. Depending on the circumstances, this may include:
  - An explanation or further information about the issue
  - Mediation, counselling or other support
  - An apology
  - Change of decision
  - Change of policy, procedures or practices
  - Cancellation of debt (such as for school policies)
  - An essential education item refund
- If the parent with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, they should contact the Department of Education's – North Western Regional Office

16<sup>TH</sup> August 2016

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....