



Fitzroy Community School

Complaints Policy

To ensure that complaints are effectively investigated and resolved

To communicate avenues of raising complaints.

Purpose:

To enable the School to provide a consistent and equitable response to complaints.

To meet the requirements of the Child Safe Standards in Ministerial Order 1359 and the VRQA Minimum Standards for School Registration.

Scope:

Staff, Students, Parents / Carers of enrolled students, Volunteers and other School Community Members and members of the public

Implemented by:

Chaplains, FCS Board

Approved by:

FCS Board, September 2025

Reviewed:

Every three years or as regulatory changes arise or improvements are identified

Communicated via:

FCS website, Policies and Procedures Manual, staff induction and training, student presentation

Overview

FCS understands that from time-to-time students, parents/carers, community members, and members of the general public may be dissatisfied with an outcome of a request or situation and wish to make a complaint. This policy outlines the avenues and process that will be followed for all complaints raised with the school.

There may be times when a complaint relates to Child Safety. In this situation, the response will be handled as per the Child Safety Reporting Policy & Procedures, however if the situation falls outside of the scope of that policy it will be handled in the same way as other complaints outlined below.

Whilst dealing with complaints the School will:

- prioritise student wellbeing and educational needs
- adhere to all school policies and processes, as well as taking instruction from external agencies as appropriate

- create and promote an environment where complaints are taken seriously
- ensure that all those involved have a reasonable opportunity to have their voice heard, defend themselves and/or explain their understanding of the context and any extenuating circumstances
- ensure that all responses and outcomes are fair, unbiased, consistent, and proportionate
- ensure all Complaints are recorded in the Complaints Register and that the Board reviews this register annually.

Definitions

Complaint

A complaint may be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about an identifiable situation, or the specific actions or lack of action in relation to a situation for which the school is responsible.

- Incidents, situations, or general concerns regarding a student or individual in the school community
- Situation or incident relating to the operation of the school
- A breach of a school policy, agreement, or code of conduct
- The handling of an incident, situation, or circumstance
- The outcome of a decision made by the School, including matters relating to procedural fairness

What is not a complaint

The initial raising of a day-to-day matter with the school is not included in the scope of this policy. If an individual is not satisfied with the response or action in relation to the matter, they may subsequently raise it as a complaint as per the steps below.

Raising a Complaint

For students

Students are encouraged to speak with a trusted adult or family member regarding their complaints. The trusted adult or family member can raise a complaint on behalf of the student, if requested by the student to do so or deemed necessary by the adult. Where suitable the student will be involved in the process until an outcome is achieved.

Students can approach the Chaplain, who can raise a complaint on their behalf. Where suitable the student will be involved in the process until an outcome is achieved.

Students are presented information on these avenues and this policy in a child friendly and age-appropriate way as part of their class program. This program delivery takes into account the diverse needs of students and families.

Student Complaints do not need to be made in writing but should be transcribed by the staff member receiving the Complaint.

For Adults

Complaints should be made in writing and directed to the Board Chair via complaints@fcs.vic.edu.au.

During the process, School community members are asked to:

- Provide detailed information
- Maintain and respect everyone's privacy and confidentiality
- Be calm, courteous and honest
- Put the Complaint in writing

Any matters relating to Child Safety should be raised in an urgent manner; follow the Child Safety Reporting Policy and Procedures.

External Complaints

Any complaint received by the school via another avenue will be re-directed to complaints@fcs.vic.edu.au.

Volunteers who receive a complaint

Any volunteer who receives a complaint should direct it to complaints@fcs.vic.edu.au.

Responding to Complaints

The School's response will be prompt, courteous, and in line with procedural fairness. All matters will be dealt with in-line with School policies and procedures.

The following will be followed in response to a complaint:

- The Board Chair will determine the most appropriate individual to manage and respond to the complaint.
- The complaint will be acknowledged in writing
- All formal discussions and actions will be documented
- The complainant's wellbeing will be considered
- Steps to identify and avoid victimisation will be taken
- Steps to identify and avoid conflicts of interest will be taken in line with the school's Conflict of Interest Policy

All those involved in handling complaints will take appropriate measures to ensure each matter is dealt with discreetly, in a timely manner, and that confidentiality and privacy of information is maintained in accordance with legislative and policy requirements and that the Conflict of Interest Policy is followed.

If the complaint is related to the Principal, a Board member, or where a conflict of interest exists, the Board Chair will immediately re-direct the complaint to the Special Purpose Committee which will manage this process themselves.

Keeping and Securing Records

Digital records are to be securely stored in a digital file (document storage facility) on the school's file server, but which is password protected and accessible only to the Board Chair or where appropriate, the Principal.

Outcomes

The school will work with the relevant individual/s to find an appropriate outcome which might include:

- An explanation or further information that resolves the complaint
- Mediation, counselling or other support
- An apology, expression of regret or admission of fault
- Review of a decision, including the potential for the original decision to be altered
- Review of policies, procedures or practices
- Making a report or referral to external agencies or support services

Timeframes

Timeframes for dealing with complaints will vary depending on the complexity of the matter. However, the school will take all reasonable efforts to ensure that they are addressed:

- As promptly and efficiently as practicable
- In a manner that supports due process and the principles of natural justice

If a Complaint is not Resolved

Any matter that remains unresolved after being dealt with by the Chair's delegate will be referred to the School Board. The School Board will determine appropriate next steps.

If the complaint refers to an action of any person who is also a Board member or in attendance at the Board meeting, a Conflict of Interest Management Plan may be developed in line with the Conflict of Interest Policy.

Related Resources

- VRQA Minimum Standards for School Registration
- Ministerial Order 1359
- Complaints Register

Related Policies

- Child Safety Reporting Policy
- Special Purpose Committee Terms of Reference
- Whistleblower Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy