

Grievance Policy and Procedure (Student)

Purpose

Rossbourne School is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy environment characterised by respect, tolerance and support; and which also respects differing learning styles and celebrates student achievements. Part of this commitment involves ensuring students have access to processes that allow for grievances to be managed appropriately, promptly, fairly and with sensitivity. In doing so, we seek to ensure that our students feel empowered, supported and heard throughout their educational journey at the School, especially when raising grievances with us. The School takes all complaints and concerns received from students seriously. Consistent with this commitment, this policy outlines the School's approach to addressing student grievances.

Scope

This policy applies to all students of the School. This policy does not apply to:

- (a) Staff grievances, which should be raised in accordance with the School's Grievance Policy and Procedure (Staff).
- (b) Parent or other member of the community grievances, which should be raised in accordance with the School's Grievance Policy and Procedure (Community).
- (c) Concerns about child abuse, reportable conduct and other student safety and wellbeing matters, which will be addressed in accordance with the Student Safety and Wellbeing – Raising and Responding to Concerns Policy.
- (d) Legal matters, including requests for compensation, payment and redress.

Definitions

Staff	An individual working in a school environment who is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Directly engaged (volunteers) or employed by the School• A contracted service provider engaged by the School• A labour hire worker• A secondee
Student	A person who is to be enrolled at, enrolled or attends the School

Framework

This policy and procedure has detailed information about how students can raise and resolve grievances.

The School's framework for dealing with grievances involves a three-step process, namely:

- Stage 1 - A concern is raised with the School.
- Stage 2 – A formal written complaint is made to the Principal.
- Stage 3 - A review by the Chair of the School Board is requested.

Further details about these Stages are set out in Schedule 1. Common considerations when the School is managing grievances are set out in Schedule 2.

In practice, students should raise any grievances with the relevant staff member or any member of staff they feel comfortable speaking with, including:

- Classroom Teachers
- Homeroom Teachers
- School Section Leaders
- Deputy Principal
- School Psychologists
- If your concern is about student safety and wellbeing, and you are not comfortable speaking with the staff referred to above, speak to the Principal or speak to any staff member you feel comfortable speaking to
- If your concern is about the Principal, you can speak to the Chair of the School Board.

The School's focus will be on understanding the nature of the problem raised, the people involved, and the options available to resolve the grievance.

Principles

The guiding principles in this policy and procedure apply to students who raise a grievance with the School. In this regard, students can expect to:

- Be treated with courtesy and respect.
- Talk about their grievance in confidence with a member of staff and be reminded that speaking up in good faith is the right thing to do (as this is not dobbing).
- Have the grievance taken seriously, considered impartially, and dealt with on the merits.
- Be supported during the grievance handling process, including by the School Psychologists, School Section Leader or the Principal, and the School will ensure there is procedural fairness.
- Not be victimised or subjected to punishment, for raising grievances in good faith.

In turn, the School expects that students, when raising a grievance, will:

- Treat others (including School staff, students and parents, both former and present) with respect and courtesy.
- Raise grievances in accordance with this policy, and as soon as possible after the event giving rise to the grievance has occurred.
- Be open and honest when raising a grievance and provide complete and factual information about the grievance.
- Ask for assistance or further information as needed.
- Act in good faith to achieve a reasonable outcome.
- Advise an appropriate member of staff if they have any further concerns about the grievance or feel that they are being treated differently for raising a grievance.
- Be understanding and accepting of any outcome reached, being mindful that the School must sometimes manage the interests of a number of students and other individuals when making decisions and may be privy to confidential information not known to the person raising the grievance.

Our aim is for the quick resolution of student concerns, ideally without there being a need for a formal complaint to be made. As the Board appoints the Principal to manage the day-to-day operations of the School, a review by the Chair of the School Board should be a last resort.

Timeframes listed in this policy are only a guide and can vary due to the nature of the grievance and surrounding circumstances.

Where timeframes set out in this policy cannot be met, the School will strive to communicate with the affected parties about the status of the grievance, and the steps taken (or to be taken) to progress a resolution.

Please note that the processes outlined in this policy are intended to be conciliatory, non-adversarial and non-legal.

Recommendations for Initially Raising Concerns (Stage 1)

In the first instance, students should raise concerns directly with School staff. The School must be aware of a concern in order to address it.

The School believes that a concern is often best resolved closest to its source, and when a concern relates to a student, the School encourages concerns to be raised with the relevant staff member. However, depending on the nature and severity of an issue, concerns may instead be raised directly with a senior staff member (e.g. Deputy Principal or School Section Leader).

The following considerations are relevant prior to, and when raising a concern:

- Take the time to identify the key concern or problem prior to contacting School staff.
- Decide whether the issue or problem is a complaint, concern, enquiry or suggestion. This will help in finding a solution.
- Identify the people involved.
- Consider the outcome you are trying to achieve (while being realistic and open to other outcomes and solutions).
- If there is more than one concern or problem, write a list – in order of importance to you - so that you are adequately prepared.
- Consider whether there are any interim measures you would like the School to consider whilst it makes enquiries about the issue or problem.
- Make an appointment to meet with the relevant staff member to discuss the concern - the best way to do this is to contact Reception to arrange a mutually convenient time for a telephone call or meeting.
- Remain calm when conveying your concerns. The School is within its rights to terminate a conversation with the person raising the concern until such time that a calm conversation can continue.

Management of Records

The School will maintain accurate and up to date records in relation to any complaint or grievance and any associated investigation conducted in relation to the complaint or grievance.

Records relating to a complaint or grievance will be stored securely to protect confidentiality.

The School will manage records pursuant to its privacy and confidentiality obligations.

Confidentiality

Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained by the School at all times when dealing with a grievance, with information only being provided to those who have a right or need to know.

Communication

This policy will be reviewed every two years and is available to students, staff and the school community via the School's website. This policy (or aspects thereof) will also feature in communications via the School newsletters and at assemblies as required.

Related Documents

- Student Safety and Wellbeing – Raising and Responding to Concerns
- Student Safety and Wellbeing - Staff Code of Conduct
- Grievance Policy and Procedures (Staff)
- Grievance Policy and Procedures (Community)
- Grievance and Appeals Form
- Grievance and Appeals Register
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Information Privacy Act 200 (Vic)
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cth)

POLICY OWNER	APPROVED BY SCHOOL BOARD/PRINCIPAL	DATE APPROVED	VERSION	REVIEW DATE
Principal	School Board	22 April 2026	1	22 April 2028

Schedule 1: Further Details about the School’s Grievances Resolution Procedure

Stage 1: Raise the Concern

	Details	Comment
Step 1	Identify the Concern	<p>Clarify your concern:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“who, what, when, where, why, and how”.</p> <p>Identify the outcome you are trying to achieve by raising your concern.</p>
Step 2	Raise the Concern	<p>The School believes that a concern is often best resolved closest to its source and encourages concerns to be raised with the relevant classroom teacher or your homeroom teacher in the first instance.</p> <p>Depending on the nature and severity of an issue, concerns may instead be raised directly with a senior staff member (e.g. School Section Leader). However, that senior staff member may decide to delegate responsibility for dealing with the concern to another appropriate staff member (e.g. Principal).</p>
Step 3	Acknowledgement	<p>Once a concern is raised, the School staff will record (either by way of an electronic file note or written correspondence) the details of the concern including your name and contact details. The School’s focus will be on understanding the nature of the problem, the party or parties involved, and the nature of any agreeable solutions.</p>
Step 4	Outcome	<p>Where an agreeable solution is available, this will usually be communicated in writing and verbally to the student (being usually within five (5) business days of the outcome being reached).</p> <p>Where a mutually agreed outcome between the School and the student is not appropriate, or possible, the staff member handling the concern will make a decision that best aligns with the School’s procedures and legal obligations.</p> <p>This decision will be communicated in writing to the student (being usually within five (5) business days of the outcome being reached), and the communication will be kept on the relevant student’s (and if appropriate, staff member’s) file.</p>

Stage 2: Make a Complaint

	Details	Comment
Step 1	Make a Complaint	<p>If you are not satisfied with the way your concern has been handled, you may choose to make a formal written complaint.</p> <p>Complaints should ordinarily be made within one (1) calendar month of the initial concern first being raised with the School. A formal complaint should at first instance be addressed to the Principal.</p> <p>If the complaint concerns the Principal, the complaint should be made to the Chair of the School Board (see Stage 3), in which case the Chair of the School Board will manage the process outlined below.</p> <p>You may lodge a formal written complaint to the Principal at principal@rossbourne.vic.edu.au. You may also go to or call Reception on (03) 9819 4611 to arrange a meeting.</p> <p>Please note that if phoning to arrange a meeting, Reception staff will take your details and endeavour to confirm a meeting time as soon as it is practicable to do so.</p>
Step 2	Acknowledge receipt	The Principal will acknowledge receipt of the formal written complaint as soon as practicable (being usually within five (5) business days).
Step 3	Review of complaint	<p>When dealing with a formal written complaint, the School's objective is to achieve a resolution by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifying the substance of the complaint, and the steps taken by the School to address the initial concern. • Identifying whether the complaint raises an issue regarding non-compliance with the School's procedures. • Identifying whether the complaint raises an issue that would be more appropriately addressed under another relevant School policy.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating with the student and relevant parent(s), student(s) and staff, in an attempt to resolve the issue by agreement (where practicable). Failing agreement, investigating the complaint and deciding appropriate outcomes in accordance with procedural fairness and natural justice principles. <p>The Principal may delegate parts of the complaint-management process, and seek the assistance of third parties, however any ultimate decision will still be made by the Principal. If the Principal or delegate arranges to speak with you, you may request to have someone else present as a support person. The support person can be a relative or a friend, but please note that the role of a support person is to provide you with support and not to act as an advocate.</p>
Step 4	Outcome	The Principal or delegate will aim to communicate the outcome of a formal written complaint in writing within fifteen (15) business days where practicable. The Principal will promptly report any formal written complaints, and relevant outcomes, to the Board. This is part of the cyclical review and risk management process at the School.

Stage 3: Request a Review

	Details	Comment
Step 1	Request a review by the Chair of the Board	<p>If you are not satisfied that your formal written complaint has been adequately resolved by the Principal, you may request a review by writing to the Chair of the School Board via email at:</p> <p>boardchair@rossbourne.vic.edu.au or via post: Chair of the School Board Rossbourne School 131 Power Street Hawthorn VIC 3122</p> <p>Students who raise grievances with other Board members will be directed to follow the procedures set out in this policy (e.g. raising a complaint with the Principal or requesting a review by writing to the Chair of the School Board).</p>

		<p>Requests for review must be made in writing within ten (10) business days of the date the Principal communicated the outcome of your complaint in writing.</p> <p>The grounds for the review, and in particular any concerns you have with the way the relevant complaint was dealt with, must be clearly identified in the request for review.</p>
Step 2	Review	<p>Please note that in accordance with good governance, the Board entrusts the Principal with the day-to-day management of the School, and in particular its staff and students.</p> <p>The Principal is accorded significant discretion regarding such matters. Accordingly, any review of the Principal's decision under this policy will be confined to the Chair of the School Board deciding whether there is evidence that the School's procedures have not been followed, in a way likely to have meaningfully influenced the Principal's decision, or that the Principal unreasonably exercised his or her discretion.</p> <p>The Chair of the School Board may delegate parts of the review, or seek the assistance of third parties, however any ultimate decision will still be made by the Chair of the School Board.</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt, the Chair of the School Board will not delegate to the Principal a review of a decision they have already made. However, if the Chair of the School Board is satisfied that a complaint has not been properly raised (or dealt) with by the Principal (and the Principal does not otherwise have a conflict of interest), the Chair of the School Board may refer the matter to the Principal to make an initial decision (noting that decision would then create a right to request a review).</p>
Step 3	Outcome	<p>The Chair of the School Board will aim to communicate the outcome of a request for review in writing within forty-five (45) business days where practicable. The Chair of the Board will promptly report any requests for review, and relevant outcomes, to the Board.</p>

Schedule 2: Relevant Considerations

Withdrawal of a Grievance

A grievance can be withdrawn at any stage during the processes outlined in this policy. A grievance can only be withdrawn by the person who made the complaint to the School. Ideally, all grievances should be retracted in writing, however a dated notation on the School's systems, stating the grievance has been withdrawn verbally by the student can be made by a staff member at the School responsible for managing the grievance. The School will notify affected parties if a grievance is withdrawn, where considered appropriate. Regardless of the student's wish to withdraw a grievance, complaints that have disciplinary implications may still be followed up by the School.

Anonymous Grievances

The School is committed to dealing with grievances in accordance with the processes outlined in this policy. The School respects in some cases, complainants would prefer to remain anonymous and not put a name to their grievances. The School treats grievances about the School, a staff member, its contractors, volunteers, a student's education, enrolment and/or a student's wellbeing with the utmost importance and will investigate such grievances raised to the fullest extent practicable. However, anonymity can make it difficult for the School to effectively resolve grievances (particularly where the School is being asked to accept an anonymous source's version of events) and are accordingly discouraged.

Previously Addressed, Stale or Vexatious Grievances

Grievances that have been previously addressed by the School or externally, or which were not raised with the School within a reasonable period of time (having regard to the nature of the relevant grievance), will not be considered in the absence of highly relevant new information and/or evidence coming to light. The School does not tolerate vexatious grievances.

External Grievances and Redress

The School acknowledges that grievances relating to the School can be made to an external body at any stage of the grievance process or be the subject of legal action. However, the School encourages its community to raise any grievances, and work to resolve such matters, in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.