



COMPLAINTS & APPEALS POLICY

International Students

CONTEXT

The purpose of this policy is to draw attention to the Complaints and Appeals policy available to International students and their parent/guardian. All students have access to the Sacred Heart College Senior Student Grievance Policy for matters relating to academic and behaviour grievances which gives opportunity to access procedures to facilitate the resolution of a dispute or complaint. This Grievance Policy is based on the principles and procedures of Due Process. A support person may accompany the student in this process.

PRINCIPLES

Key principles underpin the Complaints and Appeals process:

- That Complaints and Appeals will be treated respectfully by all parties;
- That there will be a genuine attempt to acknowledge the issues that underpin the Complaints and/or Appeals by all parties;
- That responses to Complaints and Appeals will be cognizant of principles outlined in the National Code 2007;
- That all Complaints and Appeals will be dealt with expediently so as to produce outcomes in the shortest possible time.

PROCESS

The Student Grievance Policy is distributed to all students through the School Diary. Students will be informed of this policy through the Orientation program conducted at Sacred Heart College Senior.

For disputes or complaints not covered by the Student Grievance Policy and related in particular, to Course Progress and Attendance, an International student or their parent/guardian has 10 working days to access this policy.

If the matter cannot be resolved as a result of an error in calculation or mediation, it will be referred to the Principal.

There may be other grounds for appeal against the decision, which are generally related to compassionate or compelling circumstances. This means unusual or exceptional circumstances that are not part of daily life experience.

The following are grounds that must be strictly addressed in an appeals process with supporting evidence provided:

- Serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student is unable to attend classes for a significant period of time
- Bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents
- Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel
- A traumatic experience which could include involvement in, or witnessing a serious accident; and witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime

PROCEDURES

The student or parent/guardian must notify the school in writing of the nature and detail of the complaint.

The student has the opportunity to present their case to the Principal. They may nominate a support person (such as the International Student Liaison Officer) to accompany them at any stage of the dispute resolution process.

Sacred Heart College Senior's internal formal complaints process will commence within 10 working days of the lodgement of the complaint with the Principal.

Once the Principal has come to a decision regarding the complaint, the student will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome.

If the complainant is not successful or the student is dissatisfied with the complaints procedure, the International Student Coordinator will advise the student of the external complaints process available to them.

A student has the right to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection Laws in the case of financial disputes or to pursue other legal action.

The purpose of Sacred Heart College Senior Complaints and Appeals Policy is to provide a student or parent(s)/homestay parent with the opportunity to access procedures to facilitate the resolution of a dispute or complaint. These internal procedures are a conciliatory and non-legal process.

In the first instance, Sacred Heart College Senior requests there is an attempt to informally resolve the issue. If this is unsatisfactory or does not result in a resolution of the matter, the internal formal complaints handling procedure will be followed.

The process of this grievance procedure is confidential and any complaints are a matter between the parties concerned and those directly involved in the complaints' handling process.

If the student or parent(s)/homestay parent remains dissatisfied with the outcome, Sacred Heart College Senior will advise of access to an independent external appeals process.

Grievances brought by a student against another student will be dealt with under the School's policy.

How:

- a) Students should contact the Pastoral Group Teacher or the Pastoral Care Coordinator in the first instance to attempt mediation/informal resolution of the complaint.
- b) If the matter cannot be resolved through mediation, the matter will be referred to the Deputy Principal or Principal.
- c) At this point, the student should notify the School in writing of the nature and details of the complaint.
- d) Each complainant has the opportunity to present his case to the Deputy Principal or Principal. Students may be accompanied by a support person.
- e) The formal complaints process will commence within 10 working days of the lodgement of the complaint with the Principal or delegate.
- f) Once the Deputy Principal or Principal has come to a decision regarding the complaint, the student will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome.
- g) If the complaints procedure finds in favour of the student, Sacred Heart College Senior will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventative action required.
- h) If the complaints procedure does not find in favour of the student or the student is dissatisfied with the result of the complaints procedure, he will be informed of the external complaints and appeals process available to them at minimal or no cost.
- i) Sacred Heart College Senior undertakes to finalise all grievance procedures within a reasonable time-frame as per Standard 8 of the Code.

- j) For the duration of the appeals process, the student is required to maintain enrolment and attendance at all classes as normal.

External appeals bodies:

- Institute of Arbitrators and Mediators of Australia (IAMA) at <http://www.iama.org.au/>
- National Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Service at <http://www.nadrac.gov.au/>
- Access Counselling at www.access-ocar.com.au/

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