



Avila College

COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION POLICY

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Rationale

In keeping with Catholic social teaching, the Avila College Mission and Vision statements and the College's *Parent / Guardian Code of Belonging*, we are committed to building and maintaining a school culture that features a reverence for the innate dignity of each person, a shared resolve to respect members' rights and responsibilities, the pursuit of justice and a desire for conciliation.

In building and nurturing this culture, Avila College acknowledges that students, parents and staff can sometimes feel aggrieved about something that is happening at Avila College. Every member of our community has a right to have their grievance or complaint addressed. Avila College will work positively and resolutely to achieve a satisfactory outcome for the people involved.

This policy outlines our principles and procedures for *receiving and resolving complaints from parents*, either on a specific parent-school concern or on behalf of their daughter.

Procedures for receiving and responding directly to student complaints (e.g., assessment, about a teacher, another student(s) or an operational matter) are addressed separately through a student's Homeroom Teacher, Year Level Coordinator or the appropriate Curriculum Leader. The *Creating a Culture of Safety – Student Anti-Bullying Policy* is another mechanism by which a student can raise a relevant complaint in order for it to be addressed.

Procedures for receiving and responding to staff complaints are addressed separately in issue-specific Avila College policies, listed at the conclusion of this policy statement. These include the *Workplace and Equal Opportunity Policy* and the *Anti Bullying Policy (Work Place)*. Staff may also choose to have a grievance pertaining to employment conditions addressed through processes outlined in the Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement (VCEMEA) 2018 (section, 22:1-4, Disputes) as amended from time to time.

Guiding Principles

In receiving and responding to complaints, the following guiding principles will direct and shape Avila College's actions:

- We will work with the complainant with respect, courtesy and openness and with a genuine desire to achieve fair and reasonable decisions.
- The complaint will be resolved as quickly as possible.
- Confidentiality, impartiality and the principles of natural justice will form the basis of our complaints resolution process.

- The person(s) facing the complaint will be provided with detailed information about the substance of the complaint and will have the opportunity to respond.
- Personal information is confidential, but may need to be disclosed in connection with the resolution process.
- Our resolution process will be grounded in sound and fair procedures for information sharing.
- The needs of the school community will be considered.

Procedures

Expectations of People Making a Complaint

In making a complaint, Avila College requests and expects that the complainant will:

- Raise the concern of complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen;
- Communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair and respectful;
- Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint;
- Observe confidentiality and a respect for sensitive issues;
- Act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties;
- Have realistic and reasonable expectations about possible outcomes/remedies.

We expect that complaints from parents relating to their daughter's alleged treatment by another member of the Avila College community will:

- Be referred directly to her Homeroom or Subject Teacher, Year Level Coordinator or any other member of the teaching staff; *and*
- Not involve a direct approach to anyone allegedly involved in the complaint.

Process for making a complaint

The process for making a complaint is via an email or phone call registering the complaint and requesting a phone conference or a face-to-face meeting.

Complainants and staff are strongly discouraged from sending or discussing confidential, contentious and/or emotional information via email. These matters are best discussed face-to-face or over the phone.

In raising concerns on behalf of your child, or making a complaint about the school's practices or treatment of your child, **we expect that parents will:**

- listen to their child, but remember that a different 'reality' may exist elsewhere;
- observe the school's stated procedures for raising and resolving a grievance/complaint;
- follow specified protocol for communication with staff members, including making appointments at a mutually convenient time and communicating your concerns in a constructive manner;
- refrain from approaching another child while in the care of the school to discuss or chastise them because of actions towards your child. Refer the matter directly to your child's Homeroom Teacher for follow-up and investigation by the school.

In responding to your concerns or a complaint, **we expect that staff will:**

- observe confidentiality and a respect for sensitive issues;
- ensure your views and opinions are heard and understood;
- communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair and respectful;
- ensure a timely response to your concerns/complaint; ideally acknowledgement of receipt of complaint within 72 hours and response within 7 days;
- strive for resolutions and outcomes that are satisfactory to all parties.
- keep a record of event(s)
- In respect to issues between student(s) respond in a way that reflects the College Restorative approach as outlined in *Creating a Culture of Safety – Student Anti-Bullying Policy* and the *Student Behaviour Policy*.

Staff Safety and Wellbeing

The school places high value and priority on maintaining a safe and respectful working environment for our staff. We regard certain behaviours as harmful and unacceptable insofar as they compromise the safety and professional wellbeing of our staff. These behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- shouting or swearing, either in person or on the telephone;
- physical or verbal intimidation;
- aggressive hand gestures;
- writing rude, defamatory, aggressive or abusive comments to/about a staff member (emails/social media);
- racist or sexist comments;
- damage or violation of possessions/property.

When a parent behaves in such unacceptable ways, the Principal or a senior staff member will seek to resolve the situation and repair relationships through discussion and/or mediation.

Where a parent's behaviour is deemed likely to cause ongoing harm, distress or danger to the staff member and others, we may exercise our legal right to impose a temporary or permanent ban from the parent entering the school premises. In an extreme act of violence that causes physical harm to the staff member and his/her property, the matter may be reported to the Police for investigation.

(Taken from CECV Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines)

Matters of Concern

If a parent/guardian has a complaint, criticism or concern with a member of staff, they should:

- speak to the staff member involved and try to resolve the concern with mutual respect and clear communication.

If it is not possible to resolve the concern in this manner, then raise the matter with the:

- Year Level Co-ordinator for pastoral care concerns;
- Curriculum Leader for teaching practice concerns.

If the matter still hasn't been resolved, or if the matter is very serious, then make an appointment to speak with the appropriate Director or Deputy Principal. If the problem cannot be solved within the College, we will help you to contact Catholic Education Melbourne.

If the matter is serious or is covered by the College's Child Safe Policy, the parent will be asked to document the concern in writing.

Conflicts and incidents between students that occur at the school ought to be referred directly to the school for investigation and resolution.

Parents should:

- never approach a child of another family whilst in the care of the school to discuss or chastise them because of actions towards their own child;
- not approach other families with the intent of managing matters that arise at school;
- raise the concern with their daughter's Homeroom or subject Teacher or Year Level Co-ordinator.

(Taken from the Avila College Parent / Guardian Code of Belonging)

Informal and Formal Resolution Processes

Where possible, complaints will be resolved informally.

If the complaint is not resolved, then the complainant may contact the Principal or an Avila College leader.

In moving to a more formal process, the Principal or College Leader will:

1. organise a face-to-face meeting;
2. further and fully investigate the matter;
3. endeavour to ensure that no one is victimised as a result of a complaint being made;
4. invite the complainant to bring an agreed support person;
5. enable the person against whom the complaint has been made to respond, and invite them to bring an agreed support person; and
6. fully document the complaint, any actions taken to resolve it and outcomes of those actions.

The Principal or Avila College Leader may organise a process of mediation if a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved by Avila College.

Serious or Repeated Complaints, or Allegations of Misconduct

Where a complaint relates to an allegation of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, or when complaints are sufficiently serious or repeated, the Principal will report the matter to the appropriate authorities, ensure a comprehensive investigation, and work with all parties to facilitate a resolution. These authorities may include Catholic Education Melbourne and/or Victoria Police.

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date Issued	(Minor, Major Change)
March 2019	July 2019	New
July 2020	October 2020	No change

Document approved by Principal and ratified by the Avila College Advisory Board	
Next Review Date	July 2021
Person/s Responsible	Principal
Related Documents	Parents / Guardians Code of Belonging Anti-Bullying Policy [WorkPlace] Workplace and Equal Opportunity Policy Creating a Culture of Safety - Student Anti-Bullying Policy
References	Parents / Guardians Code of Belonging Anti-Bullying Policy [WorkPlace] Workplace and Equal Opportunity Policy CECV Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines Creating a Culture of Safety - Student Anti-Bullying Policy