



Bacchus Marsh
Grammar

School Board Policy

Governance

GOV - Complaints Handling Policy

Approved by the School Board 30 November 2022





Complaints Handling Policy

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1 Bacchus Marsh Grammar's Complaints Handling Policy

- 1.1.1 Bacchus Marsh Grammar (the School) welcomes feedback from all members of the School community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously. This Complaints Handling Policy is designed to assist you to understand how to make a complaint.

2 What is a Complaint?

- 2.1.1 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the School, related to its services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

3 Bacchus Marsh Grammar's Commitment

- 3.1.1 The School is committed to handling complaints effectively and efficiently. To manage complaints effectively, the School has established a Complaints Handling Program in line with both the international complaints handling standard (ISO 10002:2014 Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations), and the Australian/New Zealand complaints handling standard (AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations).
- 3.1.2 The School's Complaints Handling Program includes the establishment of an online complaints management system which allows the School to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints. Regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of rectification action, where deficiencies are identified, are key to the School's commitment. The School's internal complaints handling process are available at no cost.
- 3.1.3 The School is committed to ensuring the confidentiality and privacy of individuals' personal information that it collects. Refer to the School's Privacy Policy available on the School's website.

4 Informal Complaints Resolution

- 4.1.1 The vast majority of issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. In most cases these issues can be resolved through informal discussions between the complainant and the appropriate staff members. Even if an issue is able to be resolved informally, all staff are required to log issues through the School's complaints management system so the School is able to identify any systemic issues arising, and take appropriate rectification action.

5 How Do I Make a Formal Complaint?

- 5.1.1 If you have been unable to resolve a matter informally, or simply wish to make a formal complaint you can do so by any of the following means:
1. Sending an email to complaints@bmg.vic.edu.au.
 2. Writing a letter to the School addressed to "The Complaints Manager".
 3. Telephoning the School and asking to speak to your child's Year Level Coordinator
- 5.1.2 All formal complaints will be logged into the School's online complaints management system and managed in accordance with the following process.

6 The School's Internal Complaints Handling Process

Step 1 - All formal complaints are logged through the School's online complaints management system where they are screened by one of the School's Complaints Officers, or in the case of complaints against the Principal by the Chair of the School Board.

Step 2 – All valid complaints will be acknowledged in writing, within 10 business days, and allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is the Schools policy, where possible, to resolve all disputes within 28 days.

Step 3 – The Complaints Officer shall conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.

Step 4 - Following the determination, if appropriate, the Complaints Officer shall formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

Step 5 - If the initial response is not acceptable the matter will be reviewed internally by the Principal or the Principal's delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Principal or their delegate seek to resolve all disputes within 28 days from the date of acknowledgement to the complainant. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal, or their delegate, is accepted.

Step 6 - All complaints received will be entered into the School's Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

Step 7 - If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives.

7 Process for Review of a Complaint's Resolution

- 7.1.1 Depending on the nature of the complaint, complainants may be afforded a number of avenues throughout the complaints handling process should they feel that their complaint is not being handled as they see fit, including:
- seeking alternative dispute resolution other than through the School's Complaints Handling Program, for example through counselling and mediation which involves the assistance of an independent third party who helps parties to negotiate a settlement of the complaint or dispute;
 - seeking legal advice following an outcome, should a complaint escalate to a dispute, to ensure that they know their rights relating to the issue at hand;
 - making a request for an alternative investigator for the complaint where the complainant perceives a conflict of interest, or potential for conflict of interest.
- 7.1.2 The above alternatives should be discussed with the School to determine the most suitable avenue.
- 7.1.3 If a complaint remains unresolved or if you are dissatisfied with the outcomes, the complainant has the right to seek other avenues of appeal through authorities such as the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

8 Reporting to the School Board

- 8.1.1 It is critical that the School Board, Principal and Senior Management Team are notified of serious complaints as quickly as possible, and regularly informed as to the School's performance with respect to complaints handling.
- 8.1.2 It's the Complaints Manager's responsibility to report to the Senior Management Team who will escalate any serious complaints to the Principal.
- 8.1.3 Within 3 days, the Principal may determine that the seriousness of the matter warrants involvement of the School Board and the requisite notification will be made to the Board members within 5 days of the Principal's decision.

9 Overseas Students

- 9.1.1 If an overseas student isn't satisfied with the outcome of School's internal complaints handling process, they may lodge an external appeal through the Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO) which investigates complaints about problems that overseas students or intending overseas students may have with private education and training in Australia. The services of the OSO are free. The contact details for OSO are as follows:

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Call: 1300 362 072 within Australia. Outside Australia call +61 2 6276 0111.

Enquiries: 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday, Australian Eastern Standard Time (Australian Eastern Daylight Time when daylight savings is in effect)

Postal: Commonwealth Ombudsman, GPO Box 442 Canberra ACT 2601.

Website: <http://www.oso.gov.au/>

- 9.1.2 The School agrees to be bound to the OSO's recommendations, and will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of receipts of the report.

10 Child Protection Related Complaints

- 10.1.1 Child-protection related complaints are handled through the School's Child Safe Program, rather than the School's Complaints Handling Program. Please refer to the School's Child Safe Quick Reference Guide for more information.

11 Authorisation

Board Document No.		
Board Document Name	Complaints Handling Policy	
Approval Authority	Chair of the School Board	
Approval Signature	Cathy Jeffkins Chair of the School Board Bacchus Marsh Grammar	
Administrator	Company Secretary	Greg Gough
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12 History

Date	Amendment
27 May 2020	1. New policy
27 October 2021	2. Added sections 4 – 9 to provide more details.
30 November 2022	3. Added section 6 step 7 and section 10.