



# St Scholastica's College

A Catholic Day and Boarding School  
for girls in Years 7-12

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## **Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures**

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### **Rationale**

St Scholastica's College welcomes feedback from all members of the College community and takes all raised complaints or concerns seriously. This procedure applies to the College when handling complaints made in respect to services provided by the College or concerning staff members, which includes employees, contractors and volunteers.

This procedure does not extend to personal grievances between parents, guardians or other members of the College community.

In this Policy, we use the terms "staff" and "staff member" to include all teaching and non-teaching staff, College members, volunteers, contractors and external providers. These terms include people who are working at or for the College as well as people who are working at or for the Boarding House. Similarly, the term students include all students as well as boarding students.

### **Whistleblowing complaints**

This procedure does not extend to complaints which are whistleblowing disclosures. The procedure for processing whistleblowing complaints is dealt with in the College's Whistleblowing Policy.

In summary a whistleblowing disclosure is a disclosure which:

- is made by a board member, staff member, a person who supplies goods or services to the College, including a volunteer, an employer of a supplier or a relative of any of these people;
- involves alleged misconduct, an improper state of affairs or circumstances, or illegal activity;
- is made to the company [Stoline Pty Ltd](#) (Stoline) as an external, secure and independent service provider to receive disclosures impartially and confidentially as an authorised eligible recipient.

### **Related policies**

Complaints about reportable conduct will be addressed in accordance with the College's Child Safety Reporting Policy.

Complaints regarding a grievance between staff members about work matters, including work relationships and decisions made by other staff members which impact on their work, will be addressed in accordance with the College's Staff Grievance Policy.

Complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying between staff are generally addressed in accordance with the College's Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy.

If the complaint relates to student bullying, it must be dealt with in accordance with the measures set out in the College's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Procedures.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and, if relevant to a person against whom a complaint is made. The College is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process.

Personally identifiable information about a complainant will only be made available for the purpose of addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) will be actively protected from disclosure.

### Complaints

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the College about an educational and/or operational matter relating to services provided by the College, or the behaviour, or decisions of a staff member, contractor or volunteer, including misconduct.

If a parent/guardian or student has a concern about the conduct of a staff member, they should raise their concern with the College in accordance with this policy. If a complaint that concerns the behaviour of a staff member may constitute reportable conduct, the matter will be addressed in accordance with the College’s Child Safe Reporting Policy Please refer to the College’s Child Safe Reporting Policy for information about reportable conduct. Complainants are not required to assess whether their concern meets the threshold of reportable conduct before making a complaint. Any concern about a child’s wellbeing may be reported under this policy.

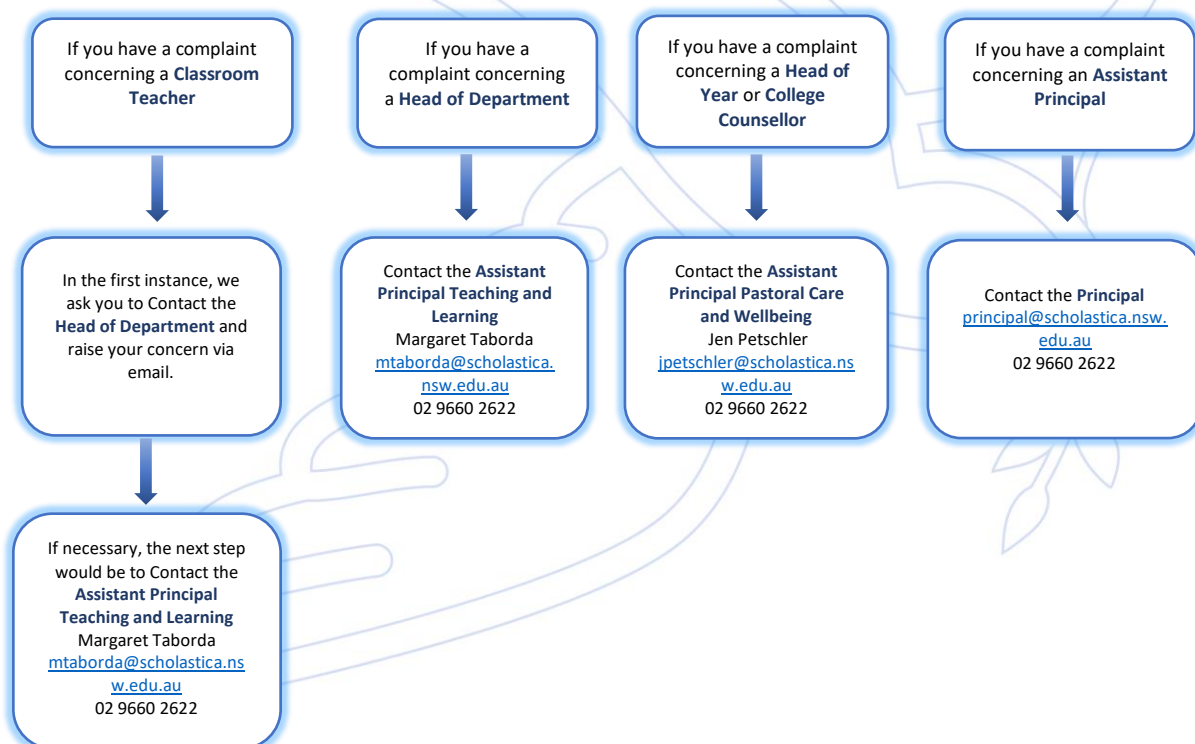
Complaints may be made by a student or parent/carer.

The College will seek to resolve complaints informally where possible but acknowledges that in some cases a person may wish to make a formal complaint.

### Raising a complaint

#### The Complainant

Informal complaints may be raised by a complainant directly with the person involved. However, if the complainant does not feel comfortable doing so or the matter is one where it may not be appropriate to do so a complaint can be made to the relevant individual by following the below chart:



Should the matter not be resolved through informal processes, the complainant may raise the matter formally with the College. A formal complaint can be made in writing to the Principal, via email [principal@scholastica.nsw.edu.au](mailto:principal@scholastica.nsw.edu.au).

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning the Principal the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of the College Board of Directors, via email [board.chair@scholastica.nsw.edu.au](mailto:board.chair@scholastica.nsw.edu.au). In this situation, the references in this policy relating to the role of the Principal should be read as references to the College Board of Directors.

### **The College**

The Principal will generally acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing as soon as practicable.

### **Handling complaints**

#### **Assessing a complaint**

The relevant individual as outlined above generally will assess the complaint and determine:

- whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or is a staff grievance or reportable conduct matter which are dealt with by the relevant policies, and
- the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised; and
- whether the school may be required to report the matter to the Office of the Children’s Guardian, Police, Department of Communities and Justice or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

#### **Managing a formal complaint**

The Principal generally will manage a formal complaint by:

- a. advising the complainant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the College in relation to the complaint;
- b. if appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the complaint at the relevant time and providing them with an opportunity to respond;
- c. collecting any additional information the College considers necessary to assess the complaint;
- d. making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved (“resolution decision”); and
- e. advising the complainant in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision of the Principal and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

There may be circumstances where some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the College will determine, on a case-by-case basis the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.

A complainant and the relevant parties that the complaint is about may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the College about the complaint. However, the College maintains the right to determine whether the person’s preferred support person is appropriate and may not approve the attendance of a support person where they are determined by the College to be inappropriate.

### **International Students**

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

- Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto: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: <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/international-student-complaints>.

St Scholastica’s College agrees to be bound by the OSO’s recommendations and will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of any received report.

### **Contact**

If you have any queries about this procedure, you should contact Principal Office for advice.