



## **Grievance & Communication: Parents & Students Policy**

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### **Preamble**

Hunter Valley Grammar School is committed to the maintenance of a positive relationship with the School community and to the timely resolution of any grievance of a parent or student which may arise.

### **Policy**

Hunter Valley Grammar School will endeavour to provide an appropriately prompt response to all verbal and written enquiries and to resolve any issues as soon as practicable.

It is the aim of the school to resolve complaints at the first point of contact with a staff member. If a complaint is not resolved at this point, the matter may be escalated to a higher authority for resolution.

The Policy uses as appropriate, procedural fairness in dealing with complaints and grievances and includes processes for raising and responding to matters of concern identified by parents and/or students.

### **Procedure**

A complaint or grievance should be directed to the appropriate staff member as listed below, with the following exceptions:

- where the grievance concerns the nominated staff member;
- where it is believed that the issue has not been dealt with expeditiously by the nominated staff member; or
- if the complaint pertains to allegations of staff misconduct or a reportable conduct matter, the School will follow the HVGS Child Protection Policy and process for handling of the complaint.

In these circumstances the matter should be referred to an appropriate higher authority.

### **Person with whom contact should be made regarding a complaint or grievance:**

1. Director of Enrolments
  - Information about enrolment
  - Scholarships
2. Communications Officer
  - Public Relations and Publications
3. Chief Financial Officer
  - Financial issues

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4. Director(s) of Sport
  - General information about the School's sporting program and fixtures
  - Students' selections in teams
  
5. Mentor (Senior School) /Class Teacher (Junior School)
  - Student-related issues of a day-to-day nature
  - In the first instance, issues relating to the wellbeing of the student
  - Other queries/concerns related to a student
  
6. Head of Faculty (Senior School)/Head of Stage (Junior School)
  - Class placement
  - Course/class assessment task
  
7. Dean of Innovative Curriculum (Senior School) and Head of Curriculum (Junior School)
  - Information about the curriculum offering of the School
  - Information about the HSC and NSW Education Standards Authority curriculum requirements
  - Reporting
  
8. Head of Students (Senior School) and Head of Academic Care (Junior School)
  - Student behaviour inside and outside the School
  - Student-to-student interaction and harassment
  - Participation of a student in school activities
  - Issues that relate to the relationship between a student and teacher
  - Organisational or administrative issues
  - Issues associated with bus travel
  - Concerns about welfare and discipline of students
  - Parent groups
  
9. Director of Academic Services and K-6 Coordinator of Academic Services
  - Personalised student learning support and learning enrichment services
  
10. Deputy Principal and Heads of School
  - More serious student issues of a social, emotional or psychological nature
  - Dissatisfaction in the way in which a staff member may have handled a particular issue
  
10. Principal
  - Application for a student to be absent from school for an identified or extended period
  - Having exhausted the due process and where the aggrieved feels a concern remains unresolved then the matter should be raised with the Principal

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11. Board

- Where a grievance is held about the Principal that matter should be made to the Chair of the Board in writing and addressed to “Chair of the Board, Hunter Valley Grammar School Board, PO Box 458, East Maitland NSW 2323”

Contact with the relevant member of staff can be facilitated by phoning the School Administration Office on 4934 2444 to arrange an appointment, or by email to the relevant staff member.

**Resources**

The School will provide the appropriate resources and structure to facilitate the implementation of this Policy.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation of this Policy.

**Evaluation**

The Board is responsible for evaluating compliance with the Policy. Evaluation will be facilitated by means of:

- Principal’s Report to every Board Meeting; and
- Minutes from Board Committee Meetings.

**Record of Review**

Version	Date	Description
1	May 2010	New policy document endorsed by the Board
2	March 2013	Policy document reviewed and amended
3	June 2016	Policy document reviewed and amended
4	March 2019	Policy document reviewed and amended
5	June 2021	Planned review

*The School’s policies, which are made from time to time, are made pursuant to the registration requirements set out in section 47 of the NSW Education Act and the NSW Education Standards Authority.*

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## Grievance & Communication: Parents & Students Policy Complaint Handling Procedure

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### To be read in conjunction with the HVGS Grievance & Communication Policy

Complaints from parents/guardians/students will be dealt with in the first instance by the responsible person as detailed in the School's Grievance & Communication Policy.

At all stages of the complaint investigation the responsible person will take into account the principles of natural justice for all parties concerned.

A written record is to be maintained throughout the investigation process.

**Note:** if the complaint is in relation to allegations of staff misconduct, or a reportable conduct matter, the handling of this complaint will be as per the School's Child Protection Policy and investigation process.

On receipt of a complaint the responsible person will aim to:

#### 1. Acknowledge

##### Where the complaint is made verbally:

Advise the complainant that the matter will be fully investigated and that they will be kept up to date on its progress.

##### Where the complaint is made in writing:

Respond in writing (email is acceptable) acknowledging receipt of the complaint, advising that the matter is being investigated and that they will be kept up to date on its progress. Throughout the process the responsible person will aim to ensure that communication from the complainant is responded to in a timely manner. If for any reason this is not possible the responsible person will delegate to another responsible person to follow up on the communication, and report back to the responsible person who took receipt of the initial complaint.

#### 2. Investigate

Ascertain from the complainant if the matter has been discussed with the Class Teacher/Mentor or Head of Stage/Head of House, and obtain details of any action that has been taken.

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Summarise the issues with the complainant to clarify and check that you understand the issue.

Liaise with the Class Teacher/Mentor and/or Head of Stage/Head of House to gather information to ascertain the facts relating to the matter, working collaboratively with all persons involved.

### 3. Communicate action taken

Where it is identified that the complaint is valid, the responsible person will ensure that the necessary action is taken with the staff member involved and procedures implemented to address the concern. The complainant should be advised of the outcome as soon as possible.

If, after analysing and assessing the matter, it is considered that the complaint is not valid, the findings will be communicated to the complainant as soon as possible.

**Note:** Complaints relating to behavioural issues are dealt with in line with Hunter Valley Grammar School's Behaviour Management Policy.

In the event that the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome they have recourse to the Principal or Board Chair as per Hunter Valley Grammar School's Grievance & Communication Policy.

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