



College council will review this policy every three years or as directed by DET

Date approved: March 2019

Date of next review: 2022

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process so that members of the community (parents / guardians, carers, students) are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school.
- ensure that all complaints are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

SCOPE

This policy relates to complaints brought by members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school. In some limited instances, we may need to refer the complainant to another DET (Department of Education and Training) process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions, for example, expulsion appeals.

POLICY

Doncaster Secondary College welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our community and families and are committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. We recognise that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

We value and encourage open and positive relationships with our school community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

When addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- raise and discuss issues in a courteous and respectful manner
- acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome that is in the affected student's and school community's best interests and acceptable to all parties
- act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- recognize that all parties, including the broader school community, has rights and responsibilities that must be balanced
- recognize that schools and DET may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information.

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

Doncaster Secondary College encourages members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- carefully consider the issues you would like to discuss
- remember you may not have all the facts relating to the issues that you want to raise
- think about how the matter could be resolved
- Be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by DET and Doncaster Secondary College (see 'Further information and Resources' – next section)

Formal complaints and concerns

Doncaster Secondary College is always happy to discuss with members of the community any concerns they may have. The nature, sensitivity and complexity of the complaint will determine who the issue should be directed to. In the case of most student matters the first point of contact would be the Year Level co-ordinator. Concerns may also be directed to the: Senior School or Middle School Leader, Assistant Principal or Principal. School staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, members of the community may wish to make a formal complaint to the Principal or to an Assistant Principal.

Formal Complaints Process

If you would like to make a formal complaint, in most cases, depending on the nature of the complaint raised, our school will first seek to understand the issues and will then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint together.

The following process will apply:

- 1. Formal complaint received:** Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the Principal or Assistant Principal, to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are. Additionally as part of the process it may be preferable to also meet in person to discuss the issues. We can, depending on the nature and complexity of the issues, address your complaint in writing or over the phone.
- 2. Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Principal, Assistant Principal or nominee may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
- 3. Resolution meeting:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Principal or Assistant Principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. If after the resolution meeting we are unable to resolve the complaint together, we will work with you to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event you would like to take further action about it. In some circumstances, the Principal or Assistant Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
- 4. Timelines:** Doncaster Secondary College will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within 48 hours) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, the College may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. We will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting where appropriate within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, the College will consult with you and discuss any interim response to the dispute that can be put in place.

Resolution

Where appropriate, the College may seek to resolve a complaint by:
[order of resolutions changed from the DET version]

- offering the opportunity for student counselling or other support
- other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community
- an apology or expression of regret
- a change of decision
- a change of policy, procedure or practice

In some circumstances, the College may also ask you to attend a meeting with an independent third party, or participate in a mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute.

Escalation

If a member of community is not satisfied that their complaint has been resolved by the school, or if their complaint is about the Principal, then the issue should be referred to the Department of Education North Eastern Metropolitan Region Office by contacting on 1300 333 231

Doncaster Secondary College may also refer a complaint to the North Eastern Metropolitan Region if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

For more information about DET's *Parent Complaints Policy*, including the role of the Regional Office, please see [Parent complaints policy](#)

Further Information and Resources

PLEASE ALSO REFER TO THE DSC EXTERNAL WEB PAGE FOR COLLEGE POLICIES