




Broadford Secondary College

# COMPLAINTS

Policy and Procedure

***Broadford Secondary College actively promotes the safety and wellbeing of all students. All staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment in accordance with their legal obligations including Child Safe Standards.***

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Responsible for Review	Principal
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References	Policy and Advisory Library



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the general office on 57841200

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

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

## Scope

This policy relates to complaints brought by students, parents, carers, or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school.

This policy does not apply to child safety concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm. All child safety matters are managed in accordance with the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the school's legal reporting obligations.

In some limited instances, we may need to refer a complainant to another policy or area if there are different processes in place to manage the issue including:

- Complaints and concerns relating to fraud and corruption will be managed in accordance with the department's [Fraud and Corruption Policy](#)

- Criminal matters will be referred to Victorian Police
- Legal claims will be referred to the Department's Legal Division
- Complaints and concerns relating to child abuse will be managed in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures

## Policy

Broadford Secondary College welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our 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:

- be considerate of each other's views and respect each other's role
- be focused on resolution of the complaint, with the interests of the student involved at the centre
- act in good faith and cooperation
- behave with respect and courtesy
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- operate within and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with any applicable legislation and Department policy.
- recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

## Complaints and concerns process for students

Broadford Secondary College acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. Broadford Secondary College encourages our students to raise issues or concerns as they arise so that we can work together to resolve them.

Students may raise concerns directly with a trusted staff member, Year Level Coordinator, or through student voice structures such as the Student Representative Council. Where a concern is raised informally, staff will assess whether further action or escalation is required and ensure appropriate follow-up occurs.

You can also ask your parent, carer or another trusted adult outside of the school, to talk to us about the issue instead. Information about our parent(s)/guardian(s) complaints and concerns process is outlined further below. The parent(s)/guardian(s) process also applies to students who are mature minors, refer to: [Mature Minors and Decision Making](#).

Other ways you can raise a concern or complaint with us include:

- talking to a member of the student representative council about your concern and any suggestions you have for resolving it
- participating in our Attitudes to School Survey

Further information and resources to support students to raise issues or concerns are available at:

- [Report Racism Hotline](#) (call 1800 722 476) – this hotline enables students to report concerns relating to racism or religious discrimination
- [Reach Out](#)
- [Headspace](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#) (call 1800 55 1800)
- [Victorian Aboriginal Education Association](#) (VAEAI)

# Complaints And Concerns Process for Parents, Carers and Community Members

## Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

Broadford Secondary College encourages parents, carers or 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 the department and Broadford Secondary College (see “further information and resources” section below).

## Raising a concern

Broadford Secondary College is always happy to discuss concerns that parents/carers and community members may have. In the first instance, all concerns should first be directed to Year-Level Advocates, Year-Level Coordinators, or Sub-School Leaders. Where possible, school staff will work with parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that concerns are appropriately addressed.

## Making a complaint

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

Depending on a complaint's complexity, Broadford Secondary College may require time to gather sufficient information for a thorough understanding. The school will aim to have an outcome (based on the following) within **ten** working days of receiving the written complaint. If more time is needed, the school will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) and explore interim solutions.

Depending on the nature of the complaint raised, Broadford Secondary College requires the parent(s)/guardian(s) to follow the outlined process:

1. **Lodging a Complaint:** Parent(s)/Guardian(s) submit a written complaint detailing the concern's specific nature and any desired outcomes. Complaints can be submitted via email ([broadford.sc@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:broadford.sc@education.vic.gov.au)) or in hard copy via the General office. Broadford Secondary College will acknowledge receipt of a complaint (verbal or written) within **two** school days.
2. **Initial Review:** Upon receipt of a complaint, the Principal (or delegate) will conduct an initial review to determine the nature and seriousness of the complaint. This may involve gathering additional information if necessary and may take up to **ten** school days to complete.
3. **Response:** Following the initial review, the Principal (or delegate) will write to the complainant, providing a detailed response to the concerns raised. If deemed necessary, the Principal may offer to convene a resolution meeting to discuss the matter further. The Principal is the only person who can determine if a resolution meeting is or is not appropriate.
4. **Resolution Meeting:** If the Principal deems a resolution meeting is needed, it will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time for all parties involved. The purpose of this meeting will be to unpack the written response and work to reach a satisfactory outcome.
5. **Outcome Communication:** Following any resolution meeting, the Principal will communicate the complaint's outcome to the complainant. This communication will include any actions taken or proposed resolutions.
6. **Outcomes:** If, after the response, a parent or guardian would like to take further action, the principal will outline to the family the next steps they can take and provide information about the support available to the complainant.

Please note that unreasonable conduct (e.g. vexatious complaints) may need to be managed differently from the procedures in this policy.

## Resolution

Where appropriate, Broadford Secondary College may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- an apology or expression of regret
- a change of decision
- a change of policy, procedure or practice
- 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.

In some circumstances, Broadford Secondary 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.

## Support person

You are welcome to have a support person to assist you in raising a complaint or concern with our school. Please advise us if you wish to have a support person to assist you, and provide their name, contact details, and their relationship to you.

## Escalation

If you are not satisfied that the school has resolved your complaint, or if your complaint is about the principal and you do not want to raise it directly with them, then the complaint should be referred to the North Eastern Victorian Region by contacting 03 5783 9582.

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

For more information about the Department's parent complaints process, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Raise a complaint or concern about your school.](#)

Where a complaint involves unreasonable or inappropriate conduct, including repeated complaints about the same matter or behaviour that is aggressive, abusive or uncooperative, the school may apply alternative management strategies in line with Department guidance on managing unreasonable complainant conduct, while continuing to act fairly and respectfully.

## Record keeping and other requirements

To meet Department and legal requirements, our school must keep written records of:

- Serious, substantial or unusual complaints
- Complaints relating to the Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, to meet regulatory requirements - refer to Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes for further information

Our school also follows Department policy to ensure that record-keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints or concerns.

Records relating to complaints are managed in accordance with privacy legislation, the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS), and the Department's Records Management - Schools policy.

## COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on school website
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

- [Complaints - Parents](#)

The Department's parents' website:

- [Raise a complaint or concern about your school](#)
- [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)
- [Privacy](#)

Broadford Secondary College's Policies:

- [Respect for school staff](#)
- Bullying Prevention
- [Wellbeing and Engagement](#)