

# IGNATIUS LEARNING CENTRE COMPLAINTS POLICY

## 1. PRINCIPLES

The principles that underpin this policy are:

- all members of the Ignatius Learning Centre (ILC) community have the opportunity to be heard. We will listen to and respect the views of each person.
- procedural fairness is observed by the ILC when dealing with complaints. We will work with the complainant with respect, courtesy and openness observing procedural fairness, with a genuine desire to achieve fair and reasonable decisions.
- parents/carers/guardians must be offered opportunities to clarify any concerns regarding their child, or the ILC.
- confidentiality, impartiality and the principles of natural justice will form the basis of our complaints resolution process, any personal information disclosed will be treated as confidential and remain private within the constraints of the law and our obligations under it.
- processes for resolving concerns and complaints of parents/carers/guardians, students and others in the ILC community must be accessible, clear and effective.
- any person(s) facing a complaint will be provided with detailed information about the substance of the complaint and will have the opportunity to respond through a formal process.
- if a satisfactory outcome cannot be achieved, the ILC will advise the complainant of options for having the decision reviewed or mediated via an external authority.

## 2. PROCEDURE

### 2.1 Approach

The ILC's approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on the following guiding principles: our values of:

- providing a safe and supportive learning environment
- building relationships between students, parents/carers/guardians and staff
- providing a safe working environment for staff.

### 2.2 Expectations

The ILC expects a person raising a concern or complaint to:

- do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs
- provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint to the best of their ability
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame
- Communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair and respectful

- Have realistic and reasonable expectations about possible outcomes/remedies
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.

The ILC will address any concerns and complaints received from, students, parents/ carers/ guardians or others:

- courteously
- efficiently
- fairly
- promptly, or within the timeline agreed with the person with the concern or complaint (ideally within two school or business days of receipt.)
- in accordance with due process and principles of procedural fairness.

All complaints received by the ILC will be recorded, even those which are about issues perceived as trivial or minor. This helps to identify key risk areas or any whole-school issues which, if left unresolved, could lead to harm or injury or more serious concerns.

## **2.3 Raising concerns or complaints**

If your concern/complaint relates to your child's treatment by another student or students while at ILC, the ILC expects that you will refer your complaint directly to the ILC, via your child's teacher or Principal. Under no circumstances should you approach another student while in the care of the ILC to discuss the issue or chastise them. Direct contact with parents/carers/guardians to resolve the matter is also discouraged if the complaint pertains to issues or incidents that have arisen at the ILC.

For contact details for any staff member, telephone the ILC office.

For complaints about any ILC staff (except the Principal) it should be discussed with the individual concerned in the first instance, where you feel comfortable to do so. Otherwise the complaint should be addressed to the Principal.

For complaints about the Principal it should be discussed with them in the first instance, where you feel comfortable to do so. Otherwise, the complainant should contact the Chief Executive Officer, Jesuit Social Services or the Chair of the Jesuit Social Services Board by telephoning the office on (03) 9421 7600 or via the website: <https://jss.org.au/feedback-and-complaints/>

### **2.3.1 Informal Resolution Process**

Raise the matter directly with the relevant staff member first where appropriate. If the matter involves your child or an issue of everyday class operation, contact the staff member concerned by your preferred method of communication to discuss the nature of your concern and request a meeting. Complainants are strongly discouraged from sending or discussing confidential, contentious or emotional information by email. This is best done in a meeting or phone call.

The teacher will acknowledge the email within two working days and provide further information about the process to be undertaken, if this is required. The staff member may be able to respond to your complaint by return email or telephone with a satisfactory outcome. At times, parties may be assisted to resolve a misunderstanding, miscommunication or lack of clarity through the support of another person, such as another member of staff or the Principal.

If further investigation of the complaint is required, the staff member will explain this to you and direct you to this policy if you have not already viewed this. They will also establish a clear time frame for the investigation and when you can expect further information from them.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, or you wish to make a formal complaint, you can telephone to make an appointment to discuss the matter with the Principal or email your concern in writing.

### **2.3.2 Formal Resolution Process**

If the complaint or concern is about broader school issues, ILC staff or serious issues that are difficult to discuss with classroom teachers or if the issue not been satisfactorily resolved, complainants are invited to make an appointment to speak with the Principal.

- In all cases, confidentiality is upheld within the constraints of legal requirements. Only the people that need to know about the issue, will be involved. The people who need to be informed will be discussed at the meeting.
- Community members may be accompanied by a support person at appointments to resolve complaints.
- All formal discussions and processes involving complaints will be documented.
- Every attempt will be made to address an issue and where resolution is possible it will be reached in a timely manner.

When a formal complaint is received, it will be acknowledged and the complainant will be provided with a copy of this policy so they can understand the process that will be followed in dealing with their complaint.

## **2.4 Help with raising concerns or complaints**

Personal support is most appropriate in situations where the complainant and others involved in the complaint process have emotional issues related to the complaint.

Complainants can seek the services of a support person when they feel they are unable to express their concern clearly. A support person can be a friend or someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation.

All parties involved in addressing a complaint may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty coming to an agreement.

The ILC will ensure that the complainant is aware of these supports. A complainant who wishes to use these support services should ensure the person addressing the concern or complaint is aware of their intention and is in agreement.

## **2.5 Managing student, parent/carer/guardian concerns and complaints information**

The ILC will record the following details of all complaints received:

- the name and contact details (with permission) of the person with a concern or complaint
- the date the concern was expressed or complaint made
- the form in which the concern or complaint was received (such as face-to-face, by telephone, in writing, by email)
- a brief description of the concern or complaint
- the nature of the complaint and the requested resolution
- details of the ILC staff member(s) receiving and responding to the concern or complaint
- action taken on the concern or complaint, the timeframe, minutes of meetings and communication
- the outcome of action taken on the concern or complaint including the closure date and date of advising the complainant of the outcome, whether the complainant was satisfied with the outcome and if the complainant was advised of external complainants mechanisms.
- any recommendations for future improvement in the ILC's policy or procedures.

However, in the first instance when a complaint is easily resolved in a telephone call, a brief note will be made in the ILC's/Principal's/teacher's diary recording the issue and the resolution.

## **2.6 Addressing concerns or complaints**

Complaints will be dealt with under the guidance of the Principal who is responsible for the operation of the School and upholding legislation in the form of this complaints policy.

In moving to a more formal process, the principal or a senior member of staff will undertake the investigation in the following manner, ensuring procedural fairness is observed:

- Organise a meeting/phone conference with the complainant
- Give a complainant a copy of this complaints policy
- At the outset, establish the time frame for the investigation of the matter and when you can expect to hear further information or have a resolution
- Fully document the complaint, any actions taken to resolve it and outcomes of those actions
- Ensure that everyone is treated fairly as a result of a complaint being made
- If necessary, enable a complainant to be accompanied at meetings by another person of their choice as a support person
- If appropriate, enable the person against whom the complaint has been made to respond, and to be accompanied to any meeting by another person of their choice as a support person
- Advise the complainant of the outcome of the investigation in writing
- Interpreter, translation, and other forms of assistance to lodge a complaint can be provided

In some circumstances the ILC may suggest that a complaint is better managed through an external process/agency. This will be discussed with the complainant before proceeding.

All complaints will be noted and acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint.

The ILC will acknowledge all complaints and provide the complainant with a timeline for investigating the complaint. Complaints are addressed in accordance with their urgency.

The Principal, or a delegate, will investigate all complaints and will provide a response to the complainant. However, where the complaint relates to the Principal's action or performance, the Chair of the Jesuit Social Services School Board will oversee the handling of the complaint. The complainant will receive regular updates.

Concerns and complaints about general school matters (such as the timing of events, ILC policies and facilities) will be addressed by the Principal or a relevant staff member.

The ILC will make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible.

If the complaint involves many students and a range of issues, the ILC will need more time to investigate and resolve it.

Should the complaint involve complex issues, the ILC might need to take advice from the Jesuit Social Services School Board or Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Southern Regional Office or delegate, which may take more time. The ILC will inform the complainant of the new timeline for addressing the complaint and the reasons for any delays. In all cases, the ILC will try to resolve a concern or complaint within ten school days (two weeks).

In addressing complaints, the ILC may seek informal or formal resolution options.

## **2.7 Anonymous Complaints**

The ILC may be unable to deal with complaints that are made anonymously if there is insufficient detail for investigation or resolution of the matter. There may, however, be instances when it is possible to investigate anonymous complaints, depending on their nature and the circumstances. Where possible, complainants are encouraged to give their names and to be reassured that we will deal with complaints professionally and in accordance with procedural fairness and confidentiality.

If the complainant wishes to remain anonymous, it is at the Principal's discretion what, if any, action will be taken.

Anonymous complaints will be recorded in the same manner as all other complaints are recorded.

## 2.8 Remedies

If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the ILC will offer an appropriate remedy. For example, at its discretion and depending on the circumstances, the ILC might offer:

- an explanation or further information about the issue
- mediation, counselling or other support (with an internal or external mediator)
- an apology, expression of regret or admission of fault (either verbal or written)
- to change its decision
- to change its policies, procedures or practices
- pastoral or spiritual care
- an understanding that the behaviour will not be repeated
- an official warning
- disciplinary action

The ILC will implement the remedy as soon as practicable and ideally within two school or business days of receipt.

## 2.9 Referral/appeal of concerns or complaints

If they are dissatisfied with the outcome, the complaint remains unresolved or the response from the ILC, the student, parent/carer or guardian can take the complaint to the Chair of the Jesuit Social Services Board.

If they are not satisfied with the Jesuit Social Services Board's response, then the complainant has the right to appeal in writing to Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS). External complaints/appeals can also be lodged online via [www.cem.edu.au](http://www.cem.edu.au) 'Contact us'. Refer to the feedback complaints form entitled RESOLVE.

### Contact details

<p><b>Ignatius Learning Centre</b> 326 Church St (PO Box 271) Richmond VIC 3121 Ph: (03) 9421 7600 <a href="https://jss.org.au/feedback-and-complaints/">https://jss.org.au/feedback-and-complaints/</a></p>	<p><b>MACS</b> <b>Southern Regional Office</b> 602 South Road MOORABIN EAST VIC 3189 Ph: (03) 8301 7400 Email: <a href="mailto:manager.sro@macs.vic.edu.au">manager.sro@macs.vic.edu.au</a></p>
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Parents/carers or guardians may also seek support or advice, or external review from other external agencies, including:

- [Australian Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Catholic Education Commission of Victoria \(CECV\)](#)
- [Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria](#)
- [Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority](#)
- [WorkSafe Victoria](#)

## 2.10 Students with a disability

Students with disabilities have rights under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth), the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth) and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic) to access their education on the same basis as their peers, including the right to reasonable adjustments.

As with all complaints to which this policy applies, student, parents/carers/guardians should raise any concerns or complaints regarding the treatment of a student with a disability with the ILC in the first instance.

The ILC also recognises that parents/carers/guardians of students with a disability can raise complaints or concerns regarding a student with a disability in a number of forums, including:

- the Australian Human Rights Commission - in relation to complaints regarding compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act or the Disability Standards for Education
- the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission - in relation to complaints regarding compliance with the Equal Opportunity Act

## 2.11 Communication and training

This Policy will be displayed on the ILC website and provided to families during the enrolment process.

The ILC will make information about procedures for addressing concerns and complaints readily available to students, parents/carers/guardians and the ILC community, in clear and easy-to-understand language and, where appropriate, in a range of community languages and formats that are accessible to everyone so that no one is disadvantaged.

The information will include:

- how a person can make a complaint
- the person's responsibilities
- information to be provided by the person
- who the person should contact and their contact details
- the process and timeframes for managing complaints
- the ILC's procedures for addressing concerns and complaints will be communicated to the school community through appropriate means.

The ILC will:

- brief all members of staff (including volunteers) about its procedures to address concerns and complaints annually
- provide staff with (or provide access to) training and support appropriate to their responsibilities under the procedures
- ensure staff who manage complaints demonstrate the personal attributes outlined in the Good Practice Guide: Ombudsman Victoria's guide to complaint handling for Victorian public sector agencies.

## 2.12 Monitoring complaints

The ILC will monitor student, parent/carer/guardian concerns and complaints and consider issues raised through the complaints process, and any other relevant information from the parent/carer/guardian opinion survey, when undertaking a review of the ILC's policies, procedures and operations.

The Jesuit Social Services Board will regularly review its policy and procedures to effectively address student, parent/carer/guardian concerns and complaints as part of its cyclic policy and procedures review schedule.

The ILC will review its information about complaints made over time to:

- identify common or recurring issues that may need addressing
- assess the effectiveness of these and other procedures and whether they are being followed
- use information provided to the ILC through the parent/carer/guardian opinion survey on the views of parents/carers/guardians.

### **3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

The expected outcomes of this policy are:

- clear, accessible and fair processes for managing complaints
- the ILC responds to parent/carer/guardian and student concerns and complaints in an effective and timely manner.

END OF DOCUMENT

## Appendix 1: Sample Complaint Form

1. YOUR DETAILS	
Family name:	Given name(s):
Address:	
Contact number:	Email:
2. YOU ARE: (please tick one only)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/carer/guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
3. SUBJECT OF THE COMPLAINT (please tick all relevant boxes)	
<input type="checkbox"/> School	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff member
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy/Procedure
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	
4. DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINT	
<i>(Please attach additional page(s) if space is insufficient. You may also attach further documentation if you wish.)</i>	
5. DETAILS OF THE OUTCOME YOU ARE SEEKING	
<i>(Please attach additional page(s) if space is insufficient.)</i>	
6. HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY RAISED THIS CONCERN WITH A STAFF MEMBER? (please tick)	
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, when?
Who dealt with the matter?	
What was the result?	
Signature:	Date:
SCHOOL OFFICE USE ONLY: RECORDING OF OUTCOMES	
For matters which have been resolved: Resolution options	
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-resolution	<input type="checkbox"/> Supported self-resolution <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitated mediation <input type="checkbox"/> Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Investigation
Actions undertaken:	
Outcome:	
Date matter is finalised:	
Name of staff member:	Signature:
For matters which need further action:	
Referred to: Name:	Date:
Referred by: Name:	Signature:
Outcome:	
Date outcome was communicated to the complainant and by whom:	
Name of staff member:	Signature:



Document Status	DRAFT	FOR APPROVAL	APPROVED
Document Number:	12.4.8		
Version:	3		
Policy owner:	ILC Principal		
Policy category:	Care, Safety and Welfare of Students		
Level of approval:	Board via Education Committee		
Policy Approved by:	Board		
Date Approved:	August 2022		
Effective date:	May 2020		
Review Frequency:	One Year or following a specific significant event		
Review Date:	August 2023		
Purpose:	<p>This policy outlines how the ILC will respond to complaints raised by parents, guardians, carers, students, or a member of the general community (e.g. a neighbour) so that all parties can reach a positive resolution. The complaint may be about an individual staff member, a student, a policy or procedure. The policy is not applicable for use by staff for complaints about aspects of their work or employment conditions.</p> <p>This Policy will be accessible via <a href="http://jss.org.au">jss.org.au</a>.</p> <p><i>Please note, this process is not applicable in a complaint of a child protection nature, which must be addressed in accordance with child protection laws and reporting obligations. See the ILC's Child Protection Reporting Obligations Policy and PROTECT: identifying and reporting to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools.</i></p>		
Relevant legislation and/or standards:	<p><i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</i>  <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)</i>  <i>Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)</i>  <i>Ministerial Order 1359- Implementing the child safe standards – managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises</i></p>		
Risk Awareness:	Operational, Reputational, Compliance		
Related Documents:	<p><b>Internal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-bullying Policy</li> <li>• Behaviour Support Policy</li> </ul> <p><b>External</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CECV Complaints Management Guide</li> <li>• <a href="#">CEM Policy 2.20 Complaints</a></li> </ul>		
Scope:	ILC Staff		
Definitions:	ILC	Ignatius Learning Centre	
	Complaints	Expressions of dissatisfaction related to our programs and activities or about the way in which a complaint is handled.	
	Complainant	A member of the ILC community (i.e. parents, guardians, carers or students) or a someone from the general community (e.g. a neighbour) who wish to make a complaint to the ILC.	
	Formal resolution options	are used when concerns cannot be resolved by informal means and may also be initiated by the principal or other school leader. Where no mutually acceptable resolution of the matter can be reached, formal options may include the intervention of the Principal or investigation by the Principal or an outside body. The nature and scope of the investigation will depend on the circumstances.	
	Informal resolution options	are those where the parties may resolve concerns in open discussion, where relevant documents can be provided and information clarified. Other informal	

<p>Less serious complaints</p> <p>Serious complaints</p> <p>Support person</p>	<p>options include assistance to resolve a misunderstanding through the intervention of another staff member or school leader.</p> <p>those that fall outside serious complaints.</p> <p>complaints are those requiring urgent action or which could have serious consequences for the parties concerned or others, resulting from a serious breach of legislation, school policy or procedure. These may relate to issues including student behaviour management, bullying or harassment, drug or alcohol use, damage or loss of personal or school property, student wellbeing or the requirement for adjustments to learning. Serious complaints may be complex issues or those of a whole-school nature.</p> <p>A positive presence for the person bringing the complaint who may accompany the complainant in meetings. The support person's role is to listen, they may make notes and may occasionally speak to the person bringing the complaint to clarify what they are saying. The support person does not speak on behalf of the complainant.</p>
<p>Policy:</p>	<p>Student engagement and learning outcomes are dependent upon strong relationships between parents/carers/guardians, students and the ILC. Working together is a part of our mandate. To relationships that are strong, positive and respectful, honesty, openness and trust are required. Concerns and issues about the ILC's operation of its programs and activities will arise and need to be aired, so that they can be worked out. Feedback is important and parent/carer/guardian and student contributions can help improve the ILC. Also, as a result of this dialogue, students, parents/carers/guardians can gain a better understanding of why the ILC makes particular decisions.</p>
<p>Responsibilities:</p>	<p>The Principal, teachers, and all ILC staff</p>