



Ellenbrook
CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Child Friendly Complaints System

Source of Obligation

The Western Australian Registration Standards for Non-government Schools (Standard 11.1) requires that Ellenbrook Christian College (ECC) has a child-friendly, complaints handling policy and procedures.

In addition, the SCEA Complaints Management Policy requires that each school:

- Develop, as a priority, a Child-Friendly Complaints System, including procedures and practices that suit their specific school site, and are accessible by children and young people, and
- Review their Child-Friendly Complaints System periodically

Six key elements of a child-friendly complaints system have been identified as follows:

One: Focus on children and young people

At ECC, we ensure that the children and young people in our care are acknowledged in our policies and procedures, as the key users of the educational services provided.

Two: Visibility

The publicising of 'complaints systems', need to include strategies that are effective in communicating with children and young people. For example - SMS, email, telephone and printed material, such as signs and posters.

At ECC, we invite children and young people in our care to make comments and communicate with us. Signs in each classroom and around the College invite students to: "Come and talk to us anytime".

We ensure that the children in our care know they have a right to complain. We use a booklet entitled "Child Friendly Complaints Procedure" (see Appendix 3) that is specifically written for our staff, to be able to inform children and families of the procedure.

We make sure all children are aware of 'the process' through:

- Explicit lessons taught throughout the year
- Printed copies of the booklet that are available for students to freely access
- Communications delivered by the pastoral and teaching staff in one-on-one sessions.

Parents may access these information booklets on request, in order to work through the process with their child. Posters explaining the process and encouraging children to seek help, will be clearly displayed around the College.

Children and Parents are informed about our Complaints procedures in newsletters and at assemblies.

Three: Accessibility

Make sure children and young people know who they can make a complaint to, and how. The booklet addresses this element of the complaint system clearly, using step-by-step procedures, that can be followed by all children and young people. The language used is age-appropriate, presented in large font with graphics, in a layout that helps children engage the process.

Children and young people know they can take an advocate with them for support when they make a complaint. They also know that they can also make a complaint on their own if they want to.

Our students can choose how they want to complain

- In person | the students have names and photos of the most appropriate person for their year group, and can also speak with either the Chaplain, Councillor, Deputy Principal or Principal regardless of what year they are in.
- In writing | using a form that is readily available, that they can fill in and then place in a box.

ECC gives all students frequent opportunities to have a voice and provide feedback concerning the activities of the school. We also have Student Leadership Teams, made up of students from Years 4, 6, 9 and 12 to whom students can provide feedback, that will be raised at the student leadership meetings.

Four: Responsiveness

Staff need to be trained to respond promptly to complaints made by children. Child safety is paramount as time is precious in keeping children safe.

At ECC, as outlined in the booklet, the staff to whom children and young people can bring their complaints are experienced, caring and responsive.

The staff handling complaints know that they must promptly acknowledge a student's complaint, whether that be in verbal or written form. Timelines are quickly established and communicated to students to assure them that they have been heard and taken seriously.

Students who complain are treated with kindness, respect, understanding and helpfulness. Our staff dealing with complaints investigate and check information provided by students and clarify as necessary. They give students the choice of how they want to be kept informed throughout the process.

In general, it is only the more serious complaints that require formal acknowledgement, investigation and responses; however, all complaints are heard and considered.

While the complaint is being acknowledged, the staff member involved may provide a document to the complainant that describes the nature of the complaint and an overview of how the school will handle it. This helps the complainant to have clear expectations of what will be done and any outcomes.

Five: Confidentiality

Children and young people often don't make complaints due to concerns about confidentiality. This becomes complex when children and young people are involved. Staff at ECC cannot agree to a student's demands for confidentiality or requests that parents, Police or other agencies not be informed when the welfare or safety of the student or other students may be threatened. Our staff clearly explain this to students at appropriate times throughout the complaints process.

If students wish to remain anonymous, the booklet explains how this can be achieved using an email or phone call to our Whistleblower.

Six: Accountability and continuous improvement

It is important that the specific needs of children and young people are recognised in accountability and continuous improvement processes.

At ECC, we make sure that appropriate data is kept, enabling the reporting of complaints by children and young people. Records are taken during the complainant's lodgment of the complaint and includes witness accounts and statements, and a record of the outcome of the investigation. This is kept on TASS as a pastoral care entry. ECC maintains a record of all complaints.

Complaints can be recorded by all staff members on behalf of a student or their parents. Details of the complaint are recorded, and the follow-up details can be sent to parents to let them know about the complaint and how it has been dealt with in real time.

Using TASS to record complaints means that all data can be systematically analysed for patterns in an individual's behaviour or across a wider cohort.

Review and Continuous Improvement

Ellenbrook Christian College reviews our Child-Friendly Complaints System periodically in order to ensure that we are satisfied that our procedure is the best it can be.

We ask students who have made complaints to provide feedback about the process involved, how they were treated, whether they were satisfied with the outcome. Students are encouraged, in the booklet, to "keep at it" and "keep trying" if they continue to be unhappy with something that is happening to them; not give up.

To review our Child-Friendly Complaints System we annually use pages 9 and 10 of the Commission for Children and Young People Complaints Guidelines retrieved from;

<https://www.cyp.wa.gov.au/media/1414/report-are-you-listening-guidelines-for-making-complaints-systems-accessible-and-responsive-to-children-and-young-people-june-2013.pdf>




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**Student
Complaints
Procedure**

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1. What is a complaint?

At school you have the right to feel safe and secure and to tell someone how you feel, including if you are unhappy or have a concern about your care.

If you are not happy with something that happened, or is happening, at school, you have a right to complain about it. This means explaining and describing something that happened to you that you didn't like.

2. What should I do before I make a complaint?

You might talk to someone else about it first - to another student or friend or to a teacher or adult at the school – someone you trust.

Making a complaint can be scary, so you could ask them to come with you when you make the complaint if you like.



3. How can I make a complaint?

- You can talk to someone (see the next page)
- You can email someone
- You can go to the Office and ask Mrs Wheeler or Mrs Turner to help you
- You can phone 9297 9230 or send an email to help@scea.wa.edu.au
- You can fill in the form at the end of this booklet and put it in the box in the Office

Step 4: Be calm

Try not to get upset or cry because they won't clearly hear what you are saying

Step 5: Ask questions

- Such as: What will happen next?
- When will you get back to me?
- Will you tell my Mum and Dad?
- Can you talk to my Teacher/Mum please?



Step 6: Keep notes

Write down

- who you talked to
- the date and time
- what they promised they'd do
- when they said they'd get back to you
- how you feel about what they said
- anything else you remember



This will help you to know that they listened to you and are doing what they said they would do.

Step 7: Keep at it

If you're not happy with what happens next (or if nothing happens), you can talk to another person like Mrs Welsby or Mr Johnston.



Complaint Form for Children and Young People

If you need help to fill in this form, see member of the Pastor Care Team.

1. Tell us about you

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Class: _____ Teacher: _____

2. Tell us about your complaint

Who or what are you unhappy with?

When did it happen?

3. What would make you happy?

Tell us what you would like to happen

**Once you have completed this form,
please hand it in at the School Office.**



Are you upset about something?

You can talk to someone you trust.

1. Get Supported!

At Ellenbrook Christian College, we actively encourage all students who wish to make a complaint - or seek clarification on a matter to talk asap to a member of staff (or student leadership body) regarding any concerns that they may have about the College. This person(s) can even come with you when you complain, to support you!

2. Find out How!

Raising a concern can be a scary process. Knowing who to talk to can be tough. Your PC teacher is a great place to raise your concern. If you are in Year 7, Mrs Welsby is your Dean of Pastoral Care and can assist you with any College related concern or question. For years 8 to 12, Mr Taylor is your contact person. If you are unsure about speaking to either of these staff members, our friendly Chaplain, Mr Peakall or our College Councillor, Mrs Royle are always available. You may even wish to speak with Mr Johnston, our Deputy Principal.

When choosing who to talk to, please consider the following:

- a) Talk to someone within the College you feel most comfortable with
- b) You can usually reach a staff member by email or just pop in to Student Services where Mrs Wheeler will be able to assist.

3. Plan what to say

Write down what you are unhappy about and how this has affected you. Also decide what you think should be done. Your support person (student leader or staff member) can assist you with this. This will help when you have to talk about it. You may need to talk to a couple of people throughout the process so it will definitely help to have things written down.

4. Be calm and ask questions

When you make a complaint, remember to be calm and polite as best you can, even if you feel upset. The staff at the College should also treat you with respect.

Ask as many questions as you like. We want to hear from YOU. You may want to know:

- How will they keep your complaint private?
- What will happen next?
- Who will get back to you and who is your support person?
- When will they get back to you?
- If you're not happy about the result of your complaint, what is the next step - who will review your complaint then?

5. Keep notes

As part of managing your complaint your support person (or yourself) should keep notes on the conversations, meetings and people you talk to? These notes should include:

- Who you spoke to
- Who your support person is
- The dates when you spoke to someone
- What they promised to do
- The date they will get back to you

This process will help provide a sense of assurance that your complaint is being listened to and it will also assist in keeping staff accountable to ensure they are completing the agreed tasks.

6. Keep at it

Do not be afraid to complain further if you are still feeling unsafe or that the matter in question has not been resolved.