



## Executive Summary

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to Heritage College, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Heritage College has established a Complaints Handling Policy that is published on our public website.

We ask that, where appropriate, complaints are first raised directly with the relevant staff member if possible.

If it is not possible to resolve a complaint informally, our Complaints Handling Policy sets out how to make a formal complaint and our seven step process for handling complaints.

It is our policy, where possible, to resolve all complaints within 14 days.

## Complaints Handling Policy

Heritage College welcomes feedback from all members of the College community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously. This Complaints Handling Policy is designed to assist you to understand how to make a complaint.

### What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to Heritage College, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Complaints about child abuse, grooming or other harm, or other breaches of our Child Safe Codes of Conduct, relating to conduct by:

- current or former staff members

- current or former students
- other people on College premises or at College events are managed differently to other complaints.

Refer to the section at the end of this policy – Complaints About Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the College or its Staff Members – for more information.

### **Heritage College Knox's Commitment**

Heritage College is committed to handling complaints effectively and efficiently. To manage complaints effectively, we have established a Complaints Handling Program in line with:

- Principle 6 of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, using the Office of Child Safety's "Complaints Handling Guide: Upholding the Rights of Children and Young People"
- the international complaints handling standard (ISO 10002:2018 Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations), and
- the Australian/New Zealand complaints handling standard (AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organisations)

Our internal complaints handling process is available at no cost.

Our complaints handling procedures include the establishment of an online complaints management system which allows us to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints. Regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of rectification action, where deficiencies are identified, are key to the College's commitment.

### **Informal Complaints Resolution**

The vast majority of issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. In most cases these issues can be resolved through informal discussions with appropriate staff members.

Even if an issue can be resolved informally, staff are requested to log issues through our Complaints Handling Form, so we can identify any systemic issues arising and take appropriate rectification action.

### **How do I make a formal complaint?**

We ask that, where appropriate, you first raise the matter directly with the relevant staff member. If you have been unable to resolve a matter informally, or simply wish to make a formal complaint you

can do so by any of the following means:

1. Sending an email to The principal at [principal@heritage.vic.edu.au](mailto:principal@heritage.vic.edu.au).

This can be done via the Feedback tab on the website

[https://heritage.csassurance.com/contracts/new?contract\\_template=7&token=3VC-4pS9qjL-xn6CSriH](https://heritage.csassurance.com/contracts/new?contract_template=7&token=3VC-4pS9qjL-xn6CSriH)

In the case that the issue is not resolved the following persons/organisation should be contacted.

[chairman@heritage.vic.edu.au](mailto:chairman@heritage.vic.edu.au) or Independent Schools Victoria ([enquiries@is.vic.edu.au](mailto:enquiries@is.vic.edu.au))

2. Writing a letter to the College addressed to “The Principal or the Chairman of the Board”
3. Telephoning the College and asking to speak to the Principal or the Chairman of the Board

All formal complaints will be logged into our online complaints management system and managed in accordance with the following procedure.

### **Our Internal Complaints Handling Process**

**Step 1** - All formal complaints are logged through our online complaints management system where they are screened by the Principal or the Chairman of the Board, or in the case of complaints against the Principal by the Chair of the Board.

**Step 2** – All valid complaints will be acknowledged in writing, as soon as practicable, and allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is our policy, where possible, to resolve all disputes within 14 days.

**Step 3** – The the Principal shall conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.

**Step 4** - Following the determination, if appropriate, the Principal or the Chairman of the Board shall formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

**Step 5** - If the initial response is not acceptable the matter will be reviewed internally by the Principal or the Principal’s delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Principal or their delegate seek to resolve all disputes within 14 days from the date that the review process is initiated. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal, or their delegate, is accepted.

**Step 6** - All complaints received will be entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

**Step 7** - If the matter remains unresolved and/or the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome or the way the complaint has been managed, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives. External agencies to which complaints may be made include the Victorian Regulations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) ([vrqa.vic.gov.au](http://vrqa.vic.gov.au)) and the Victorian Ombudsman ([ombudsman.vic.gov.au](http://ombudsman.vic.gov.au)). For general information on mediation, counselling, advocacy and support, refer to the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria ([disputes.vic.gov.au](http://disputes.vic.gov.au)).

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and, if relevant to a person against whom a complaint is made. The College is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process.

Personally identifiable information about a complainant will only be made available for the purpose of addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) will be actively protected from disclosure.

## **Complaints About Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the College or its Staff Members**

Complaints about or allegations of:

- breaches of the Child Safe Codes of Conduct
- child abuse, grooming and other harm of a current or former student
- “reportable conduct” as defined in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- other child safe-related staff misconduct

by

- current or former staff members
- current or former students
- other people on the College premises or at College events

are managed by the College in a different way from other complaint.

This is because of the additional confidentiality and privacy requirements surrounding these kinds of matters.

We refer to these as child safe-related complaints.

For information about how the College manages child safe – related complaints, as well as any child safety incidents or concerns at or involving the College or its staff members, please refer to our [Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the College or its Staff, Volunteers or Contractors](#), available on our public website.