



Parent Complaint Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Victoria University Secondary College so that 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 regarding Victoria University Secondary College are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

2. Background

2.1 This policy relates to concerns or complaints brought by parents, carers, students or 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 Department of Education and Training process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions, for example, expulsion appeals.

2.2 Victoria University 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.

2.3 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.

3. Principles

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.

4. Implementation

4.1 Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

Victoria University 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 Victoria University



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Secondary College (see "Further Information and Resources" section below).

4.2 Complaints process

Victoria University Secondary College is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to the Year Level Co-ordinator. Where possible, school staff will work with parents/carers to ensure that their concerns are appropriately addressed. Concerns or complaints which are deemed urgent by the school will be treated as such.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the Middle/Senior School Leaders, noting that formal complaints should be directed to a member of the school's leadership team.

Parents/carers may refer to the *DET Quick Reference Guide for Parent Complaints* (Appendix 2) for further information. Non-English speaking parents/carers may use the National Translating and Interpreting Service by calling 131 450.

If a person 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:

- A. Complaint received:** Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the administration office with School Leader at your child's campus, to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are. We can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.
- B. Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, Middle/Senior School Leader 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.
- C. Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Middle/Senior School Leader 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 may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
- D. Timelines:** Victoria University Secondary College will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within two school days) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Victoria University Secondary 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



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required, Victoria University Secondary College will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

4.3 Resolution

Where appropriate, Victoria University 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, Victoria University 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.

4.4 Escalation

If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved by the school, 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 South West Regional Office by contacting them on 1300 333 232 or swvr@education.vic.gov.au.

Victoria University Secondary College may also refer a complaint to the South West Regional Office if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

For more information about the Department's Parent Complaints policy, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Parent Complaints policy](#).

5. Further Information and Resources

- [VUSC Statement of Values and School Philosophy](#)

6. Appendices

1. Parent Concerns or Complaint Form
2. DET Quick Reference Guide for Parent Complaints

7. Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required by changes to DE&T guidelines.



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Appendix 1

Parent Concerns or Complaint Form

This form should be used if you have a concern or complaint, and you wish register it in writing with the school's Principal.

This Form is to be completed by following the guidelines in the VUSC Parent Complaint Policy.

PERSONAL DETAILS:

Title:	First Name:	Family Name:
Street Address:		
Suburb:		Postcode:
Telephone: B/H		Mobile:
Email:		

STUDENT DETAILS:

First Name:	Family Name:
Year Level:	Gender (please tick) Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>

Who have you contacted previously about your complaint? (Please indicate below)

Class Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	Year Level Co-Ordinator	<input type="checkbox"/>	Middle/Senior School Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campus Principal	<input type="checkbox"/>	College Principal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Department of Education and Training:		<input type="checkbox"/>	(please provide name/s and date/s)						

COMPLAINT DETAILS:

Please provide an outline of your complaint. Include relevant dates/detail of phone conversations or meetings / any explanations that you think are important. Attach extra pages as required (including copies of other documents relevant to your complaint).



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Date: _____ Signature: _____

How do you think this issue can be resolved?

Send the form to the General Office in a sealed envelope marked **Confidential - For the Principal**.

Victoria University Secondary College
Junior Campus – 88 Billingham Rd, Deer Park
Senior Campus – 5a Jamieson St, St Albans

The College will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 2 business days of receiving it and will endeavour to provide a full response to your complaint within 10 school days or sooner. If you are not satisfied with the school's response, you may contact the Department of Education and Training Regional Office.

South Western Victoria Region: swr@education.vic.gov.au

Privacy Statement

The Department has an information privacy policy and handles personal information in accordance with the Victorian Privacy laws: the Information *Privacy Act 2000* and *Health Records Act 2001*.

See <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/privacy.aspx>.