



COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY

RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Melba 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 Melba College are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

SCOPE

This policy relates to 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.

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Melba College welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement.

Melba College 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.

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 of Education and Training policy
- recognise that schools and the Department of Education and Training may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

Raising a concern, complaint or grievance

Melba 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 Melba College (see 'Further Information and Resources' section below).

Complaints process

Melba 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 Coordinators, Sub-school

Coordinators, Assistant Principal or Principal. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal complaint. Formal complaints should be directed to a member of the school's leadership team, either the Principal or an Assistant Principal.

If you 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. The following process will apply:

1. **Complaint received by Melba College:**
Either email, telephone, facebook, messaging or other electronic messaging. A meeting is arranged through the administration office with the Principal, Assistant Principal or nominee to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are. The Principal or Assistant Principal will discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.
2. **Information gathering:**
Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Principal, Assistant Principal or nominee 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.
3. **Response:**
Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Principal, Assistant Principal or nominee to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. If after the resolution meeting the Principal, Assistant Principal or nominee are unable to resolve the complaint together with you, 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.
4. **Timelines:**
Melba College will acknowledge receipt of a 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, Melba College may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. The Principal, Assistant Principal or nominee 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 required, Melba College will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.
5. **Records and Actions:**
The Department of Education and Training Parent Complaint Policy requires schools to keep a written record of serious, substantial or unusual complaints that require resolution actions

Documentation of all steps taken to achieve agreement as well as documentation of any agreements must be kept and signed by both parties (for Melba College this must be the Principal or Assistant Principal.)

Resolution

Where appropriate, Melba 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, Melba 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.

Escalation

If a person making the complaint is not satisfied that the complaint has been resolved by Melba College, or if your complaint is about the Principal and there is no desire to raise it directly with the Principal, then the complaint should be referred to the Glen Waverley Office of North East Victoria Region on:

Phone: 1300 333 231

Location: Level 2, 295 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley 3150

Explain the issue, the Department staff member will help record your complaint and explain the steps they will take. You need to give the Department staff member time to speak with the principal and anyone else involved with the issue. If the issue is complex it could take a little longer to work through.

If a person making the complaint is still not satisfied with the result, the complaint can be referred to the Central Office of the Department of Education and Training on:

Phone: 9637 2000

Location: 2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne 3002

The central office team will work to resolve the issue or refer eligible complaints to the Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution.

If the complaint is not resolved or the person making the complaint is still unhappy with the result, the complaint can also be considered by the Victorian Ombudsman.

It might not always be possible to resolve a complaint to complete satisfaction. Melba College and the Department of Education can only resolve complaints in ways that are in line with Department values, policies and the law.

If the concern or complaint is about the Principal and there is no desire to raise it directly with the Principal, then the complaint should be referred to the Glen Waverley office of North East Victoria Region on:

Phone: 1300 333 231

Location: Level 2, 295 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley 3150.

Melba College may also refer a complaint to North East Victoria Region 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.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Melba College Policies

- Philosophy and Values Statement with Implementation Strategies
- Parent Code of Conduct Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Respect for Melba College Staff Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy

Legislation that is relevant to parent conduct:

- Working with Children Act

Policy Reviewed by School Council	Person Responsible for Policy	Next School Council Review
2019	Assistant Principal - Accountabilities	2022