



St Margaret's College

5. Formal Complaints Policy

5.1 Rationale

- (a) To ensure best practice and physical and mental wellbeing of staff, students and parents at St Margaret's College (SMC)
- (b) SMC are committed to positive, supportive and low-key resolution of concerns and complaints.
- (c) SMC will follow current employment legislation and best practice for employers, in addition to the requirements of the collective agreement in place for SMC staff
- (d) To ensure excellent provision of facilities and up to date legal practice occurs
- (e) To ensure formal complaints are received and dealt with fairly, promptly and consistently to a point of resolution
- (f) To provide a pathway by which parents, students and staff can be heard and resolution reached
- (g) To ensure that SMC is not brought into disrepute and bring harm to others by the conduct of students both internally and externally

5.2 Definition

5.2.1 A formal complaint is one judged by the complainant to be of a serious nature, requiring a process of investigation, resolution and reporting back to the complainant. It must be made verbally or in writing and cannot be anonymous. Formal complaints will be received, investigated and responded to in a timely manner with the aim of satisfactory resolution for all parties with the respect of those involved.

5.2.2 Formal complaints will fall under the following interactions (see Appendix 1)

- (a) Formal Complaints about teaching staff
- (b) Formal Complaints about College facilities and services
- (c) Formal Complaints about the conduct of students within or outside of SMC

5.3 Process of Formal Complaints Resolution

5.3.1 Making and Receiving all Formal Complaints

The complainant may make a written or verbal complaint (see Appendix 2). If verbal, the person receiving the complaint should take notes and then seek confirmation from the complainant that they are an accurate summary. The complaint will not be acted upon if it is made anonymously.

5.3.2 Deciding upon a Course of Action

- (a) Within the category of “formal complaints”, complaints vary in complexity, seriousness and validity. For this reason, some reflection upon the best course of action, involving discussion with the relevant parties, when appropriate, will be helpful
- (b) Depending upon the nature of the complaint, the first steps will involve seeking verification of the issues and/or the employee’s/student’s response, so that its validity can be ascertained
- (c) The complexity and seriousness of allegations in this category of complaint will vary, so that in the first instance a judgment about its gravity will be made and subsequent action will depend upon this
- (d) Action or intent which risks serious breach of the safety and welfare of others in the SMC community should be brought to the urgent attention of the Executive Principal, Trust Board Chair and Leadership Team.

5.3.3. Response by Staff Member Handling Complaint

- A. May involve some or all of the following steps, depending upon the nature of the complaint
 - (i) Compiling further relevant information to ascertain the validity of the complaint
 - (ii) Discussing issues raised with the employee/student
 - (iii) Observing employee/student practice
 - (iv) For aspects of the complaint which are valid, develop an action plan in consultation with the employee/student
 - (v) Monitoring effectiveness of action plan. Take further remedial action, if required
 - (vi) Seeking counsel from colleagues, and/or legal advice if required
 - (vii) Performance review and management
 - (viii) Disciplinary action
 - (ix) If the complaint is related to grounds or facilities steps (iv) to (viii) should be followed.
- B. Will always involve:
 - (i) Informing, in writing :
 - (a) the complainant of the steps taken to resolve the issue
 - (b) the Executive Principal of the complaint and the action taken
 - (c) the staff member about whom the complaint was made
 - (d) the timeline for responding to the complaint
 - (ii) Respecting the confidentiality of the complainant if possible (if not then explain the process further for continuation)
 - (iii) Maintaining a written record of the complaint, the action taken and the outcome
 - (iv) In cases of disciplinary action the employer will adhere to the St Margaret’s College Collective Agreement- Clause 11 - Appendix A, Individual Employee Agreements, and Student policy on discipline.

5.4 Formal Complaints against Teachers

5.4.1 Procedure

- (a) Complaints may be made in writing or if verbal, a written confirmation
- (b) Advise staff member of their right to seek support and representation before responding to complaints, and give them a reasonable opportunity to take that advice

- (c) An investigation of the complaint will be undertaken
- (d) At the conclusion of the investigation the complainant and any relevant staff member shall receive a written response outlining and explaining:
 - (i) the need to retain the status quo
 - (ii) any proposed or implemented changes which address the issue and improve future practice
- (e) The Executive Principal will advise the NZ Teaching Council if appropriate

5.5 Formal Complaints about College Facilities (venues) and Services

5.5.1 Procedure

- (a) Complaints will be made in writing or if verbal a written confirmation
- (b) An investigation of the complaint will be undertaken
- (c) At the conclusion of the investigation the complainant and any relevant staff member shall receive a written response outlining and explaining:
 - (i) the need to retain the status quo
 - (ii) any proposed or implemented changes which address the issue and improve future practice.

5.6 Formal Complaints about the Conduct of Students within or outside of SMC

5.6.1 Procedure

Complaints will be made in writing, describing the issue and addressed to the Associate Principal, who will inform the Executive Principal and the relevant Dean of the complaint.

5.6.2 Response

- A. May involve some or all of the following steps, depending upon the nature of the complaint:
 - (i) Compiling further information from those involved in the issue described including, as necessary, students, parents, SMC employees, members of the public
 - (ii) Seeking counsel from colleagues
 - (iii) Using Student Handbook guidelines and SMC rules (see Student Handbook)
 - (iv) Discuss issues raised, as appropriate, with the students involved and/or their parents and form a plan of action
 - (v) For aspects of the complaint which are valid, develop a response designed to
 - (vi) Reduce or prevent negative consequences
 - (vii) Reduce or prevent a repetition of the issue
 - (viii) Restore positive relationships
 - (ix) Monitoring the effectiveness of the response.
- B. Will always involve:
 - (i) Informing, in writing :
 - (a) the complainant, student and student's parents of the steps taken to respond to and resolve the issue
 - (ii) Respecting the confidentiality of the complainant, if requested
 - (iii) Maintaining a written record of the complaint, the action taken and the outcome.

5.7 Contact of Staff to Approach (see Appendix 3).

5.8 References:

- (a) SMC Collective Agreement (clause 11) Termination of employment, disciplinary procedures and redundancy

- (b) Code of Conduct
- (c) Staff Handbook
- (d) Parent/Student Handbook
- (e) NZ Teachers' Council Code of Ethics
- (f) Individual Employment Agreements**

5.9 This Policy links to:

- (a) Student Support
- (b) Health & Safety Policy
- (c) Health & Wellbeing Policy
- (d) Academic Policies
- (e) Boarding Policies
- (f) Pre-school Policies
- (g) Confidentiality and Privacy
- (h) Trust Board Policies

Formal Complaints Policy

Approved by:

Executive Principal

Print Name: DIANA PATCHETT

Signature: 

Compliance

Committee Chair:

Print Name: Nicola Church

Signature: 

Trust Board Chair:

Print Name: Di Humphries

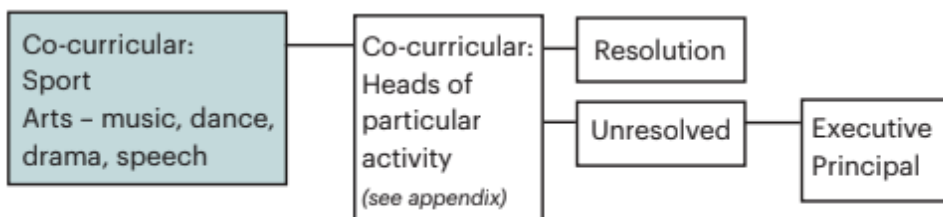
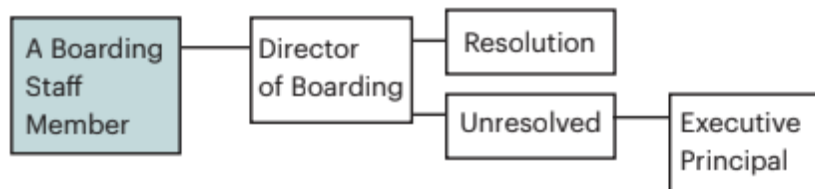
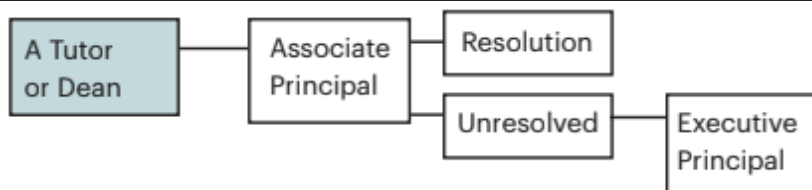
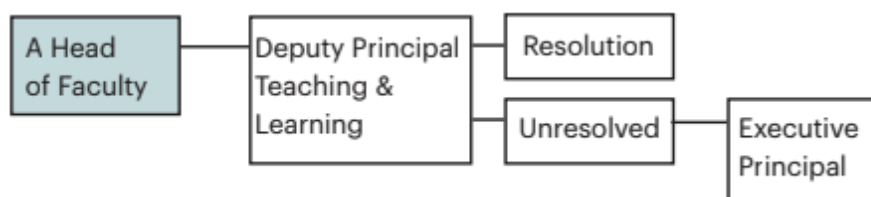
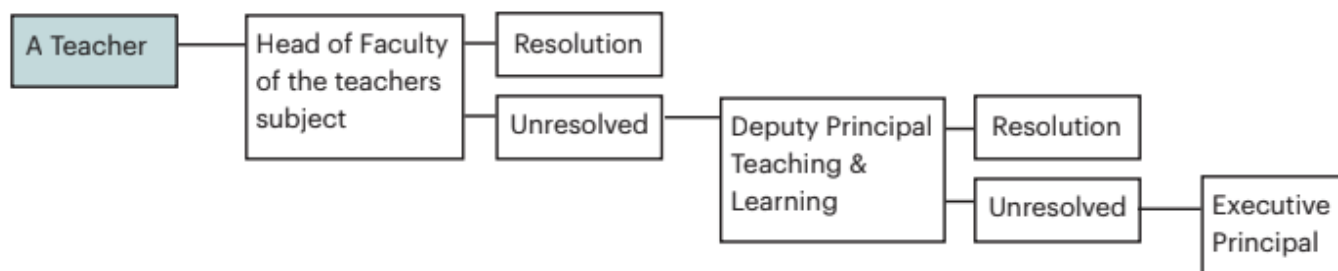
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Date Approved: 25/3/24.

Date of Next Review: 2026

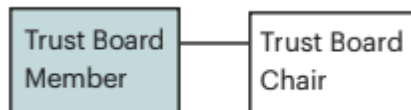
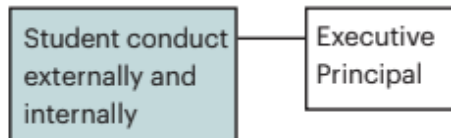
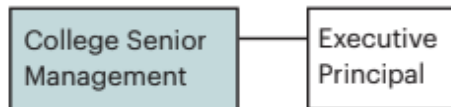
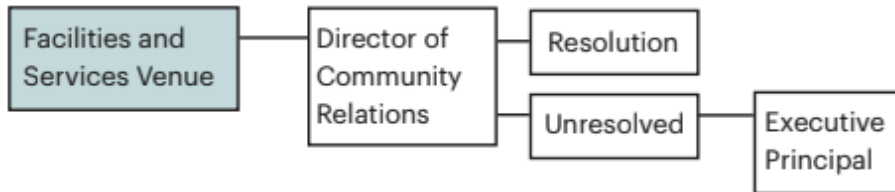
Appendix 1

This diagram summarises the staff member to initially contact and the staff involved in receiving and acting upon a complaint. Complaint received about:





St Margaret's College



Complaint Form

Contact details

Title and full name:			
Other Names (if applicable):			
Street Address:			
Suburb:		Postcode	
City			
Phone	Work:		Mobile:
Email			

Complaint details

Date of Complaint:	
Who / What is the subject of your complaint:	

Tell us about your complaint in your own words including times and places as appropriate
(attach additional pages if needed):

Witness details

Title and full name:				
Other Names (if applicable):				
Street Address:				
Suburb:		Postcode		
City				
Phone	Work:		Mobile:	
Email				

Investigation notes:

Outcome / Resolution decided upon:

Date outcome communicated to Complainant:

Reasons for outcome / Response from Complainant to outcome:

Any other comments:

Signature:		
Name:	Position at St Margaret's College:	
Date:		

Key Contacts

If you need to contact a staff member, the email structure is: **firstname.lastname@stmargarets.school.nz**

Deans

Y7 & 8 – Nicole Lloyd (nicole.lloyd@stmargarets.school.nz)

Y9 – Sarah Hickford (sarah.hickford@stmargarets.school.nz)

Y10 – Sarena Harrison (sarena.harrison@stmargarets.school.nz)

Y11 – Nick Ryan (nick.ryan@stmargarets.school.nz)

Y12 – David Thompson (david.thompson@stmargarets.school.nz)

Y13 – Helen MacDonald (helen.macdonald@stmargarets.school.nz)

Heads of Faculty

Visual Art – Callum Arnold (callum.arnold@stmargarets.school.nz)

English – Deborah Matheson (deborah.matheson@stmargarets.school.nz)

Languages – Stefanie Hossbach (stefanie.hossbach@stmargarets.school.nz)

Mathematics – Tamara Leros (tamara.leros@stmargarets.school.nz)

Acting PE & Health – Paula Vesty (paula.vesty@stmargarets.school.nz)

Performing Arts – Amanda Woods (amanda.woods@stmargarets.school.nz)

Science – Richard Freeman (richard.freeman@stmargarets.school.nz)

Creative Technologies – Trudy Keys (trudy.keys@stmargarets.school.nz)

Humanities & Social Sciences – Chris Walker (chris.walker@stmargarets.school.nz)

Learning Enhancement – Catherine Bell (catherine.bell@stmargarets.school.nz)

Leadership

Executive Principal – Diana Patchett (diana.patchett@stmargarets.school.nz)

Associate Principal – Jennie Nairn (jennie.nairn@stmargarets.school.nz)

Pre-School Director – Sarah Bradley (sarah.bradley@stmargarets.school.nz)

Head of Junior School – Bridget Compton-Moen (bridget.compton-moen@stmargarets.school.nz)

Head of Middle School – Kathryn Gray (kathryn.gray@stmargarets.school.nz)

Head of Senior School – Sian Evans (sian.evans@stmargarets.school.nz)

Deputy Head of Middle School – Rachel Quigley (rachel.quigley@stmargarets.school.nz)

Deputy Head of Senior School -Student Care & Experience – James Evans
(james.evans@stmargarets.school.nz)

Deputy Head of Senior School (Academic) – Jacq Gilbert (jacq.gilbert@stmargarets.school.nz)

Director of Boarding and International – Rachel Clemenger (rachel.clemenger@stmargarets.school.nz)

Director of Sport – Helen Belcher (helen.belcher@stmargarets.school.nz)

Other support

Venue / Facilities Hire – Jane Lougher (jane.lougher@stmargarets.school.nz)