

# NORTHERN BAY COLLEGE

## PARENT CONCERNS AND ISSUES POLICY NBC090

### 1. PURPOSE

A timely and professional response to student, parent and community issues, concerns and complaints is an effective means of encouraging communication, building trust and resolving issues for the betterment of all concerned.

Northern Bay College (NBC) encourages and supports the involvement of parents in their child's education. The development of strong family-school partnerships is important for children's development and learning. NBC also recognises that in all partnerships there may be times of disagreement and issues of concern that will need to be resolved. This policy provides the NBC community with a procedure for investigating parent concerns and complaints.

Our approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on our school's values of:

- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment
- Building a positive relationship between students, parents and staff
- Providing a safe work environment for staff

Complaints and concerns made by parents will in no way adversely affect their children.

### 2. BROAD GUIDELINES

- 2.1. To develop and implement a process by which students, parents and community members can confidently raise concerns in the knowledge that they will be listened to and professionally managed in a timely, confidential and appropriate manner.
- 2.2. Northern Bay College's policy and processes for receiving and responding to complaints are in line with the DET *Addressing parents' concerns and complaints effectively: policy and guide*. This document is available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx)
- 2.3. Maintaining an approach to handling concerns and complaints is based up the College Core Values
- 2.4. Relationships with students, parents and the community are important and the College takes complaints seriously.
- 2.5. Students, parents or community members making complaints or raising concerns should ascertain the facts as best they can, and contact the school at their earliest convenience.
- 2.6. Any investigation conducted by the school will be done so in a timely, efficient and confidential manner, ensuring the fair principles of natural justice are applied for all. The complainant will be provided with an anticipated time-frame for a resolution.

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION

- 3.1. Students, parents or community members with complaints or concerns should contact the **campus** by telephone, in person or in writing.
- 3.2. Parents or community members visiting the campus to make a complaint are advised that it is unlikely that staff will be immediately available to investigate the complaint. However, office staff can make an appointment to meet with an appropriate person to discuss their concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.3. Students, parents or community members making complaints are expected to:
  - do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs
  - provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
  - maintain and respect privacy and confidentiality of parties
  - acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
  - act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner
  - show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame
  - recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced

- 3.4. Students, parents or community members who are unreasonable, threatening or discourteous can expect their discussions with staff to be terminated until such time as an alternative discussion time is arranged by the school.
- 3.5. Northern Bay College staff will address any concerns and complaints received from students, parents or the community:
  - courteously
  - efficiently
  - promptly, or will provide a timeline in which to address the issue
  - in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the DET's regulatory framework
  - fairly
- 3.6. The school will record the details of all complaints including the name and contact details of the persons making the complaints.
- 3.7. The Campus Principal will refer the complaint to the most appropriate person to investigate. There will be occasions that this will be referred to the college principal.
- 3.8. College staff will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the DET.
- 3.9. The campus principal will determine whether or not an anonymous complaint will be investigated.
- 3.10. The investigating staff member may conduct a preliminary investigation or communicate with the student, parent or community member to discuss the matter further.
- 3.11. If the scope of the investigation is beyond the capacity or jurisdiction of the College, the matter will be referred to the appropriate authority and the student, parent or community member will be informed of the referral.
- 3.12. Students, parents or community members discussing complaints with staff may be accompanied by an advocate if they wish. A person acting on behalf of the complainant and receiving a fee for service will not be entitled to meet regarding the complaint. In this case the complaint will be required in writing and will be forwarded to the DET Legal Services.
- 3.13. The investigating staff member will record the details of the investigation.
- 3.14. Following the investigation, the investigating staff member will communicate with the complainant to provide their findings and an appropriate course of action, if any.
- 3.15. Should the complaint or concern involve complex issues, the school might need to take advice from DET which may take more time. The school will inform the complainant of the new timeline for addressing the complaint and the reasons for any delays.
- 3.16. If in the view of the student, parent or community member the matter remains unresolved, the complainant will be provided with details as to how they can refer the matter to the Department of Education's regional office.
- 3.17. Similarly, the school, the parent or other involved parties may seek to involve a mediator to try to resolve any unresolved complaint.
- 3.18. Northern Bay College will develop a variety of policies relating to areas where complaints often arise, so that all parties are sure of the school's position.
- 3.19. All staff will be made aware of our school's complaints handling procedures and will be supported with training on how to minimise, respond to, and manage community complaints.

**4. EVALUATION:** This policy will be reviewed annually or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances

**REFERENCES:** <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx>

Document #	Committee Responsible	Review Date	Public Location	Ratified by School Council:
NBC090	Leadership	May 2016	Website	
	<b>Related Documents</b>			
NBC091	Parent Involvement and Engagement			