



# Atlantis Beach Baptist College

## COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE POLICY

<b>Adopted by:</b> Principal		<b>Review date:</b> 02/04/2024
<b>Scheduled review date:</b> 02/04/2025		
<b>To whom issued:</b> College staff and community		

## POLICY CONTROL HISTORY

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DATE:	REVIEWED BY:	AMENDMENTS/REVIEWS
04/10/2023	Principal	
02/04/2024	Principal	

## OVERVIEW

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Atlantis Beach Baptist College is committed to providing an environment where students' safety, education and wellbeing is supported through our policies and processes.

We are a community and as such, there will be times when members of the community may wish to provide feedback, raise a concern or make a complaint. The College accepts feedback from current and past members of the College community. Members of the community refers to students, staff, parents and people of the wider community.

The College encourages members of the community to either provide feedback, raise a concern or make a complaint especially when there is a situation that impacts the safety, education or wellbeing of our students. These situations are advised to be raised immediately in order to implement supports required promptly or resolve matters swiftly, always with the aim of providing an environment where students' safety, education and wellbeing is protected.

The College understands that if feedback, a concern or a complaint is raised, that there is a genuine level of support required, or dissatisfaction in an experience with members of the community. We aim to consider all matters brought to our attention objectively, actively work together with all parties involved to determine a suitable resolution and maintain confidentiality at all times.

While we will be actively working to support students and their families through a concern or a complaint, the staff of the College also have the right to a safe working environment and as such, verbal or physical aggression towards staff will not be accepted.

The College endeavours to be a culturally safe environment 'where there is no assault, challenge or denial of [a person's] identity, of who they are and what they need' and refers specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This encompasses Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals' own assessment of their safety and capacity to engage meaningfully, on their own terms with non-Indigenous person or institution. This requires action from the non-Indigenous person or institution to listen, enable and support these environments, with accountability to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues or service users [Royal Commission Final Report, Volume 1, page 322].

Atlantis Beach Baptist College wishes to ensure that parents, students (past and present) and members of the community have a developed understanding of:

- How to provide feedback, raise a concern or make a complaint, should the need or situation arise
- The expectations of the College's response to feedback, a concern being raised or a complaint being made
- Processes of appeal where there is an unsatisfactory resolution for the concern/complaint raised

## **NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD SAFETY**

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The following principles are supported by this policy:

- Principle 6 – Processes to respond to concerns and complaints are child focused.
- Principle 9 – Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.

## **REVIEW OF POLICY**

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This policy is reviewed on an annual basis and is endorsed by the College Board.

Any changes to the policy will be communicated through:

- Newsletters to families
- Staff development sessions
- Updating the website

## **PROVIDING FEEDBACK**

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Members of the community are encouraged to provide feedback. This provides an opportunity to the College to evaluate our processes and policies.

Feedback can be provided through:

- Talking with a member of staff
- Submitting feedback via the website
- Completing satisfaction surveys

Feedback can be given anonymously where no response is expected. If the member of the community wishes to have a response, we ask that the name and best contact details of the person providing the feedback is supplied.

## **RAISING A CONCERN OR A COMPLAINT**

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Raising a concern or complaint can be done simply through contacting the College and speaking to a staff member. It is always helpful to firstly consider what the concern/complaint refers to so we can direct your concern/complaint to the most appropriate staff member. Writing down what you wish to discuss can also be beneficial so that when discussing your concern/complaint the matters are fully addressed with the relevant staff member.

### **How to raise a concern/complaint**

Parents/carers are able to raise a concern or complaint:

1. In person – talk to one of our staff members (see the chart below)
2. By phone – contact the College and request to speak with one of our staff members
3. In writing – via email: [admin@abbc.wa.edu.au](mailto:admin@abbc.wa.edu.au); or through written correspondence which can be delivered to the College reception.

## **Staff to raise the concern/complaint with:**

### **Levels of concerns/complaints**

All concerns/complaints will be taken seriously by the attending staff member no matter what the concern or complaint relates to.

Some frequently asked questions about raising concerns/complaints and their responses are below:

Below is a guide of who you can contact to raise a concern/complaint guided by the nature of the concern or complaint:

### ***Chart 1: Initial person of referral specific to the nature of a concern/complaint***

PASTORAL CARE	ACADEMIC	STAFF MEMBER	PRINCIPAL/COLLEGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Class Teacher</li><li>• Chaplain</li><li>• Form Teacher (SEC)</li><li>• Coordinator</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Class Teacher</li><li>• Subject Teacher</li><li>• Coordinator</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deputy Principal</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Principal</li></ul>

#### *'I am not sure whether to raise a concern or not, yet something is bothering me'*

We are all working towards the same goals; that is, the safety, education and well-being of students. If you have a concern/complaint, we encourage you to speak to a staff member as soon as you feel there is an issue arising. Often matters are resolved swiftly and effectively by raising a concern/complaint before it becomes something more significant.

#### *'I am not sure that the concern/complaint can be handled by a discussion over the telephone'*

We encourage you to make an appointment to speak with the appropriate staff member at a mutually agreeable time. Often it is helpful to write down your concerns/complaint so that the matter can be addressed fully.

#### *'I am concerned about the welfare of a student'*

We encourage you to speak to the Deputy Principal immediately. If after hours, we advise that the Department of Communities and Child Protection Central Intake Team is contacted on 1800 273 889.

#### *'The matter is of a confidential or sensitive nature'*

All concerns/complaints are treated with the utmost respect of confidentiality. Only essential staff and those directly involved will be informed of the matter. Please discuss these concerns with the attending staff member.

#### *'The concern/complaint needs urgent attention'*

Contact the College and speak to the Deputy Principal.

*'The concern/complaint refers to a situation that happened during classes'*

We encourage you to speak directly with the supervising teacher of the class. As they were present during that time, they may be able to provide an immediate response.

*'The concern/complaint refers to a curriculum query'*

Please speak initially with the subject teacher. They can refer it to the Coordinator or Deputy Principal if needed.

*'The concern/complaint relates to academic progress of my child'*

Please discuss your concerns with your child's class teacher. They will be able to assist you.

## **RESPONSE TO A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT**

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We aim to respond to concerns or complaints as soon as possible, however time demands may impact the immediacy of a response. If a concern or a complaint has not been initially responded to within 48 hours, please contact the College to notify our Administration Team. We will make it a matter of priority that someone contacts you before the end of the day.

### **Upon responding to a concern or complaint, the staff member may:**

- a) Arrange to meet to discuss the concern/complaint in person together
- b) Commit to investigating further information provided and then following up on the concern/complaint
- c) Arrange a time to provide feedback on the concern/complaint

Concerns/complaints referred to or made in writing to the Principal (by email or correspondence) will be responded to within 5 business days acknowledging the receipt of the concern/complaint and will give an indication of the expected time frame for a response. Once the matter has been investigated, then a response is given in writing.

### **Confidentiality**

All matters will be treated with the utmost respect of confidentiality. Only essential staff members are notified and those directly involved.

For serious matters (relating to Child Protection Issues), the Chair of the Board and other external authorities may need to be notified whether or not they are required to by law and the College will need to cooperate with such authorities should they require additional information.

### **Objectivity**

All concerns/complaints are taken as a genuine expression of concern and without bias.

Complaints will be listened to carefully to identify the matters of dispute and seek from the complainant the desired outcome of the complainant. At times where there is no clear resolution, further consultation may occur between essential staff (where the name of the person raising the concern/complaint is anonymous) to gain another objective viewpoint.

## **Investigation**

Some concerns/complaints may take some time to resolve where further investigation or deliberation is required. This will be communicated to parties involved and an expected timeframe for a final resolution. Decisions of resolutions will be based on evidence gathered during the investigation.

## **Retribution of students**

Retribution of students by a staff member as a result of a concern or a complaint being raised is not acceptable and will be deemed by the College a breach of the Staff Code of Conduct. Staff aware of a concern/complaint are expected to remain professional at all times. The process is viewed as an expression of genuine concern for the safety, education or wellbeing of a student and as such, staff are required to work towards a suitable resolution for all parties involved in a supportive manner.

## **Resolution**

In the event a concern or complaint is raised, the College staff will work closely with families to find the best solution moving forward. Feedback will be provided as available and the agreed plan will be implemented and monitored.

## **APPEAL PROCESS**

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We hope that members of the community are completely satisfied with the resolution of any matter raised, however in the event that a concern or complaint has an unsatisfactory outcome, parties involved may request that the matter be escalated to senior members of staff for review and consideration.

This process of appeal can be initiated by a referral by staff on behalf of the family raising the concern or complaint. Families or staff members can request this referral.

Should a family wish to appeal an outcome determined by the College, they may do so by referring the matter to the College Board for review. In the event that this determination requires further appeal, families may request from the College Board to refer the matter to the College's Independent Arbiter for review.

The Independent Arbiter is not employed by the College or a member of the Board. They will review whether the College has decided in accordance with the policies of the College.

The NGSR is responsible for ensuring that the school observes the registration standards, including the standard about its complaint handling system. Any student, parent or community member is entitled to contact the NGSR with concerns about how the school has dealt with a complaint.

Information is available on <https://www.education.wa.edu.au>. While they may consider whether the school has breached the registration standards, he/she does not have the power to intervene in a complaint or override the school's decision.

## REFERRAL CHART FOR CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

