

Rationale

Carey is an outworking of Carey Baptist Church Inc. (the Church). The Carey comprises five different legal entities, operating across two campuses, and sometimes in other locations, offering a diverse range of services and community support including child care, education services, youth work, churches and coffee shops and community development. This diverse set of activities brings Carey into contact with a wide range of different clients and customer groups, and requires the employment of over 450 people across a range of different professions and vocations.

Our values of integrity, kindness, courage, respect and humility help to shape the way that we live and work at Carey. The common chords of hope, compassion, family and learning continue to resonate across the group as together we seek to build a community where individuals, families, children, students, and staff can flourish. The relationships we have with all of the communities we engage with are important to us. We are a Christian organisation and our intention is always to treat others in a way that honours God and follows the teachings of Jesus, however, we recognise that in the complexity of human interactions, concerns, complaints and grievances will naturally occur.

We also recognise the importance of working together to resolve any issues that arise, in a manner that is positive and solution-focussed. To this end, we see concerns, complaints and grievances as an opportunity for learning and growth that will help us to strengthen relationships, and bring about change where it is needed. Members of the Carey Community can be confident that staff will listen and respond to their needs and concerns. We would love to have a conversation about an issue rather than have community members feeling dissatisfied and unheard, and we welcome the opportunity to work together to find a resolution.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the measures the Carey Group Boards oversee in order to ensure that any complaint or dispute between a Carey entity and one or more individuals or between two or more individuals, whether they be staff, students, parents, clients, customers, church partners, church attendees or any other person with which any of the five Carey Group entities interacts complaints are properly acknowledged, investigated and wherever possible resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.

Carey Baptist College adopts the Carey Boards Complaints Resolution Policy to align with the Board's directives and to ensure compliance with relevant regulatory and other standards. This policy establishes a clear and systematic approach for addressing and resolving complaints, reflecting our commitment to fairness, transparency, and effective resolution in line with best practices and regulatory requirements.

Updated: 17-09-24	Version 7	Owner: Governance Council	Next Review: 2025	Page 1
-------------------	-----------	---------------------------	-------------------	--------

Scope

This policy applies to all Carey Baptist College Campuses, students, families, contractors, service providers, and community members. It sets out the process for having enquiries, concerns, and complaints addressed by the staff and leadership of Carey Baptist College.

Policy Statement

The objectives of the policy are:

- To provide for a fair, transparent and responsive management of complaints about the functions, practices and services of Carey Baptist College.
- To have complaints handled promptly and as close to the source as is possible.
- To ensure that there is effective monitoring of complaints.
- To identify and implement service and system improvement opportunities that arise from the process.
- To ensure that wherever possible the college continues to learn from issues that arise and are committed to continuously improving its procedures.
- To ensure that pathways to providing feedback and making complaints are easily accessible by stakeholders.
- To ensure confidentiality is maintained throughout the complaints-handling process, with information only disclosed to individuals who require it to address the complaint effectively
- To ensure that there is a process of recording, and monitoring complaints in line with the relevant regulatory and other standard requirements such as but not limited to the Non-Government School Registration Standards.

Definitions

A **concern** is the expression of worry, something that has made a person troubled or anxious about an issue. It is expressed at a 'first level', i.e., to a class teacher in person, by telephone, or by email directly to the relevant staff member. Depending on the nature of the concern, it can often be resolved at this 'first level' more informally.

A **complaint** for the purpose of this policy in accordance to the AS/NZS 10002:2014 , refers to an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, made to an organisation related to its products, services, staff or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. Within a school, this would usually equate to an expression, in writing, of protest, objection, dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem, accusation, or criticism and is usually dealt with formally. Irrespective of whether the complaint was first expressed as a concern, it would be expected to be in the form of a written communication, a letter, or an email addressed directly to the relevant staff member, their line manager, the Principal, or the Chair of the school's governing body.

A complaint may be made if a complainant thinks that the College or an individual staff member has, for example:

- done something wrong;
- failed to do something they should have done; or
- acted unfairly or impolitely.

A complaint may be made about the school as a whole, a specific department in the school, a particular school activity, an individual member of staff, or one or more students.

Concerns and complaints treated as constructive suggestions can facilitate rectification and improvement and may prevent cause for further complaints.

Carey Baptist College Complaints Procedure

Complaints will be resolved at multiple levels. Serious complaints may also be lodged outside the College with agencies such as the Equal Opportunity Commission, the Western Australian Police Service, and the Crime and Corruption Commission.

The following principles apply to the management of all complaints:

- Complainants can make inquiries, raise concerns, or lodge complaints about the provision of education or Carey Baptist College staff's conduct and have these handled efficiently, fairly, and promptly.
- Complaints relating to child protection, discrimination, harassment, or bullying may be referred to Codes of Conduct, Behaviour Management, or Child Protection policies and procedures.
- Students may raise complaints with or without the support or knowledge of their parents in the first instance.
- In all matters, students' educational well-being and safety are the first priority.
- The process is accessible to all aggrieved parties and is underpinned by a commitment by Carey Baptist College staff to cooperate.
- Procedural fairness is afforded to all parties.
- Confidentiality is maintained to the extent consistent with legislative requirements and the other principles outlined in this section.
- The subject of the complaint is informed of the substance of the complaint.
- The warranted investigation will be pursued with or without the active involvement of the complainant.
- Complaints are monitored, and their management is evaluated to reduce the occurrence of systemic and recurring problems.
- All members of The College community, including students, parents, administrators, teachers, and support staff, have a right to be treated with respect and courtesy.
- Vexatious, trivial, or previously finalised issues are not pursued.
- Parents, students, and local community members will be provided with information about the process for making enquiries, raising concerns, or complaining.
- Complaints from former students and/or their parents or guardians are accepted and dealt with despite the student's enrolment having ceased.

The Role of the Director General

The Director General of the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the school observes the registration standards, including the standard of its complaints handling system. Any student, parent, or community member is entitled to contact the Director General regarding how the school has dealt with a complaint. Information is available on the Department of Education website. While the Director General 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.

Dealing with Complaints

Informal Complaints

Where possible informal complaints should be resolved quickly with verbal communication. This may be seen as constructive feedback and does not need to go through the full complaints process. Informal complaints can be seen in the college flowchart.

Formal Complaints

When a complaint cannot be solved in the informal process or is of a more serious nature then it must go through the Formal Complaints process.

All Formal complaints should be made through the Formal Complaints Form which is found on the college website. Where a complaint is reported verbally to a staff member, the staff member should lodge the complaint through the form available on the website or escalate it to the relevant staff member via email.

A complaint should include the following information:

- Name of complainant
 - Name of who the complaint is against
 - Complainant type - eg. Staff member, students, parent, leadership or other person in the community
 - Contact details of the complainant
- NB. Anonymous complaints will be recorded and dealt with at the Principal's discretion as to what action to take, if any, depending on the nature and likely validity of the complaint. All complainants are encouraged to identify themselves so they can meet with school staff and the complaint can be raised and dealt with appropriately and effectively; or to receive direct response from any investigation.

Response actions

- The person in charge of following the complaint through
- Feedback to the complainant
- Result
- Date complaint closed
- Any further actions

Responsibilities in the process

- The School does not wish to be in conflict or disputes with any members of the community and we aim to address any complaints or concerns appropriately and reach resolutions peacefully and promptly;
- To avoid unnecessary tension, escalation, or adversarial behaviour, we ask all complainants to comply with the following expectations throughout the complaints process:
 - Respect and maintain confidentiality at all times;
 - Act in a civil and respectful manner towards others during the complaints process and after the resolution of any complaints;
 - Communicate honestly, openly, and promptly with the School, the Principal, and the staff at all times;
 - Conduct yourself with the aim of resolving the dispute peacefully, not escalating conflict unnecessarily;
 - Refrain from gossiping or discussing issues, concerns, or School-related matters with others, whether they are other students, parents or guardians, or other members of the community, whether in person or online;
 - Refrain from using social media to discuss or comment on the School, staff, students, or any School-related issues in a negative or defamatory manner;
 - Refrain from any conduct that may intimidate, bully, harass, undermine, threaten, or negatively deal with the School, staff, students, parents or guardians, or other members of the community;
 - Uphold the good name of the School in the community;
 - Respect the decisions of the Principal, School Leadership, and staff;
 - Act in a way that reflects our School Values;
 - Do your part to fix the problem, and
 - Treat others in the way you would expect to be treated.

Complaints received via the website

Once a complaint is received, the Executive Manager of Risk & Compliance will:

- Direct it to either the relevant Principal or the Director of Education.
- Arrange an investigation into the complaint, either in liaison with an executive member or assign it to another relevant staff member.
- After further investigation the complaint will be either accepted or rejected. This will be communicated formally.

Process for the investigation

- Complaints must follow the complaints flowchart process
- The senior leaders or relevant executive will investigate the complaint thoroughly
- Meetings with all people involved to provide details and a right of response where needed
- Complaints will be dealt with in a prompt manner
- Effective communication between all parties involved
- Record to be kept of all actions taken and results

- The College will seek to resolve any complaints fully and will ensure that complainants receive a full response to any complaint that addresses the necessary steps that will be taken to resolve the issues.

Determination and Final Response

After considering all the facts, meetings, and communication, the executive and complaints manager will make a final determination that addresses all aspects of the complaint. The following determinations may occur:

- Accept the complaint and outline results for resolution; or
- Reject the complaint and provide a reason for the rejection.

All final responses must be provided to the CEO in report form and signed off by Principals.

Closure of Complaint

The complaint has been resolved with the complainant (either internally or externally), or all reasonable internal and external options have been exhausted.

- All relevant information has been captured in the relevant complaint instance;
- Consideration has been given to the underlying risk associated with the complaint; and
- Any recommendation concerning rectification work has been recorded.

Risk Management

Whether a complaint has been resolved internally or not, the College should reflect on the circumstances that led to it, reduce the risk of such a complaint happening again, and improve our internal systems and procedures.

Staff will receive training in complaint management, including the college's policy requirements.

Record Keeping

The college will keep a log of complaints, including the information provided on the complaints forms, the results of the complaints, and recommendations for further improvements to an area if necessary.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality applies to information relating to the person making the complaint and, if relevant, to a person against whom a complaint is made. The College is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process.

Except to the extent permitted by law and for legal purposes, personally identifiable information about a complainant will only be made available for addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) will be actively protected from disclosure.

Appendices

Appendices relating to this policy:

Appendix 1: Staff Responsibilities

Appendix 2: Public Procedures

Appendix 3: Harrisdale Primary Parent Procedures

Appendix 4: Harrisdale Secondary Parent Procedures

Appendix 5: Forrestdale Parent Procedures

Appendix 6: Parent Guidelines

Appendix 7: Tips for Resolving Conflict

Contact

For queries relating to this policy, please contact the Principal or the Executive Manager of Risk & Compliance.

Related Policies and Documents

- Codes of Conduct
- Staff Complaints Resolution Procedure
- Carey Whistleblower Policy

References

- Carey Baptist College - Child Protection Policy
- Director General of Education Non Government schools complaints: <https://www.education.wa.edu.au/non-government-school-concerns>
- Registration standards of Non Government Schools of WA.
- The National Office of Child Safety has produced a guide¹⁷ to complaint handling consistent with the National Child Safe Organisations Principles <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/>
- The National Child Safe Principles https://childsafef.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/National_Principles_for_Child_Safe_Organisations2019.pdf

Version Management					
Version	Date Published	Changes made	Approved by	Next Review	Author of version
2	2016				
3	May 2019	Name change from Complaints and Disputes Updated to new guidelines Reformatted to College-Wide Format Staff Complaints moved to separate policy			MCINAN
4	June 2020	Added information about the role of the Director General	CLT	2021	MCINAN
5	April 2021	Added Poster for Primary - Child Friendly	CLT	2022	MCINAN
6	June 2021	Updated for Director of Education, corrected phone number errors	CLT	2022	MCINAN
7	September 2024	Full Review	CGC	2025	HOLMTR LINQNE JOSEJE PUZESC GIFFOBR BUTLMI

Appendix 1: Staff Responsibilities

Staff Responsibilities

The most efficient and service-focused way to resolve a problem is for staff to discuss the issue or concern in person or by telephone with the complainant as soon as reasonably practicable. This fosters an open culture and contributes to the continuous process of College improvement.

When a complaint is received through a teacher (who may or may not be the subject of the complaint) that teacher will be the “custodian” of the complaint until either:

1. The complaint is resolved; or
2. The complaint is escalated, and the next staff member in line becomes the “custodian” of the complaint.

As “custodian” of a complaint you are responsible for:

1. Acknowledging receipt of complaint as soon as possible (within two days of receipt);
2. Progressing the complaint by having conversations with appropriate persons and/or organising meetings;
3. Documenting the complaint and steps taken. This record of complaint should be submitted to the complaints register via the ticketing system and also be communicated with the relevant line manager(s);
4. Maintaining confidentiality and fairness for all involved in line with other policies and procedures;
5. Escalating the complaint according to the appropriate complaints pathway when necessary;
6. Communicating progress or resolution to the complainant promptly. Due to confidentiality requirements, this may simply inform the complainant that the complaint has been successfully resolved without giving details.

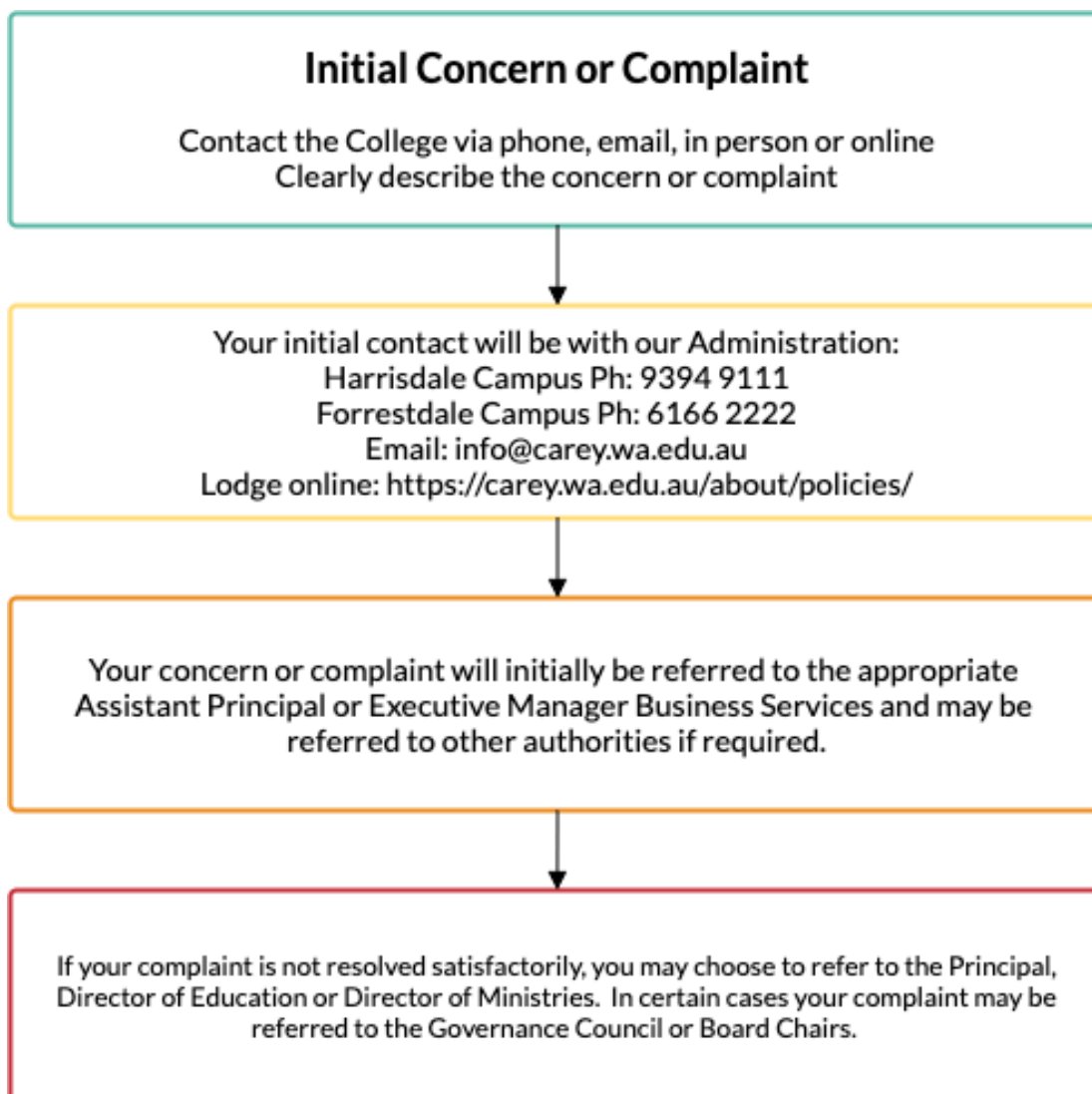
When a complaint is received through the online complaints system, the Executive Manager of Risk & Compliance will be responsible for delegating and/or escalating it to an appropriate staff member. That staff member becomes the holder of the complaint, as above.

When a complaint is received through the administration, whether by phone, in person, or writing, the staff member receiving the complaint will be responsible for escalating it to the relevant Leadership Team member. The Leadership member will be responsible for delegating or escalating the complaint to an appropriate staff member. That staff member becomes the holder of the complaint as above.

Complaints raising potential child wellbeing concerns are prioritised, and referrals to appropriate authorities will be made due to a complaint when required, for example, to the Western Australia Police Force or the Department of Communities (Child Protection and Family Support division). Refer to the Child Protection Policy.

Complaints received in writing or through formal methods will be acknowledged promptly and delegated to the appropriate staff member as soon as possible.

Appendix 2: Public Procedures



Confidentiality: Confidentiality is maintained to the extent that it is consistent with legislative requirements and other principles outlined in our policies.

Timeframes: While complaints will be acknowledged as soon as possible, the time taken to resolve a complaint will vary depending on the situation and personnel involved.

Inclusion: In some cases, you may be involved in handling this complaint. In other cases, you will just provide the College with the information, and we will handle it according to our policies and procedures. If you would like to be informed of the outcome of a complaint, please inform the College as part of this process and provide contact details.

External Mediation, Conciliation or Arbitration

Unresolved complaints can be referred by mutual agreement to an independent third party for final resolution.

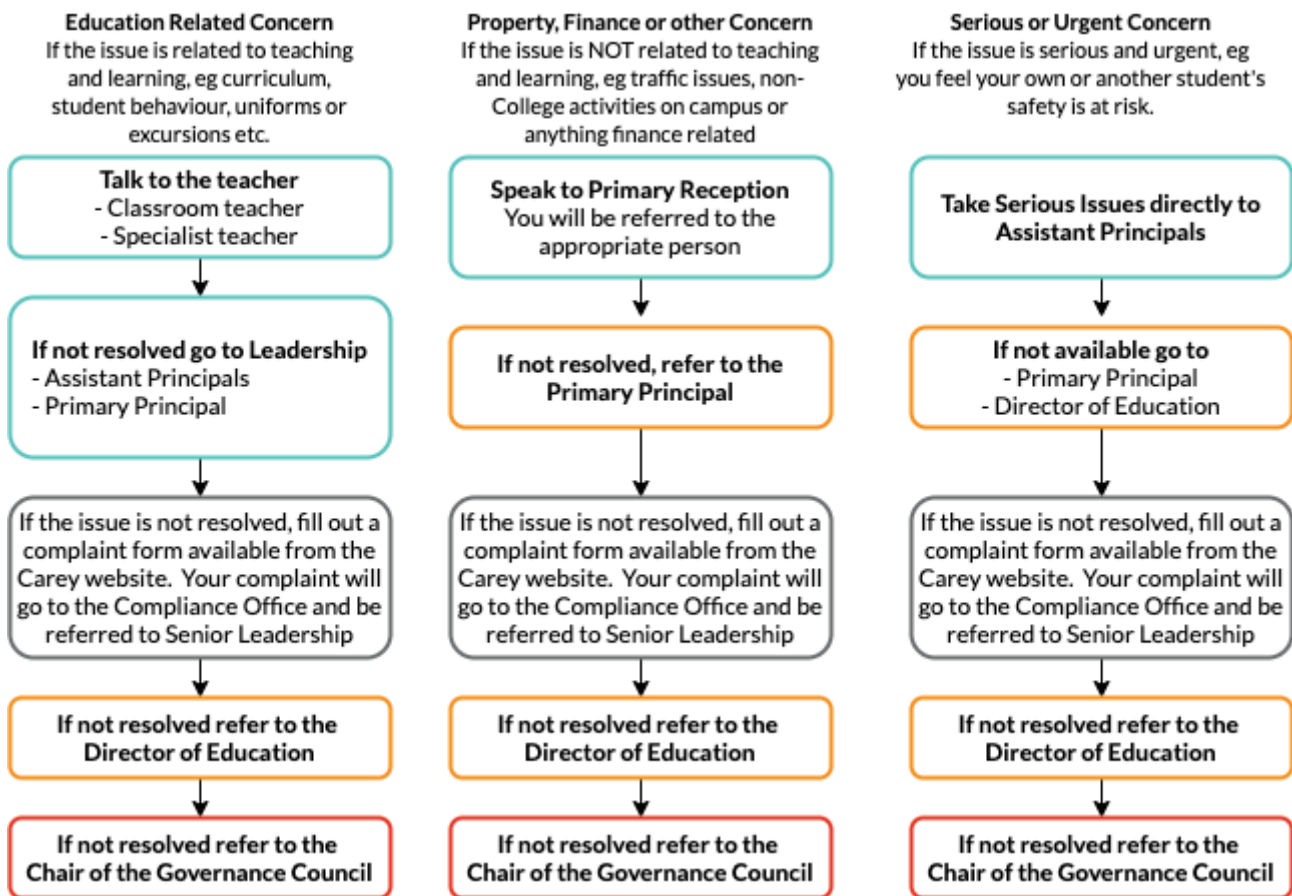
Appendix 3: Harrisdale Primary Parent Procedures

At Carey we value courage, respect and humility; and we are committed to acting with integrity and kindness.

The objectives of our complaints resolution policy are:

- To provide for a fair, transparent and responsive management of complaints about the functions, practices and services of Carey Baptist College;
- To have complaints handled promptly and as close to the source as is possible;
- To ensure that there is an effective monitoring of complaints; and
- To identify and implement service and system improvement opportunities that arise from the process.

If you have a concern we recommend you follow these procedures to achieve the best outcomes. Contact the appropriate staff member via phone, email, or in person. Clearly describe your concern.



Expectations

Confidentiality is maintained, to the extent that is consistent with current legislative requirements and principles outlined in our policies.

Timeframes: While complaints will be acknowledged as soon as possible, the time taken to resolve a complaint will vary depending on the situation and personnel involved.

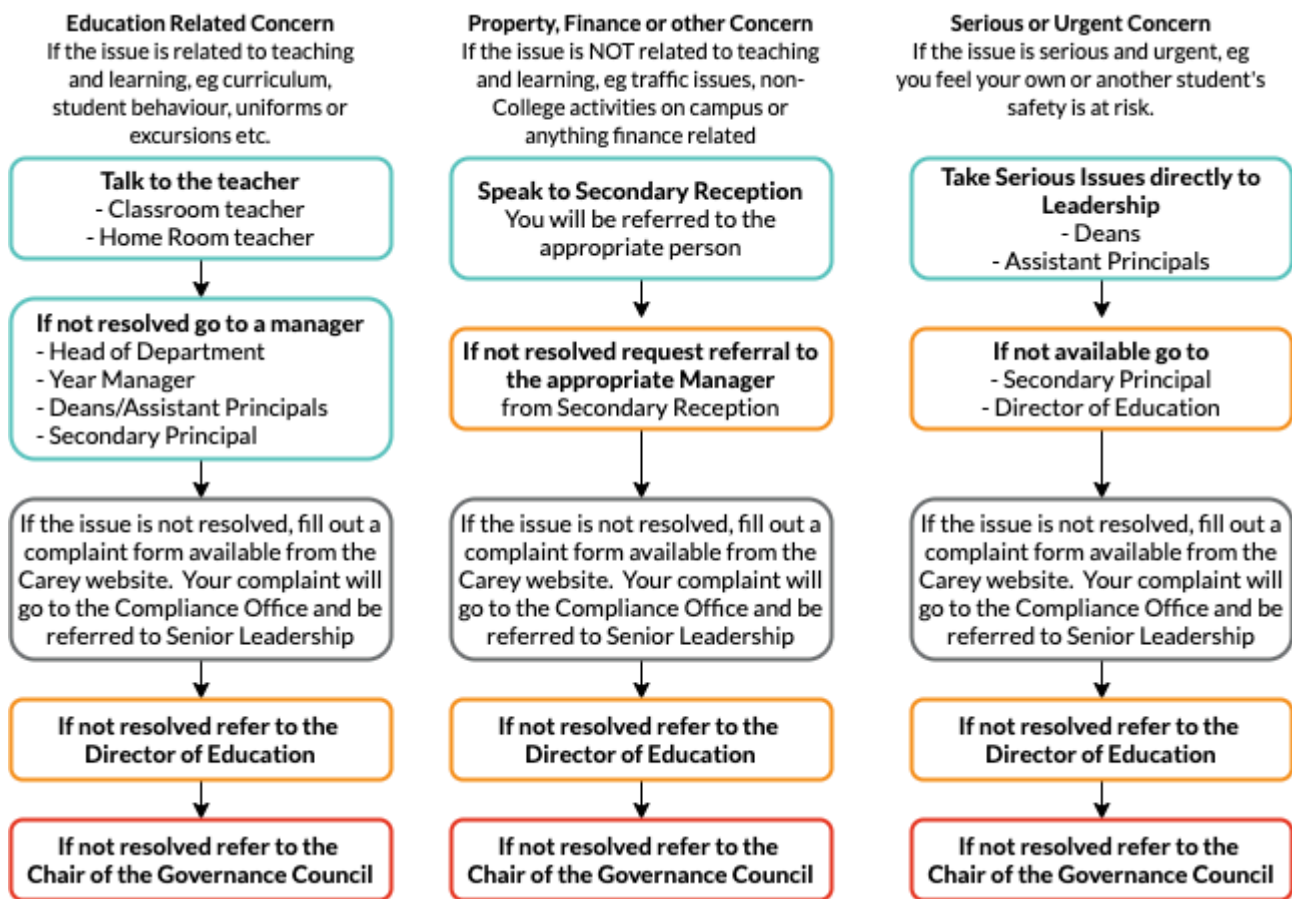
Appendix 4: Harrisdale Secondary Parent Procedures

At Carey we value courage, respect and humility, and we are committed to acting with integrity and kindness.

The objectives of our complaints resolution policy are:

- To provide for fair, transparent and responsive management of complaints about the functions, practices and services of Carey Baptist College;
- To have complaints handled promptly and as close to the source as is possible;
- To ensure that there is an effective monitoring of complaints; and
- To identify and implement service and system improvement opportunities that arise from the process.

If you have a concern, we recommend that you follow these procedures to achieve the best outcomes. Contact the appropriate staff member via phone, email, or in person. Clearly describe your concern.



Expectations

Confidentiality is maintained to the extent that is consistent with current legislative requirements and principles outlined in our policies.

Timeframes: While complaints will be acknowledged as soon as possible, the time taken to resolve a complaint will vary depending on the situation and personnel involved.

Appendix 5: Forrestdale Parent Procedures

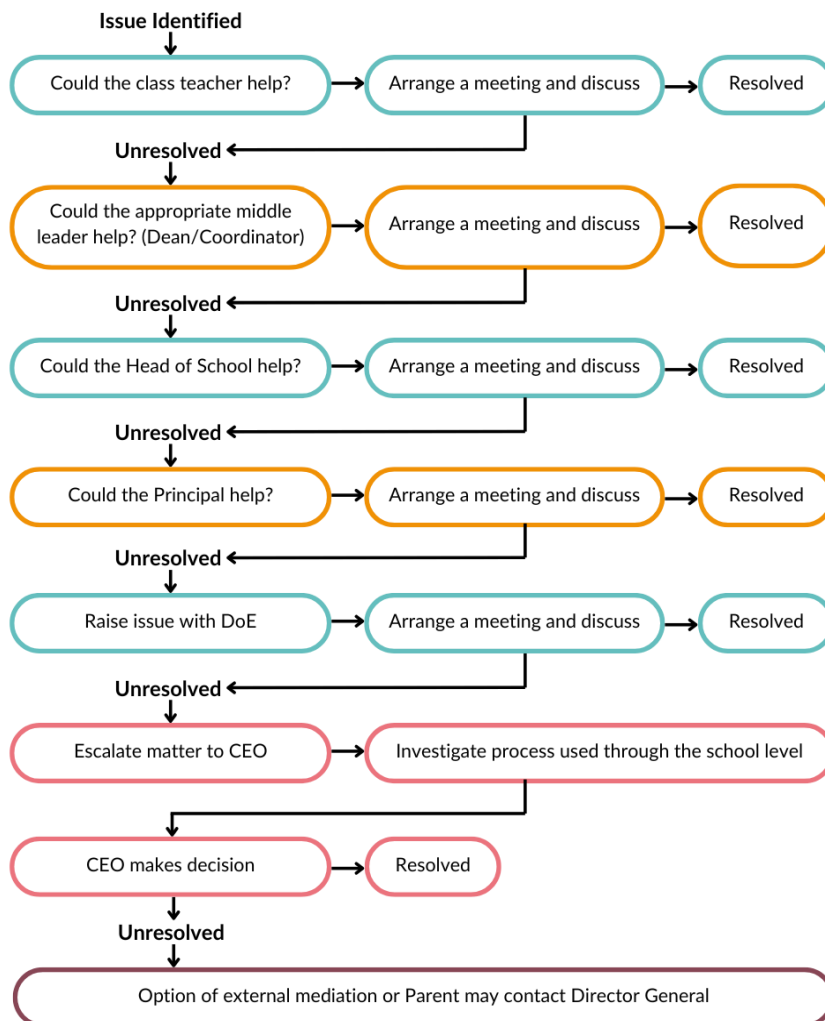
At Carey we value courage, respect and humility, and we are committed to acting with integrity and kindness.

The objectives of our complaints resolution policy are:

- To provide for fair, transparent and responsive management of complaints about the functions, practices and services of Carey Baptist College;
- To have complaints handled promptly and as close to the source as is possible;
- To ensure that there is an effective monitoring of complaints; and
- To identify and implement service and system improvement opportunities that arise from the process.

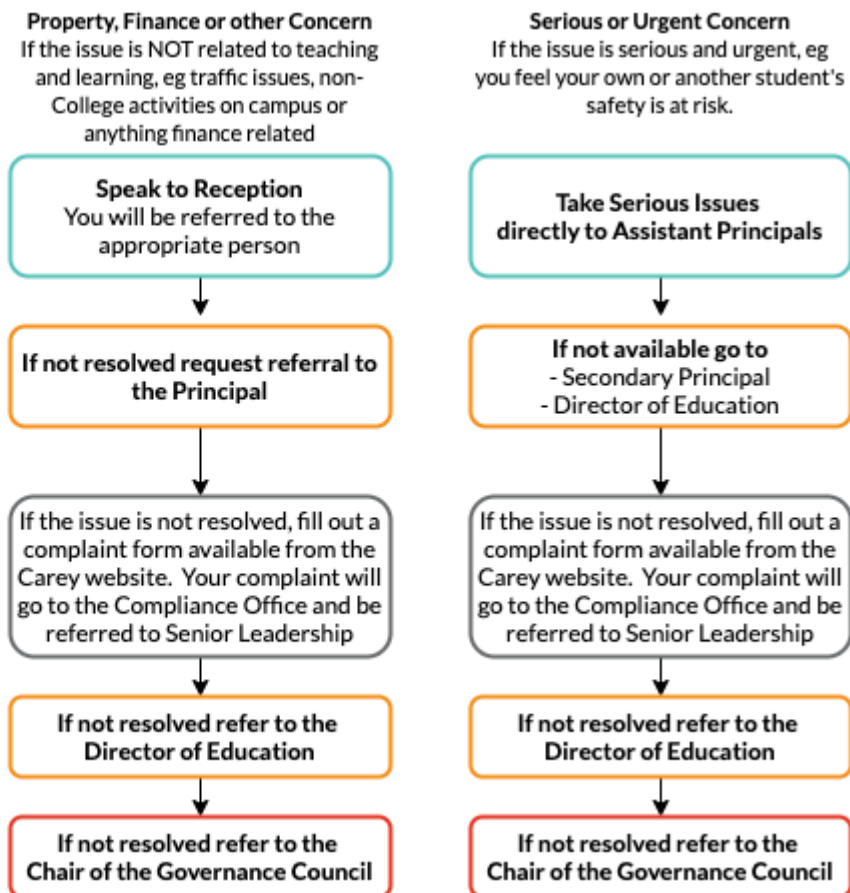
General Concerns

If you have a concern, we recommend that you follow these procedures to achieve the best outcomes. Contact the appropriate staff member via phone, email, or in person. Clearly describe your concern.



Note: If you would like to raise a complaint through our online reporting system, fill out the form on the Carey website. This will be directed to our Compliance Office and then escalated to the appropriate area.

Other Concerns



Expectations

Confidentiality is maintained, to the extent that is consistent with current legislative requirements and principles outlined in our policies.

Timeframes: While complaints will be acknowledged as soon as possible, the time taken to resolve a complaint will vary depending on the situation and personnel involved.

Appendix 6: Parent Guidelines

The relationship between the home and the school plays a very important part in a child's education.

Parents contribute significantly to their children's development; their influence on how their children approach learning should not be underestimated.

While teachers are responsible for the more formal aspects of children's learning, successful teaching builds on the child's home experiences. This is most effective where there is an active partnership with parents.

Open and respectful communication is critical in the partnership between parents and the school. Where such a partnership exists, it is easier for parents to feel confident about the teaching and learning in the classroom, while also creating an environment where parents and teachers can work together to solve any problems.

You are always welcome to discuss any concerns you have with your child's teacher. However, to ensure that you have adequate time to raise your concerns, please make an appointment through the appropriate office.

What can you do if you have a problem?

- Seeking information as early as possible can solve many problems. Contact the class teacher if you have any questions or concerns about your child's progress, the homework set or the assessment procedures.
- You can have a friend or adviser present during any discussion.
- You may prefer to discuss the matter with a more senior member of staff, such as the Assistant Principal or the Principal.

When you have a problem

- Try to identify the problem clearly before coming to the College. If there is more than one problem/issue, it may help to write them down to ensure that the extent of the problem is clear to the College.
- Decide whether the problem is a concern, an enquiry, or a complaint. This will help you find a solution.
- Make an appointment to talk with the teacher. If your concern is about a staff member's conduct, you should raise the matter with the relevant Assistant Principal or Principal.
- Try to stay calm. Even if you don't feel it, being calm will help get your concerns across more clearly than upset or angry. It may help to take someone with you.

Appendix 7: Tips for Resolving Conflict

- **Keep the matter confidential.**
It may be helpful to get wise counsel from someone who can provide support yet speak honestly into the situation. Talking with others may reinforce our position or make us feel vindicated, however it will not necessarily bring resolution to the matter.
- **Talk to the person concerned – not to others.**
Seek to resolve the matter with the person(s) with whom the conflict occurred, or those in the best position to resolve the matter. Sometimes, the best action to resolve a conflict with another person is to start a conversation with them that is clear, and presented calmly in a non-accusatory manner.
- **Be prepared to forgive; be prepared to ask for forgiveness.**
Sometimes this is the hardest thing to do, but the most rewarding in bringing about a resolution. If one person realises that another is prepared to be vulnerable, they may respond similarly.
- **What is real and what is perception?**
Be careful not to infer views, attitudes or actions which have not occurred or were not intended. Check with the other person regarding what was seen or heard to establish if that was intended. Establish what is real from what is perception or guesswork before taking action.
- **Seek good and impartial help.**
Be prepared to receive tough advice. Seek help to resolve the issue rather than to prove it right.
- **Stay calm, and don't overreact.**
Sometimes, a matter that could have been easily resolved is made worse by overreacting. Focus on the problem – not on the emotions.
- **Acknowledge differences of opinion.**
Not every issue is either right or wrong. Be prepared to acknowledge different opinions, beliefs or values. It is possible to disagree and yet respect the opinions of others.
- **Look for solutions – not barriers.**
Ask yourself whether you are just trying to prove a point or whether you are serious about resolving the conflict. Is there some common ground to focus on? Is there a possible compromise that may help to solve the problem?
- **Are there other factors at play?**
Is there something else happening? Is this conflict an indicator of another issue? Are there other matters that may be contributing to the conflict e.g., the behaviour of your children, financial concerns, tension in the home, or differences in ethos? The College is here to help. We aim to work together with you to address concerns and resolve conflicts in solution-focused ways that bring reconciliation and restoration.