

Complaints Resolution Policy

- All of Brighton Grammar School's policies are intended to be up to date and be consistent with all relevant laws.
- Employees are expected to comply with all applicable policies.
- Various parts of the policies require managers and staff to exercise discretion, and the policies are not intended to be applied in a legalistic or prescriptive manner.
- These policies may be varied by Brighton Grammar School from time to time, at its absolute discretion.
- Brighton Grammar School is fully committed to the protection of children and young people during all School activities and environments both within and outside of School hours.
- This is a whole of school policy and there may, from time to time, be variations in different parts of the School. In such circumstances, advice will be issued by the relevant Head of School.

Purpose

Brighton Grammar School welcomes feedback and is committed to resolving complaints fairly, promptly and transparently, with a focus on student wellbeing and maintaining respectful relationships within our school community. This policy sets out how complaints can be made, how we respond, and how matters can be escalated if needed.

Application

This policy applies to complaints about Brighton Grammar School, including complaints about the behaviour of any person within the School environment (for example staff, volunteers, contractors, families, children/students, service providers or visitors).

Complaints may be made by students, parents/carers, guardians, staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or other community members connected with the School.

This policy covers complaints about:

- A decision made by the School, an action taken, or a failure to take action
- Communication and interactions
- Learning and teaching, student support and wellbeing (noting privacy limits)
- Facilities, programs, fees (where applicable), and other School operations
- Conduct and behaviour issues that do not fall under a separate mandated process

Where a separate review/appeal or statutory process applies (e.g. certain employment/HR matters, legal claims, or regulatory reporting), the School will support the complainant by referring the matter to the appropriate process.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Complaints Process and, for international students, the International Students – Complaints and Appeals Policy. This policy does not cover workplace grievances, complaints and disputes, which are outlined in the Grievance, Complaint and Dispute Resolution Policy.

Guiding Principles

The BGS complaints approach is guided by the following principles:

- Accessibility and child-focus: Our process is easy to find, easy to understand, culturally safe and accessible to the diversity of our community, including children and young people.
- Prompt and thorough response: Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- Fairness (procedural fairness): We act impartially, manage conflicts of interest, and provide people a fair opportunity to be heard.
- Respect and good faith: We expect respectful communication and cooperation from all parties.
- Privacy and confidentiality: We respect privacy and confidentiality and share information only where permitted or required by law, or where necessary to manage risk.
- Continuous improvement: We use complaint outcomes and trends to improve systems and practices.

Roles and responsibilities

Board:

- Endorses this policy and ensures it is publicly available
- Provides an alternative escalation pathway for complaints involving the Principal or where there is a conflict of interest
- Oversees periodic review and ensures improvements are implemented where appropriate

Principal:

- Ensures complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly
- Ensures records are maintained securely and access is limited to authorised staff
- Ensures child safety matters are managed under the Child Safety and Wellbeing Complaints Process

Staff, volunteers and contractors:

- Receive complaints respectfully and cooperate with complaint handling processes
- If appropriate, handle in consultation with relevant Head of School as part of early resolution, ensuring documentation and record keeping
- Immediately escalate any child safety complaint/concern in accordance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Complaints Process
- Escalate formal complaints

Head of School

- Receive escalated formal complaints
- Evaluate appropriate pathway for further investigation and complaint ownership. For example;
 - Curriculum complaints – to Director of Teaching and Learning
 - Discipline / welfare concerns – Director of Students (SS), Deputy Head of Junior School (JS)
 - Community complaints related to School operations – Chief Operating Officer

- Any child safety complaint/concern to be handled in accordance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Complaints Process

Making a Complaint

Complaints can be made:

- By phone: [+61 3 8591 2200](tel:+61385912200)
- By email: admin@brightongrammar.vic.edu.au
- In writing: 90 Outer Crescent, Brighton, VIC 3186

To help us respond, please include (where possible):

- What happened (facts, dates, people involved)
- The impact (especially on the student, if relevant)
- What outcome you are seeking
- Any supporting documents

Complaints Handling Process

We aim to resolve complaints early and locally where possible, while ensuring fairness and appropriate escalation pathways. Where appropriate, the School will seek to resolve concerns quickly through discussion and clarification, typically with the relevant staff member or leader.

The School will seek to acknowledge a complaint within 2 School days, and agree next steps within 5 School days.

Formal Complaints

A complaint may be managed as a formal complaint when:

- The complainant requests a formal process; or
- The matter is serious/complex; or
- Informal steps have not resolved the issue; or
- The complaint concerns conduct requiring a formal response

The following should be noted:

- Complainants may have a support person present at any meeting or interview. Please advise the School of the support person's name and relationship to them (where possible) ahead of the meeting.
- The School will consider communication needs and preferences and can arrange interpreting/translation or accessible formats where required.
- Anonymous complaints may be accepted; however, anonymity may limit the School's ability to investigate or provide feedback on outcomes.

Formal Process (Internal)

1. Acknowledge receipt and confirm the issues to be addressed
2. Triage and identify any risks (including whether this is a child safety complaint/concern)
3. Determine the complaint handler (managing conflicts of interest)
4. Gather information fairly (meetings, documents, accounts)
5. Consider options and determine outcome actions

6. Communicate outcome (within privacy/legal limits) and next steps
7. Record the complaint and actions taken
8. Where appropriate, staff to detail the complaint in Risk Wizard or note the details of the complaint against an existing Risk Wizard report

Alternate Process

If the complaint or concern involves a person who would usually receive or manage complaints (for example, a Head of School or the Headmaster), the complaint must be escalated as outlined in the Whistleblower Policy, found on the BGS website.

Summary Flow Chart – Complaints Resolution

START

Is anyone in immediate danger?

- YES → Call 000 (Emergency) and notify the School as soon as safe.
- NO → Continue

Is the complaint about child safety (harm, abuse, grooming, serious risk)?

- YES → Follow Child Safety and Wellbeing Complaints Process (BGS will prioritise safety, respond promptly & thoroughly, report to relevant authorities where appropriate, keep records)
- NO → Continue

STEP 1: Speak with School (teacher / relevant staff / leader)

- Resolved? YES → END
- Not resolved → STEP 2

STEP 2: Formal complaint to School (Principal/delegate)

- Outcome provided
- Resolved? YES → END
- Not resolved / Principal is subject of complaint → STEP 3

STEP 3: Escalate via alternate pathway (see Whistleblower Policy)

- Review outcome provided
- Resolved? YES → END
- Not resolved → External escalation

External: VRQA (Independent Schools Regulator)

- Lodge complaint with VRQA (after trying to resolve with the School)

END

Privacy, confidentiality and information sharing

The School respects privacy and confidentiality for all parties. Information will be collected, used and disclosed only as necessary to respond to the complaint and manage risks, or where authorised/required by law, as per the Privacy Policy. The School may be limited in what it can share about actions involving other students, families or staff.

Recordkeeping

The school will keep secure records of:

- The complaint and key issues raised
- Actions taken, communications, and timeframes
- Decisions/outcomes and improvement actions

Complaint records are stored securely with access restricted to authorised staff and in accordance with the Records and Data Management Policy.

Unreasonable or unacceptable behaviour

All parties are expected to behave respectfully. Where behaviour becomes threatening, abusive or unreasonably persistent, the school may implement reasonable communication boundaries while continuing to address the complaint. Behavioural expectations are outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and Parent and School Community Code of Conduct.

External escalation

If the complainant is not satisfied with the school's final response, they may lodge a complaint with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), noting:

- VRQA expects complainants to first make a formal complaint directly to the provider (the school)
- VRQA will acknowledge receipt within 5 business days (where contact details are provided) and determine how it will proceed (e.g., investigation, audit, review)
- VRQA cannot provide compensation.

VRQA complaints information can be found here: <https://www2.vrqa.vic.gov.au/make-complaint>

Related Policies and Documents

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Complaints Process
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Obligations Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Records and Data Management Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Parent and School Community Code of Conduct
- Whistleblower Policy

This Policy is a controlled document. Any printing of this document is uncontrolled. Please refer to the school portal for the latest version of this policy

Policy Version number	20260324
BGS Strategic Risk Category	Risk and Governance
Policy Owner	Risk and Compliance
Policy Approved By	Board
Approval Date	March 2026
Review Cadence	2
Next Review Date	March 2028