



SOUTHERN CROSS
— GRAMMAR —

POLICY

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

April 2019

Document History

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1.0	March 2011			Developed
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1.2	April 2016			Updated
1.3	July 2017	Finance and Governance Committee	19 July 2017	Reviewed
1.4	July 2018			Reviewed
1.5	April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Governance Committee • Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 May 2019 (Reviewed) • 17 June 2019 (Approved) 	Updating of formatting, general terminology and Board Chairman details.

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Introduction

Good relationships within school communities give children greater opportunities to succeed. It is natural that parents or community members at one time or another may have concerns about what happens at school. To maintain good relationships, a grievance should be resolved so that all parties achieve a satisfactory result.

The welfare of students at Southern Cross Grammar is paramount. Open criticism of any parties to a grievance does not support children's education. To this end fair and open communication conducted within the procedures framework outlined here, ensures that the rights and responsibilities of all parties are respected and consensus with the process is achieved.

Purpose

The resolution of any school related grievance held by a member of a school community is vital to the well-being and success of the School and its students.

Southern Cross Grammar is open to receiving concerns and complaints with the view to improving the services provided and protecting the well-being of our students.

- General complaints will be handled under the Guidelines section of this policy.
- Bullying complaints or concerns will be handled as outlined in the Bullying and Harassment and Behaviour Management policies.
- Matters to do with child abuse be it physical, sexual or emotional in nature will be handled as outlined in the Commitment to Child Safety, Crimes Act and Mandatory Reporting policies.

It is Southern Cross Grammar's intent to resolve to the satisfaction of all concerned any complaint or grievance in as timely a manner as possible.

Scope

This policy applies to the management of all grievances received by Southern Cross Grammar.

Related Policies

Welfare Policy

Behaviour Management Policy

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Commitment to Child Safety Policy

Crimes Act Policy

Mandatory Reporting Policy

Review

This policy will be reviewed on an emergent basis or at the end of every 3 years.

Principles

The following principles apply to the management of all grievances received by Southern Cross Grammar:

- These procedures are accessible to all aggrieved parties and are underpinned by a commitment to cooperation between all parties;
- In all matters, the educational well-being of students is the first priority;
- Resolution of a grievance at the local level is preferred, wherever it is appropriate to do so;
- Any aggrieved person is able to make enquiries, raise concerns or lodge a grievance about the provision of education or the conduct of Southern Cross Grammar staff and have these dealt with efficiently, fairly and promptly;
- An employee of Southern Cross Grammar who is the subject of a grievance will be informed of the substance of that grievance;
- Procedural fairness is afforded to all parties concerned;
- Vexatious, trivial or previously finalised grievances will not be pursued by Southern Cross Grammar;
- Confidentiality will be maintained, to the extent that it is consistent with legislative requirements and the other principles outlined in this section;
- All persons in the school community including, but not limited to, students, parents, administrators, teachers and support staff, have a right to be treated with respect and courtesy;
- Information about the process for making enquiries, raising concerns or grievances will be available to parents and students and members of the local school community.

Confidentiality

Grievances should be kept as confidential as possible to enable effective resolution of the issue.

Documentation

Before a grievance is referred to the Board or other offices or persons outside the school, the concerns should be documented and covered by a letter which confirms that each of the steps outlined in this set of procedures has been followed.

Any party to a grievance has the right to be accompanied by another person, in a support role, at any meetings convened to discuss resolution of that dispute.

Accurate records of all grievances and proceedings must be maintained and current copies held by all parties involved.

Time Frame

It is the obligation of all parties to deal with a concern as promptly and amicably as possible. Initial contact to discuss a grievance with the Principal or staff member should be at a mutually agreed time, within 7 days of the alleged incident. The Principal or staff member can reasonably be expected to respond within 7 days of the meeting. In most cases, a reasonable time for resolution might be 21 days. In some cases, where external personnel or factors are involved, resolution might take longer.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal:	to ensure the policy is in place and to participate as necessary in investigations
Teachers/Staff:	to respond to complaints and/or report as required in the first instance
Executive Team:	to respond to complaints and/or report as required in the second instance (Executive Team members are Head of Junior School, Head of Middle School, Head of Senior School, Head of Teaching and Learning, HR Manager and the Corporate Services Manager)
Parents:	to lodge concerns or complaints as provided for in the guidelines
Students:	to lodge concerns or complaints as provided for in the guidelines
External Facilitators:	to intervene as required following unsuccessful school involvement (External facilitators may include Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) or another suitably qualified persons)
Chair of Board:	to be the final arbiter as necessary

Guidelines

If complaints relate to physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children staff members should immediately inform the Principal and refer to the School's Commitment to Child Safety, Crimes Act and Mandatory Reporting Policies and take the appropriate actions as required.

If a teacher, or other member of the School community observes indicators of abuse to a child, or if a student discloses abuse, the responsibility is for a teacher or observer to determine whether they can form a "reasonable belief" that this is abuse of some form.

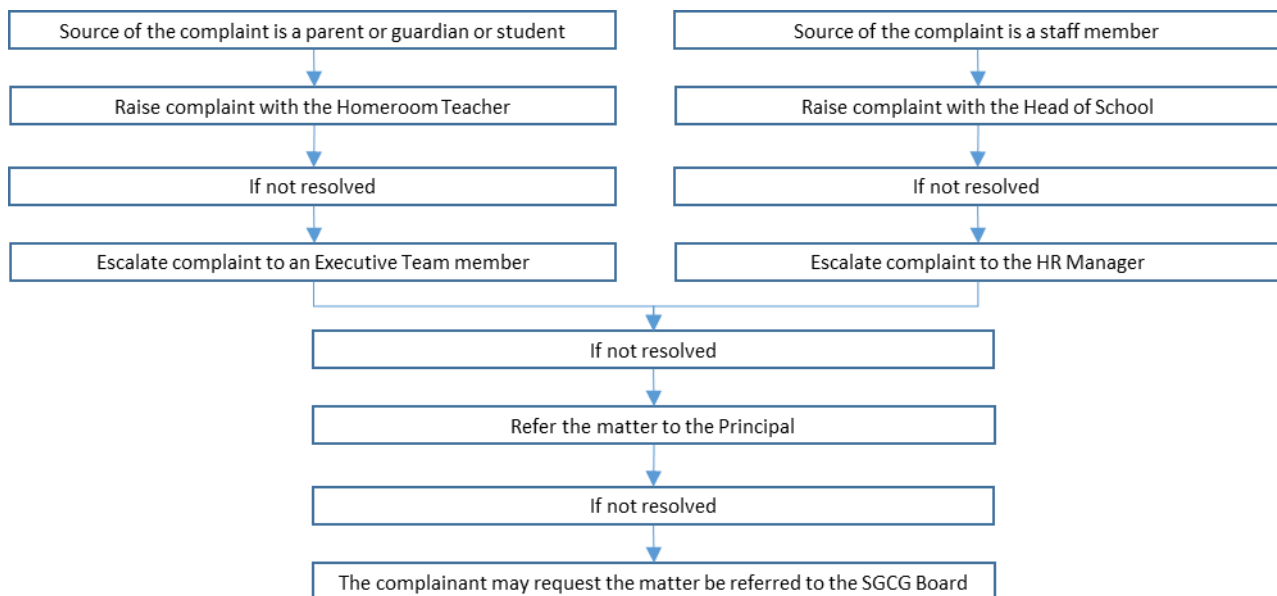
If the source of the complaint is a parent or guardian or student:

- In the first instance the complaint should be raised with the Homeroom Teacher. The teacher and complainant should act together to resolve the issue between them.
- The complaint should be escalated to a member of the Executive Team in the appropriate area:
 - If the complainant is not satisfied by the Homeroom Teacher's action; or
 - If the issue is of a more substantial nature the teacher should refer the complainant to the relevant Executive Team member.
- If the matter cannot be resolved at this level it should be referred to the Principal. Where appropriate the Principal will recommend external mediation, mediators may include Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) or another suitably qualified person.
- Failing resolution the complainant may request that the matter be referred to the Chair of the School Board who, together with the Board, is the final authority on matters concerning the school.
- If the complaint is against the Principal the matter should be referred directly to the Chair of the School Board.
- In all instances of complaint the School's representatives shall record the issues and steps which have been taken to resolve any complaints.

If the source of complaint is a staff member:

- Complaints of a minor nature should be resolved between colleagues.
- An Executive Team member acting as facilitator can be requested by either party.
- Complaints related to sexual or sex based harassment should be dealt with according to the School's policy.
- Other complaints should be directed to the Principal. During any stage of the process, a person may choose to have a supporting person present at discussions or interviews with the Principal.
- If unresolved, the staff members may write to the Chair of the School Board.
- If the complaint is against the Principal the matter should be referred directly to the Chair of the School Board.

Summary of Guidelines



Board Contact

Andrew Borg
Chairman
Southern Cross Grammar School Board

Email board@scg.vic.edu.au



Appendix 1 – Grievance Lodgement Form



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SOUTHERN CROSS GRAMMAR GRIEVANCE LODGEMENT FORM

Before lodging a grievance, aggrieved parties are requested to read carefully Southern Cross Grammar's Complaints and Grievance policy.

A grievance will not be formally investigated until all efforts by the aggrieved student or staff member to resolve the grievance through informal processes has been exhausted.

Completed grievance lodgement forms are to be sent to the following address, in a sealed envelope marked "CONFIDENTIAL":

Chairman
Southern Cross Grammar Board
PO Box 3092
CAROLINE SPRINGS VIC 3023

Please note, the contents of this form (which describes the grievance, steps taken to resolve the grievance, and the desired outcome) will be distributed to the other parties to the grievance. All personal information provided at the beginning of this form (excluding your name) is for administration purposes only and will be kept confidential.

Name	
Street Address	
Postal Address	
Email	
Telephone (BH)	
Telephone (AH)	
Mobile Phone	



Southern Cross Grammar Grievance Lodgement Form

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WHAT IS YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME WHICH YOU BELIEVE WOULD SETTLE THE GRIEVANCE?

(Attach extra pages if necessary)

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Signature: _____

Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date complaint received: _____

Complaint No. _____

File No. _____