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CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

Concerns and Complaints

The residential college will make every effort to resolve parents' concerns and complaints.

Concerns and complaints often arise from misunderstandings or breakdowns in communication. The residential college will do its best to provide parents and students with information about its policies, standards and practices in its handbooks and newsletters and to provide further clarification if parents' have any queries.

We accept that not all of our standards, policies and practices may mirror arrangements in all homes. They are based upon what has been found to work well in residential college settings where there are more students and fewer adults relative to the number of students. In our residential college there are formal guidelines and rules relating to how students are expected to conduct themselves. The expectations are high and have been endorsed by the parents who are members of the Board of Management and who have been appointed to represent all parents. Our operations are partly funded by the Government and as such must also meet the high standards which apply to the public sector.

Parents' Concerns and Complaints

In general, parents are advised to raise their concern or complaint directly with the Manager. However, parents can raise their concern or complaint with any supervisor, senior supervisor or Board Member. These people will make sure that the concern or complaint is referred to the Manager and/or the Chairperson of the Board of Management for attention as appropriate.

If the complaint is against another student or person, please clarify your concern or complaint in writing. It helps if your written account can outline what happened, when it happened, how you feel about it and how you think the matter can best be resolved.

You can expect to receive written acknowledgement of a concern or complaint lodged in writing within 5 working days of its receipt.

Unless you request otherwise, concerns or complaints lodged in writing will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management. Members of the Board of Management will keep both the matter raised and your identity confidential, to the extent that this is possible.

Students' Concerns and Complaints

The residential college has avenues which students are encouraged to use to resolve a concern or complaint. Students can take their concern to a student

prefect or councillor, a student meeting, a supervisor, a senior supervisor, or the Manager to help them resolve something of concern or a complaint. If the matter isn't resolved, or is of a more serious nature, then they are advised to ask their parents to take up their concern on their behalf.

Who To Contact If You Have a Concern or Complaint

Supervisors

The Senior Supervisor, or an on-duty Supervisor, is the person to contact if you need clarification on some minor matter of concern, or need to clear up some minor misunderstanding. Unless you request otherwise, the Senior Supervisor or Supervisor will pass on your concerns to the Manager who will ensure that appropriate action is initiated.

Manager

The Manager is the person to contact if you have a concern or a complaint about:

- the safety or wellbeing of your child, or
- the service being provided by the residential college.

Chairperson, Board of Management

The Chairperson of the Board of Management is the person to contact if you have a complaint against the service provided to you by a Manager.

Director, Country High School Hostels Authority

The Country High School Hostels Authority Director is the person to contact if you have a complaint about the Residential College Board of Management's handling of your complaint (Freecall: 1800 645 212).

Ombudsman

The Ombudsman is the person to contact if you have a complaint against the Country High School Hostels Authority.

Residential College Concern and Complaint Handling

The residential college is committed to:

1. Taking concerns or complaints seriously and ensuring that, if received by staff, the matter is referred to the Manager, or the Chairperson of the Board of Management, for handling as appropriate.
2. Having staff inform the Manager of all concerns or complaints, even when the concern or complaint is of a minor nature and already resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.
3. Having the senior person handling the complaint (i.e. the Manager or Board of Management Chairperson) provide a written acknowledgement to concerns or complaints lodged in writing within 5 working days
4. Respecting the need for anonymity and/or confidentiality as appropriate.

5. Investigating the concern or complaint promptly and to an appropriate extent.
6. Where appropriate, having a person (or persons), other than the person complained about, investigate the complaint and report on his or her findings.
7. Where the complaint is against another student or person, obtaining his or her response and giving both parties a fair hearing (if necessary, engaging a suitably qualified person to undertake these processes and to implement a conflict resolution process).
8. Giving proper consideration to all relevant facts and circumstances.
9. Offering fair and reasonable remedies as appropriate.
10. Keeping the person who raised the concern informed about the progress of the investigation.
11. Having the Manager, or College Board Chairperson, inform the Board of Management of all concerns or complaints received and how they have been, or are being, resolved.
12. Treating parents and students involved in any complaint no differently from any other parents or students regardless of the outcome of a complaint.

Accountability

1. Complaints will be directed to senior management, that is, either the Manager or the Board of Management Chairperson in the first instance, as appropriate.
2. A record will be kept of all concerns and complaints and actions taken.
3. A copy of the initial complaint record will be forwarded to the Director by fax as soon as it is recorded.
4. The Board of Management will be advised, at the next following Board meeting, of all concerns or complaints lodged in writing or recorded by a member of staff and note, or otherwise deal with them, as necessary.
5. These records will be audited and reviewed by the Country High School Hostels Authority as part of an annual audit.
6. Where appropriate, preventive and corrective action will be taken to eliminate the root causes of complaints.
7. Biennial surveys enable parents to provide feedback on how they value our boarding service.
8. This policy and these procedures are based upon the Australian Standard for Complaints Management.

Serious Offences

Complaints relating to serious offences against students, or of corrupt or criminal action, will be referred to external agencies as and when appropriate. This could include the Police, the Corruption and Crime Commission, the Department of Community Development, the Department of Health, and/or the Equal Opportunity Commission.

Where the matter is serious, but relates to misconduct that does not fall under the jurisdiction of an external agency, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the policies of the Country High School Hostels Authority. Allegations of serious breaches of conduct by staff can result in their suspension pending investigation. Staff found guilty of serious misconduct face a range of disciplinary consequences, including making reparation, demotion or termination of their employment as appropriate.

Allegations of serious misconduct by students can also result in their suspension pending investigation. Students found guilty of serious misconduct face a range of disciplinary consequences, including making reparation, suspension or termination of their residency as appropriate, for example:

Allegations of sexual misconduct or other criminal act perpetrated by staff against students will be referred to the Police for investigation. Parents and students are encouraged to refer any sexual misconduct concerns directly to the Police for investigation.

Allegations of sexual misconduct by one student against another student will be dealt with according to college policies. Parents will be informed. Where a breach of the law appears to have occurred, the matter will be referred to the Police for investigation (as and when appropriate).

Allegations from parents relating to the supply of illegal substances to a student by a member of staff, or by another student, (e.g. drugs) will be referred to the Police.

Allegations relating to physical or emotional abuse and/or bullying by or against a member of staff or a student will be dealt with according to college policies and procedures.

Allegations relating to the supply or use of substances by students not of a legal age (e.g. alcohol, cigarettes) are serious matters and will be dealt with according to college policies and procedures.