



Suggestions, Concerns and Complaints Policy

Purpose

This policy defines the College's policy and procedure to manage suggestions, concerns and complaints within the College community. It outlines the procedures to be followed and provides guidance on the approach to be taken

Scope

This policy applies to all parents and students.

Policy and Procedure Details

Parents have a responsibility to support the wellbeing of the College. Our College is a non-for-profit learning community made up of supportive families seeking quality schooling within the Christian faith tradition. As such, families should be willing to commit to the College as outlined below:

- Educationally, in being an active partner in the education of their children.
- Financially, in the timely payment of fees and levies.
- Socially, in helping build up our College community for the benefit of our children and young people, by speaking positively and helping out occasionally as time permits.
- Respectfully, ensuring our ethos and purpose is promoted and maintaining positive relationships by speaking with staff members about issues and concerns through the correct channels.
- Prayerfully, in praying for their children, class, teachers and school if they share a common faith position or alternatively hold their child, class, teachers and school in their thoughts positively.
- Additionally, parents may wish to help out on a regular basis as a volunteer.

Because of this community approach, Chinchilla Christian College welcomes suggestions and comments from parents through the correct channels and in the spirit of partnership. Staff members value suggestions, concerns and complaints that may be raised as a way of improving the College. The Bible warns against gossip and encourages people to speak directly to the relevant person; therefore, parents who use the following systems in a positive manner help their own child's situation and improve the College generally.

Please remember the following:

- Despite well-established routines and systems, the College is made up of many people and incidents will happen. Usually there are many sides to an incident.
- Teachers and other staff members make a multitude of decisions every day. From time to time errors of judgment, particularly in hindsight, occur.
- Our College strives to ensure your child's education is personalised, within the context of a larger class with other students who the teacher is responsible for as well.
- Teachers and other staff members are people with feelings. They come to work each day with the intent to achieve the best outcomes for our children to do their best.
- Each staff member is responsible for his or her work. Our systems are designed to equip and support staff members to carry out their roles.
- Parents need to check that their own personal/ family issues, or other troubles, are not the source a complaint.

1. How do I as a parent make a suggestion?

Feedback from parents is an important part of College life. Informally, parents may simply chat with relevant staff members or speak with a senior staff member, who can note your suggestion on our record system. Parents who have detailed suggestions or are seeking a reply are welcome to send emails to

admin@chinchillacc.qld.edu.au. These too will be added to our record system. Please add a subject line, for example, Feedback: buses.

2. How do I as a parent raise an issue or concern that affects my child generally or specifically?

Despite the efforts we undertake to communicate with families, concerns and issues arise from time to time between home and school when working with children and young people. Often the need is to clarify something we have said, handled, missed, overlooked or just not explained well enough.

The proven best method is to speak directly with the relevant staff member as early as possible. Through direct communication we have an opportunity to share our stories, establish mutual respect and build community.

When you phone the College or come in it is usually someone at Reception who will initially speak with you. The staff member will be able to help with a range of everyday issues; however, once the issue becomes specific to your child, they may need to refer you to the staff member concerned. This may mean the staff member will need to contact you later in the day, or the next day, depending on circumstances and the timetable.

Steps to resolving issues specific to your children:

- Have a chat with the relevant staff member.
- If the chat didn't resolve matter, then it is time to have a chat with a Senior Staff member who has responsibility over the area of concern. This is best achieved by having all parties involved to have a meeting, that is, the original staff member will be present to ensure clear communication.
- If the matter is still an issue, the Principal to be briefed and meet with the parties involved to seek a way forward that helps all involved.

3. How do I as a parent make a complaint?

Usually issues and concerns at Chinchilla Christian College can be resolved quickly and to the mutual benefit of all as per Section 2. However, a parent may need to express dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem, that is, more than just raising a concern or an issue. For example, we have:

- *done something wrong;*
- *failed to do something that we should have done; or*
- *acted unfairly or impolitely.*

A complaint may be made about the College as a whole, about a specific area in the College, or about an individual member of staff. A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction that needs a response.

Procedure for complaints made by parents:

Who do I talk to?

When you contact the school about a complaint, ask to speak to Tina or Desrey. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you so that we can help you. While sometimes emotions are running high, the best way is to communicate the problem and work with us for a solution. If it is recommended that a formal complaint is to be lodged, it is essential that a clear written account is made by the parent that clearly outlines what the complaint is and the context of the complaint.

"What will happen next?"

If you raise something face-to-face or by telephone, we can acknowledge the complaint has been made immediately. If your complaint is in writing (letter or email) then we will acknowledge your complaint as quickly as possible. No matter the delivery of the complaint, complaints will be recorded by the College and tracked until the matter has been addressed.

Hopefully we will be able to resolve the matter quickly, often with a conversation immediately or as soon as possible with a Senior Staff member along with the staff members involved (unless this is not suitable due to the nature of the complaint). However, in some circumstances we will need to collect more information before responding. You will be given a date by which time you will receive a response. If a detailed exploration

of the issue is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible: in the meantime, we will keep you informed. The report will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

“What happens about confidentiality?”

Your complaint will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to those directly involved. The CEO of CCM may also need to be informed. It is the College’s policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

Please also note:

- We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child’s safety is at risk or it becomes necessary to refer matters to the Police.
- While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints might not be pursued.
- Action, which needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints, would be handled confidentially within the school.
- Privacy matters may be involved and these would be pointed out in any response.
- There is no room for threats, targeted personal or family comments, or basically nasty actions against staff. Apart from any civil or criminal consequence of such action, our enrolment contract with you would be subject to review of cancellation based on the contract termination clause: mutual trust and co-operation between us (staff members and you) breaks down.
- The College has well established policies in line with its ethos and charter to operate the school. Parents select to send their children to the College because of the ethos and charter of the school and agree at the time of entering into a contract to support the policies and procedures of the College. In this manner we work as a community to bring about and preserve the ethos of the College.
- We will act in the best interests of individual students and the student body generally. At times this may be at conflict due to an individual student being a risk to the student body generally. This may mean we do not always act in accordance with your requests.

“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”

We hope that together the matter can be resolved or at least that you are satisfied that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered even if the matter did not exactly turn out the way you wanted it to. In the rare situations where you believe the process has not been addressed correctly, you are welcome to meet with the Principal to discuss a way forward.

If you or the Principal believe a third party would be helpful in resolving the complaint, the CEO of CCM will become involved or appoint a relevant/experienced third party. The CEO or the third party will be asked to contact you for a preliminary chat. The Principal will be asked to pass on the details of the complaint. The CEO or appointed relevant/experienced third party will examine the matter thoroughly before responding. It is sometimes necessary that a meeting with all parties be arranged. You may wish to be supported by a friend.

Other FAQs:

“I don’t want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me”, what should I do?

The school is here for you and your child, and we want to hear your views and your ideas. See the method for raising an issue or concern that affects my child generally or specifically (in Section 2 of this document)?

“I am not sure whether to complain or not?”

If as a parent you have a complaint, you are entitled to raise the complaint. If in doubt, you should contact the College, as we are here to help. The College recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.

Suggestions, Complaints, or Concerns (from students)

- General suggestions, complaints, or concerns should be addressed to our Student Representative Council (SRC). The meetings are conducted in a constructive and serious manner. The SRC allows students to feedback a range of general suggestions, complaints, or concerns.
- Personal Safety Concerns (Child Safety or Bullying type of issues): The College has established systems for students to seek help. All children can speak to the Admin staff at any time about any matter.

Specific complaints that are to do with the student (that students want to deal with by themselves):

- Have a chat with the relevant staff involved. This is by far the most effective method for suggestions, complaints and concerns.
- If it is still an issue, students are able to speak directly with a Senior Staff member depending on the matter. If these concerns are unresolved then the student's parents will be part of the meeting to help resolve the issue.

Revision Record

Refer to Complaints Policy (Students & Parents) Policy prior to versions below

Version	Approval Date	Authorised by	Effective Date	Review Cycle	Next Review
1.0	7 November 2016	CCC Board	December 2016	4 years	December 2020
2.0	10 May 2019	N McDonald	10 May 2019	4 years	May 2023