



PREAMBLE

Stella Maris is a school of Good Samaritan Education established in 1931 in the Benedictine tradition. The policies of the College give expression to its values and ethos and reflect the legal requirements of a school registered and accredited by the NSW Board of Studies.

POLICY

Stella Maris College, in the fulfilment of its duty of care and protection of students, and with an attitude of openness to addressing concerns or complaints from outside the College provides this policy with procedures to address concerns raised but also maintaining confidentiality and respecting the innate dignity of each person involved with the College. This policy reflects the increased availability of multi-mode and immediate communications sources. It also operates on the principle of subsidiary where problems are resolved wherever possible at the lowest level of management. Procedural fairness will be followed in all aspects of complaint handling. This policy is available on request from the Principal.

PROCEDURE

- **What is a concern?** – A concern is a verbal or written inquiry relating to College policies, procedures, practices which require a response from a College employee.
- **What is a complaint?** – A complaint is a verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction relating to policies, procedures, practices, facilities or behaviour whereby the complainant is seeking a response, conclusion or remedy.
- **Who handles a concern or complaint?** – Initially, concerns should be directed to the relevant staff member. If the matter remains unresolved then either party may make a complaint to the next level of management until the matter is resolved or the parties accept that it is not possible to have it resolved.
- **Complaints about staff members** – If a complaint is about a member of staff that person will be informed about the nature of the complaint/concern and the name/s of the complainant as soon as possible. An appropriate response strategy will be discussed with the staff member concerned (see table).
- **Privacy** – Information regarding the complaint is only given to the staff member involved and those directly involved in resolving the complaint. While a record of events is kept the matter remains confidential under the terms of Privacy Legislation.
- **Expressing and responding to a complaint** – This is always to be done in a courteous and respectful manner and with a cooperative spirit. The issue and not the person is to be addressed and the matter dealt with as swiftly as possible.
- **Resolving a complaint** – College policies are referred to and adhered to where relevant. Some complaints require mediation or an interview and parties must be open to resolution, dismissal of the complaint or an apology being given. A support person may be offered to the respondent to a complaint.
- **Non-resolution of a complaint** – If a resolution cannot be achieved then one or more courses of action may follow: the matter may be referred to the Principal, the complaint dismissed, declaration that a resolution is not possible, the complaint upheld and specific action implemented to address the concern or a determination that both parties bear some responsibility and behaviour is addressed.
- **Vexatious complaints** – Where a complaint or allegation is found to be false and there is evidence of malicious or vexatious intent by the complainant, the Principal will take appropriate action.

Communications Structure: Concerns and Complaints Procedure Summary			
<i>Issue</i>	<i>First directed to</i>	<i>Next level</i>	<i>further</i>
<i>General complaint regarding a specific staff member or student wellbeing</i>			
In class behaviour	Teacher	Head Of Department (HOD)	Dean of Learning
Homework	Teacher	HOD	Dean of Learning
Student marks	Teacher	HOD	Dean of Learning
Treatment of students	Teacher	HOD	Dean of Learning
Lockers/possessions	Pastoral Care Teacher	Head Of Year (HOY)	Deputy Principal
Welfare/wellbeing	Pastoral Care Teacher	HOY	Deputy Principal
<i>Academic Matters</i>			
Curriculum/subjects/classes	HOD	Dean of Learning	Principal/Deputy Principal
<i>Pastoral matters</i>			
Student behaviour	HOY	Deputy Principal	
Absences	Student reception	HOY	Deputy Principal
Difficulties between students	HOY	Deputy Principal	
Whole year activities eg camps	HOY	Deputy Principal	
<i>Co-curricular activities/programs</i>			
Sport	Teacher/coach	HOD (Sport)	Principal
Duke of Edinburgh	DoE Coordinator	Deputy Principal	Principal
Music/Dance/ Drama	Teacher	Head of Performing Arts	Principal
Debating	Teacher	Head of English	Principal
<i>College Organisation and Management</i>			
Fees	Fees Officer	Director of Business Services (DBS)	Principal
Invoices	Finance Officer	DBS	
Other	College Reception	Deputy Principal	Principal

VERSION 1

DATE OF POLICY: June 2013

DATE FOR REVIEW: June 2016