



MaristCollege Canberra

Complaints and Dispute Resolution Guide

The College welcomes feedback from all members of the school community and takes seriously any complaints or concerns that may be raised. Marist College Canberra is committed to maintaining high standards in all areas of its educational endeavour.

The College acknowledges and supports the right of parents, staff and students to raise concerns they may have about the quality of services provided by the College and the corresponding right to have these concerns addressed.

This Complaints and Dispute Resolution Guide is designed to assist you to understand our complaints and dispute resolution process.

What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to Marist College Canberra, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

What is the difference between Feedback and a Complaint?

Some expressions of dissatisfaction can be categorised as critical feedback and not necessarily a complaint. To assist in determining the difference, ask yourself, “Does the incident or dissatisfaction expressed suggest that the College can improve its service delivery or operations”? If the answer is “Yes” then the dissatisfaction expressed is regarded as a complaint.

Examples:

- A. Feedback that a student was not included in a sporting team, or not made a college leader, or did not get an “A” on a homework task, is not in itself a complaint as the particular incident does not suggest that the College could improve its service delivery or operations.
- B. Feedback relating to an alleged bias in selection or assessment criteria would be classified as a complaint as the allegation of bias would need to be investigated and if substantiated would reflect an area where the College could improve its service delivery or operations.

Note: Complaints from a staff member concerning workplace matters are managed by the College's Workplace Grievance Policy.

Marist College Canberra's Commitment

Marist College Canberra is committed to handling complaints effectively and in accordance with the principles of honesty, transparency and justice. To this end we have established a program following the principles set out in the Australian and International Standard for Complaints Handling (AS ISO 10002-2006). Our program includes the establishment of an on-line complaints management system which allows us to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints. Regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of rectification action, where deficiencies are identified, are key to the Marist College Canberra's commitment. Our internal complaints and appeals process are available at no cost.

Informal Complaints Resolution

The vast majority of issues causing concern in schools come from misunderstandings or incomplete understandings. In the vast majority of cases these issues can be resolved through informal discussions with appropriate staff members. Notwithstanding that an issue may be able to be resolved informally we encourage all staff to log issues through our complaints management system in order that we are able to identify any systemic issues arising and take appropriate rectification action.

How Do I Make A Formal Complaint?

If you have been unable to resolve a matter informally, or simply wish to make a formal complaint you can do so by any of the following means:

1. Forwarding an email to complaints@mcc.act.edu.au.
2. Writing a letter to the Regional Director (Sydney) of Marist Schools Australia if the complaint is against the Headmaster.
3. Writing a letter to the College addressed to "The Complaints Officer".
4. Telephoning the College and asking to speak to your son's House Group leader or teacher.

All formal complaints will be logged into our online complaints management system and managed in accordance with the following procedure.

Our Internal Complaints Handling & Appeals Procedure

A flowchart setting out the following steps is attached as Schedule 1 of this guide.

Step 1 - All formal complaints are logged through our on-line complaints management system where they are screened by our Complaints Officer, or in the case of complaints against the Headmaster by a member of Marist Schools Australia (MSA).

Step 2 – All valid complaints will be acknowledged in writing, as soon as practicable, and allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is our policy where possible to resolve all disputes within 14 days during school terms.

Step 3 – The Complaints Officer shall coordinate an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and ensure that a determination is made.

Step 4 - Following the determination, if appropriate, a resolution will be formulated and a written response provided to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

Step 5 - If the initial response is not acceptable the matter will be reviewed internally by the Headmaster or MSA as appropriate who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. Marist College Canberra shall seek to resolve all disputes within 28 days from the date that the review process is initiated. The matter will be closed if the response as a result of the appeal is accepted.

Step 6 - All complaints received will be entered on our Complaints Register and where appropriate a Corrective Action Request will be raised to address any underlying processes which the complaint's investigation revealed may require improvement.

Step 7 - If the matter remains unresolved after the appeals process (Step 5) the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and, if relevant to a person against whom a complaint is made. Marist College Canberra is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process.

Personally identifiable information about a complainant will only be made available for the purpose of addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) will be actively protected from disclosure.

COMPLAINTS HANDLING FLOW CHART

