

Complaint & Feedback Policy

Purpose: The Head of Barker College and the Council of Barker College are committed to the safety of all children and young people in a safe, loving and supportive learning environment. The purpose of this policy is to summarise the obligations on the School to open, constructive and responsive pathways for complaints and feedback from students and parents/guardians and caregivers.

Scope: This Policy applies to parents, guardians and caregivers of currently enrolled students at Barker College and the staff managing student conduct in *School environments* including both physical and online when students are using a Barker supplied device under the Schools *Acceptable Use of ICT Agreement*.

Mandatory or specific requirements: This policy may relate to Child Safety Procedures and the *Promoting Positive Relationships Framework* which serves to guide students and parents on the restorative approach and disciplinary responses to student conduct. Employee, contractor or visitor complaints are referred to under the Staff Complaints Procedure and the Whistleblower Policy.

Responsibility: The Head of Barker College and Deputy Head Student Experience.

1. Policy Statement:

- 1.1 Barker College views complaints and feedback from our School community as a valuable source of information to continually learn and improve relationships, policy, practice and systems.
- 1.2 The School recognises the importance of having a process that fosters a culture of disclosure whereby concerns can be raised and then managed in a supportive, co-operative and respectful manner, with confidentiality and sensitivity applied.
- 1.3 The School recognises the Child Safety Standards including the need, when appropriate, to involve students in decisions that affect them and to provide a child-focused process that gives students a voice.
- 1.4 Parents are to maintain a mutually respectful and beneficial relationship with the School as concerns and feedback are considered and are to uphold the enrolment agreement terms at all times.
- 1.5 The School will offer students and parents a voice to be heard and encourage cooperation between all parties to keep the resolution of a complaint issues student and future focused.

2. Definitions under the Policy:

Complainant is a student or parent/guardian/caregiver of a currently enrolled students at Barker College.

Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the School related to its services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required (Adapted from *AS/NZS Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organisations 10002:2014*).

Respondent is any person against whom a complaint/grievance is brought. If this is a staff member this may be referred under workplace procedures under the *Staff Code of Conduct*.

Procedural Fairness also known as natural justice, are the principles developed to ensure as far as practicable, that decision-making is fair and reasonable. It involves the Head of Barker College or a delegate decision-maker informing people of the case against them or their interests, giving them the right to be heard and not having a personal interest in the outcome and acting only on the basis of logically probative evidence.

3. Student Handbook & Promoting Positive Relationships Framework

These documents are foundational and designed to cover most scenarios where there is a difference of opinion or a concern to be learned from or resolved at Barker College.

These essential resources are provided to students and parents as a guide to expected behaviours at School and include how we identify and respond to certain behaviours in School environments.

3.1 By joining Barker College, students are committing themselves to be the best they can be. They are making a commitment to their parents, teachers and School that they will maximise opportunities, invest in their education and make a valuable contribution that upholds the mission, values and traditions of the school.

3.2 Our *Promoting Positive Relationships Framework* is a flexible multi-tiered system of proactive and preventative supports for all Barker students. When implemented with fidelity, this foundation will address the needs of most students.

3.3 Additional tiers of support are available for students at risk, through to students with significant needs and are in place in recognition that at times, some students will require more frequent and intensive levels of support or intervention to address behaviour concerns.

4. Approach

The School is committed to taking reasonable steps to ensure that complaints are managed fairly, impartially, confidentially, sensitively and in a timely manner, in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness.

The School observes the following key principles for managing complaints:

- People are entitled to raise concerns and make complaints in person, by email or via the telephone.
- Complaints will be assessed, investigated and managed in a timely manner at the appropriate level, in line with their complexity and nature.
- All parties will be treated respectfully, have the opportunity to put their case forward and be heard.
- As a School, decisions will be made with student safety and wellbeing at the centre of the resolution process and objectively having considered the perspectives and facts presented from all parties.
- Continuity of learning and re-engagement of the students with their education will be a major goal of any dispute resolution process run by Barker College.
- Students voice will be encouraged in suitable forums that promote their point of view and involvement in decisions that affect them.
- Appropriate confidentiality is expected from all parties involved and the appropriate storage and handling of records relating to the concern and its resolution.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Parents who have child safety or welfare complaint or concerns are directed to the Head of Barker College or the Deputy Head Student Experience offices via email or phone call.

5.2 Anonymous community complaints can be reported via the Barker College public website link concerns@barker.nsw.edu.au.

5.3 The Child Safety Team includes the Head of Barker College and a dedicated senior team of professionals able to deal with reports and disclosures in a confidential and rigorous process informed by internal policies and procedures.

5.4 The Head of Barker College is the final decision maker in parent complaint process at Barker College. This includes, but is not limited to, reviewing due process in managing a

complaint by staff and the child safety aspects of a complaint, if applicable, as the Head of the Relevant Entity under the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme and the National Child Safety Standards.

5.5 Information about the complaints process will be disseminated to the School through accessible and appropriate channels such as the website, newsletters, MyBarker portal, assemblies, staff meetings, parent information evenings and included in relevant handbooks or other publications.

6. This Policy is not intended to extend the responsibilities of the School beyond the law.
7. The School reserves the right to change or modify this Policy from time to time by notice on the College portal.

8. Fairness and Review

8.1 Those who make decisions at Barker College in relation to serious or unresolved student disciplinary matters will aim to reach a fair decision by way of an objective decision-making process that involves an impartial investigation if required and the exclusion of real or perceived bias.

8.2 If a student or parent wishes to make a complaint about School processes or actions or appeal a decision made in a disciplinary matter, they must first contact the School via the Head of Schools Office in an appropriate manner and expect a response from the School.

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