



11.02b Complaints and Grievance Procedure

1. Introduction

This procedure aims to provide guidance to students, parents/guardians, School Board members, contractors, volunteers, labour hire workers, secondees, visitors, and other members of the Girton Grammar School (GGS) community on how to raise a complaint or grievance with the school and how to request a review if you are not satisfied with the outcome.

2. Grievances Resolution Procedure

2.1 Stage 1 - Raise the concern

2.1.1 Step 1. Identify the concern

Clarify your concern: *“who, what, when, where, why, and how”*.

Identify the outcome you are trying to achieve by raising your concern.

You should provide the following information when raising a concern or making a complaint:

- Your name and contact details.
- Student name (if relevant).
- The nature of the complaint.
- Copies of any relevant correspondence or documents relating directly to the complaint.
- What you consider may be required to resolve the complaint.

2.1.2 Step 2. Raise the concern

In the first instance, you should raise your concerns directly with the school. GGS must be aware of a concern and of its substance in order to address it.

GGS believes that a concern is often best resolved closest to its source, and when a concern relates to a student, encourages concerns to be raised with the relevant staff member.

Depending on the nature and severity of an issue, and whether the classroom teacher has a conflict of interest, concerns may instead be raised directly with a senior staff member (e.g. Head of Senior School, Head of Junior School).

However, that senior staff member may delegate responsibility for dealing with the concern to another appropriate staff member, GGS website:

<https://www.girton.vic.edu.au/contact-us/>. Specific contact details can be found on Astra.

If unsure who to contact in the first instance, guidance is referred to in the table below.

Area of Concern / Nature of Grievance	Who to contact?	
	Junior School	Senior School
Student Wellbeing matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom Teacher• Deputy Head of Junior School• Head of Junior School• Deputy Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• House Tutor• Head of House• Head of Student Engagement• Head of Senior School• Deputy Principal
Curriculum and Teaching matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom Teacher• Head of Department



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Junior School Head of CurriculumHead of Junior SchoolDeputy Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Head of Senior SchoolDeputy Principal
Education Staff related matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Classroom TeacherDeputy Head of Junior SchoolHead of Junior SchoolDeputy Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">House TutorHead of HouseHead of Student EngagementHead of Senior SchoolDeputy Principal
Inclusive Education matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Head of Junior School Inclusive EducationHead of Junior SchoolPrincipal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Head of Senior School Inclusive EducationDeputy PrincipalPrincipal
Health (physical and psychological) matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Head of Junior School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Health Services Manager
Enrolment related matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">RegistrarHead of Community RelationsDirector of BusinessPrincipal	
Administration, business operations or finance matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Director of Business	
Principal or a member of the Board matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Chair of the Girton Board of Directors	
Careers / work experience matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Student Futures & VCE CoordinatorHead of VCE & Student Futures	
Co-Curriculum Activities matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Staff member in charge of the activityStudent Activities CoordinatorHead of Student Activities	
Camps matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Head of Student Activities	
Sports matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Head of Sport	
Bullying and/or Harassment	Refer to 11.16 Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy	

2.1.3 Step 3. Acknowledgement

Once a concern is raised, GGS will record the details of the concern, including your name and contact details electronically on ASTRA.

GGS's focus will be on understanding the nature of the problem, the party or parties involved, and the nature of any agreeable solutions.

2.1.4 Step 4. Outcome

Where an agreeable solution is available, this will usually be communicated in writing to you (within three (3) business days of the outcome being reached).

Where a mutually agreed outcome between GGS and the person raising the concern is inappropriate or not possible, the staff member handling the concern will make a decision that best aligns with GGS's procedures and legal obligations. This decision will



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be communicated in writing to you (within three (3) business days of the outcome being reached), and the communication will be kept on the relevant student's (and if appropriate, staff member's) file.

2.2 Stage 2 – Make a formal complaint

2.2.1 Step 1. Make a complaint

If you are not satisfied with the way your concern has been handled, you may choose to make a formal written complaint. Complaints should ordinarily be made within one calendar month of the initial concern first being raised with the school.

In the first instance, a formal complaint should be lodged with the Head of Junior School/ Head of Senior School or Principal/Deputy Principal.

If the complaint concerns the Principal, the complaint should be made to the Chair of the Board (see Stage 3), in which case the Chair of the Board will manage the process outlined below.

You may also telephone Reception on (03) 5441 3114 to arrange a meeting. Please note that if phoning to arrange a meeting, Reception staff will take your details and endeavour to confirm a meeting time as soon as it is practicable to do so.

2.2.2 Step 2. Acknowledge receipt

The persons receiving the complaint will acknowledge receipt of the formal written complaint as soon as practicable (usually within three (3) business days).

2.2.3 Step 3. Review of complaint

When dealing with a formal written complaint, GGS's objective is to achieve a resolution by:

- Clarify the substance of the complaint and the steps taken by the school to address the initial concern.
- Identify whether the complaint raises an issue regarding non-compliance with the school's procedures.
- Identify whether the complaint raises an issue that would be more appropriately addressed under another relevant school policy.
- Communicate with you and relevant parent(s), student(s) and staff in an attempt to resolve the issue by agreement (where practicable).
- Failing agreement, investigating the complaint and deciding appropriate outcomes in accordance with procedural fairness and natural justice principles.

The Principal may delegate parts of the complaint-management process and seek the assistance of third parties, however, any ultimate decision will still be made by the Principal.

If the Principal or delegate arranges to speak with you, you may request to have someone else present as a support person. The support person can be a relative or a friend, but please note that the role of a support person is to support you and not to act as an advocate.



2.2.4 Step 4. Outcome

The Principal or delegate will aim to communicate the outcome of a formal written complaint in writing within fifteen (15) business days where practicable.

2.3 Stage 3 – Request a Review

2.3.1 Step 1. Request a review by the Chair of the Board

If you are not satisfied that your formal written complaint has been adequately resolved by the Principal, you may request a review by writing to the Chair of the Board via email at board@girton.vic.edu.au.

Members of the school community who raise grievances with other Board members will be directed to follow the procedures set out in the Complaints and Grievance Policy (e.g. raising a complaint with the Principal or requesting a review by writing to the Chair of the Board).

Review requests must be made in writing within ten (10) business days of the date the Principal communicated the outcome of your complaint in writing. The grounds for the review, and in particular any concerns you have with the way the relevant complaint was dealt with, must be clearly identified in the request for review.

2.3.2 Step 2. Review

Please note that in accordance with good governance, the Board entrusts the Principal with the day-to-day management of the School, particularly its staff and students. The Principal is accorded significant discretion regarding such matters.

Accordingly, any review of the Principal's decision under this policy will be confined to the Chair of the Board deciding whether there is evidence that GGS's procedures have not been followed in a way likely to have meaningfully influenced the Principal's decision or that the Principal unreasonably exercised their discretion.

The Chair of the Board may delegate parts of the review or seek the assistance of third parties; however any ultimate decision will still be made by the Chair of the Board.

To avoid doubt, the Chair of the Board will not delegate to the Principal a review of a decision they have already made. However, if the Chair of the Board is satisfied that a complaint has not been properly raised (or dealt) with by the Principal (and the Principal does not otherwise have a conflict of interest), the Chair of the Board may refer the matter to the Principal to make an initial decision (noting that decision would then create a right to request a review).

2.3.3 Step 3. Outcome

The Chair of the Board will aim to communicate the outcome of a request for review in writing within forty-five (45) business days where practicable.

The Chair of the Board will promptly report any requests for review and relevant outcomes to the Board.



3. Relevant Considerations

3.1 Withdrawal of a Grievance

A grievance can be withdrawn at any stage during the processes outlined in this procedure. A grievance can only be withdrawn by the person who made the complaint to GGS.

Ideally, all grievances should be retracted in writing; however, a dated notation on the GGS's systems stating the grievance has been withdrawn verbally by the appropriate person can be made by a staff member at GGS responsible for managing the grievance.

GGS will notify affected parties if a grievance is withdrawn, where considered appropriate.

Regardless of a person's wish to withdraw a grievance, complaints that have disciplinary implications for a staff member may still be followed up by GGS.

3.2 Anonymous Grievances

GGS is committed to dealing with grievances in accordance with the processes outlined in this policy. GGS respects, in some cases, complainants would prefer to remain anonymous and not put a name to their grievances.

GGS treats grievances about the school, a staff member, a student's education, enrolment and/or a student's wellbeing with the utmost importance and will investigate such grievances raised to the fullest extent practicable. However, anonymity can make it difficult for GGS to effectively resolve grievances (particularly where the school is being asked to accept an anonymous source's version of events) and are accordingly discouraged.

3.3 Previously Addressed, Stale or Vexatious Grievances

Grievances that have been previously addressed by GGS or externally, or which were not raised with GGS within a reasonable period of time (having regard to the nature of the relevant grievance), will not be considered in the absence of highly relevant new information and/or evidence coming to light.

GGS does not tolerate vexatious grievances.

3.4 External Grievances and Redress

GGS acknowledges that grievances relating to the school can also be made to an external body or be the subject of legal action. However, GGS encourages its community to raise any grievances and work to resolve such matters in accordance with the procedures outlined in this procedure.

4. Further Guidance

- [Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Parent Code of Conduct](#)
- [Girton Grammar School Mission and Values](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy](#)
- [Child Safety Policy](#)



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5. Procedure Status/ Document Control

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