



## MLC Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

MLC is committed to creating an environment that values good relationships and open communication, and where students, parents and staff work together in an environment of trust and mutual respect. The College's approach to handling concerns, grievances, complaints and appeals is based on the MLC values of respect, responsibility and compassion.

The purpose of MLC's Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure is to provide a student, parent/s or guardian/s with the opportunity to access procedures for addressing grievances as and when they arise, to ensure the effective, fair and early resolution of the concern, grievance, complaint or appeal. These internal procedures are conciliatory and non-legal processes.

Grievances and complaints can arise from a number of different reasons, such as:

- a particular incident
- school practices, policies or decisions made or ignored and believed by the complainant to be unfair, unreasonable or inappropriate
- unprofessional conduct
- unsatisfactory performance and behaviour
- harassment, bullying and victimisation
- allegations of unlawful discrimination.

In the first instance, MLC will attempt informally to resolve the matter by raising it with the staff member closest to the matter: Teacher; Tutor/ Home Group Teacher; Student/House Coordinator; or, Head of School. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, MLC's internal formal grievance, complaints and appeals handling procedure will be followed.

The process of this informal grievance, complaint and appeal handling procedure is confidential. All grievances, complaints and appeals will remain a matter between the parties concerned and those directly involved in the grievance handling process.

Once the process is completed, if the student, parent/s or guardian remain dissatisfied with the outcome, MLC will advise of access to an independent external appeals process.

It is not the intention of this policy to resolve concerns and complaints brought by a student against another student. These will be dealt with through the MLC Student Code of Behaviour and Discipline and related policies.

For conditions which apply to handling of a grievance, complaint or appeal arising from the suspension or cancellation of a student's studies, please see Section 7 of the **MLC Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy**.

## 1. STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

### STAGE 1 – Informal Resolution

- a) In the first instance the student should contact their Teacher, Tutor/Home Group Teacher, Student or House Coordinator or Head of School to attempt mediation/informal resolution of the grievance/complaint/appeal. The College will always seek to use the informal processes to resolve matters wherever possible and appropriate.
- b) Where the informal process is not appropriate or does not lead to a resolution, the formal grievance/complaint procedure will apply.

### STAGE 2 – Formal Procedure

- c) At this point, the student should notify MLC in writing of the nature and details of the formal grievance/complaint. Written grievances/complaints are to be lodged with the Principal.
- d) Each complainant has the opportunity to present their case to the Principal, or her delegate. Students may be accompanied by a support person.
- e) The formal grievance/complaint process will commence within 10 working days of the lodgement of the grievance/complaint with the Principal. The Principal, or her delegate, will conduct an inquiry into the grievance/complaint in accordance with this policy and procedure. The respondent/s will be notified of the complaint against them.
- f) Once the Principal has come to a decision regarding the grievance/complaint or appeal, the student will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome. The grievance/complaint and the manner of its determination and the outcome will be included in confidential student records.
- g) If the grievance/complaint procedure finds in favour of the student, MLC will immediately implement the decision and any corrective action required.

### STAGE 3 – Appeals Process

- c) If the grievance/complaint procedure does not find in favour of the student, or the student is dissatisfied with the result of the grievance/complaint procedure, she will be informed of the external complaints and appeals process available to them at minimal or no cost.
- d) MLC undertakes to finalise all grievance resolution procedures within 10 working days of commencement (see Stage 2 e) above).
- e) For the duration of the appeals process, the student is required to maintain enrolment. The Head of School will determine if participation in studies will be in class or under a supervised arrangement outside of classes. The student, parent/s and/or guardian will be advised of the progress of their matter.

## 2. PARENT/S or GUARDIAN/S COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

### STAGE 1 – Informal Resolution

- a) In the first instance parent/s or guardian/s should contact the Teacher, Tutor/Home Group Teacher, Student/House Coordinator or Head of School to attempt mediation/informal resolution of the grievance/complaint. The College will always seek to use the informal processes to resolve matters wherever possible and appropriate.
- b) Where the informal process is not appropriate or does not lead to a resolution, the formal grievance/complaint procedure will apply.

### STAGE 2 – Formal Procedure

- c) At this point, the parent/s or guardian/s should notify MLC in writing of the nature and details of the formal grievance/complaint. Written grievances/complaints are to be lodged with the Principal.
- d) Each complainant has the opportunity to present their case to the Principal, or her delegate. Parent/s or guardian/s may be accompanied by a support person.
- e) The formal grievance, complaints and appeals process will commence within 10 working days of the lodgement of the grievance with the Principal. The Principal, or her delegate, will conduct an inquiry into the complaint in accordance with the principles set out in this document. The respondent/s will be notified of the complaint against them.
- f) Once the Principal has come to a decision regarding the grievance, complaint or appeal, the parent/s or guardian/s will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome. The grievance/complaint and the manner of its determination and the outcome will be included in confidential student records.
- g) If the grievance/complaint procedure finds in favour of the parent/s or guardian/s MLC will immediately implement the decision and any corrective action required.
- h) If the complaint is against the Principal, the complaint should be lodged directly with the Chair of the MLC Board. The Chair will conduct an enquiry, which will usually involve a request for a full report from the Principal, and for copies of all relevant documents. On the basis of these, the Chair may decide to request a briefing from individual members of staff and will, in most cases, speak to the parents to discuss the matter. Once the Chair is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing, with reasons given for the decision.

### STAGE 3 – Appeals Process

- i) If the grievance/complaint procedure does not find in favour of the parent/s and/or guardian/s, and the parent/s and/or guardian/s are dissatisfied with the result of the grievance/complaint procedure, they will be informed of the external complaints and appeals process available to them at minimal or no cost.
- j) MLC undertakes to finalise all grievance procedures within 10 working days of commencement (see Stage 2 e) above).

## DEFINITIONS

<b>Student</b>	A student enrolled at MLC
<b>Support person</b>	A friend/teacher/relative not involved in the grievance/complaint/appeal. Lawyers and/or education agents are not acceptable support persons at this stage of the complaints handling process.
<b>Working Day</b>	Any day other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday during Term time.

**Examples of external appeals bodies:**

- Commonwealth Ombudsman – Overseas Students
- Institute of Arbitrators and Mediators of Australia (IAMA)
- Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria
- Ombudsman in each State or Territory
- Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA)
- Independent Schools Victoria

Ph: 1300 362 072 or <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au>

<http://www.iama.org.au>

<http://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/>

[www.vrqa.vic.gov.au](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au)

[www.is.vic.edu.au](http://www.is.vic.edu.au)

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MLC staff	MLC Staff Hub
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