

## **NOSSAL HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY**

### **1. PURPOSE**

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Nossal High School so that parents/carers and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school
- ensure that all complaints regarding Nossal High School are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

### **2. SCOPE**

2.1 This policy relates to complaints brought by parents/carers, students or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school.

2.2 In some limited instances, we may need to refer the complainant to another Department of Education and Training department where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions, for example, expulsion appeals.

### **3. POLICY STATEMENT**

3.1 Nossal High School welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our families and are committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. We recognise that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

3.2 We value and encourage open and positive relationships with our school community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

### **4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Compliance, monitoring and review

4.1 The Executive Leadership Team are responsible for communicating the Communications and Complaints Policy with all staff at the beginning of each school year and throughout the year, informing staff of where policies are located and their associated roles and responsibilities.

4.2 It is the responsibility of Nossal High School staff to be familiar with the Communications and Complaints Policy to direct parents/carers and community members to use the correct processes in addressing their complaint.

4.3 It is the responsibility of Nossal High School staff, students, parents/carers and members of the community to be familiar with and comply with the Conduct and Expectations outlined in the NHS Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy when making a complaint.

Reporting

4.4 All complaints will be recorded on the student's Compass Chronicle and the complete file notes will be placed on the student's file along with the resolution notes.

Records Management

4.5 All staff are responsible for documenting and maintaining student chronicle posts to ensure there are accurate notes of any issues or incidences and their resolutions.

## 5. EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every 3 – 4 years by School Council and the Executive Leadership Team.

## 6. RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

For more information about the Department's Parent Complaints policy, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Parent complaints policy](#).

NHS Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy

## 7. THIS POLICY IS AVAILABLE ON THE FOLLOWING PLATFORMS:

7.1 School website <http://nossalhs.vic.edu.au/>

## 8. APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

<b>Date Implemented</b>	
<b>Author</b>	Fiona Vanstan
<b>Approved By</b>	
<b>Approval Authority (Signature &amp; Date)</b>	
<b>Date Reviewed</b>	
<b>Responsible for Review</b>	School Council
<b>Review Date</b>	
<b>References</b>	

## 9. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Nossal High School Communications and Complaints Policy

## 10. FEEDBACK

10.1 Nossal High School staff, parents/carers and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing [nossal.hs@edumail.vic.edu.au](mailto:nossal.hs@edumail.vic.edu.au).

## **Appendix A: Communications and Complaints Policy**

Nossal High School welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our families and are committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. We recognise that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

We value and encourage open and positive relationships with our school community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

When addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- raise and discuss issues in a courteous and respectful manner in accordance with the Conduct and Expectations of all community members outlined in the NHS Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy
- acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome that is in the affected student's best interests and acceptable to all parties
- act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- recognise that all parties, including the broader school community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced
- recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

### **Preparation for raising a concern or complaint**

Nossal High School encourages parents/carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- carefully consider the issues you would like to discuss
- remember you may not have all the facts relating to the issues that you want to raise
- think about how the matter could be resolved
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the Department and Nossal High School

### **Complaints process**

Nossal High School is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to your child's subject teacher or tutorial teacher. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents/carers or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to their child's Head of House, Director of House and Wellbeing, Assistant Principal or Principal.

If you would like to make a formal complaint, in most cases, depending on the nature of the complaint raised, our school will first seek to understand the issues and will then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint together. The following process will apply:

1. **Complaint received:** Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the appropriate Head of House, Director of House and Wellbeing, Assistant Principal or Principal to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are. We can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.
2. **Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the appropriate Head of House, Director of House and Wellbeing, Assistant Principal or Principal may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
3. **Response:** If required, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Head of House, Director of House and Wellbeing, Assistant Principal or Principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. If after the resolution meeting we are unable to resolve the complaint together, we will work with you to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event you would like to take further action about it. In some circumstances, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
4. **Timelines:** Nossal High School will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within 48 hours) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Nossal High School may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. We will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting where appropriate within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, Nossal High School will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

## Resolution

Where appropriate, Nossal High School may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- an apology or expression of regret
- a change of decision
- a change of policy, procedure or practice
- offering the opportunity for student counselling or other support
- other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent/carer and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, Nossal High School may also ask you to attend a meeting with an independent third party or participate in a mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute.

## Escalation

If a parent/carer or community member is not satisfied that their complaint has been resolved by the school, or if their complaint is about the Principal, then the complaint should be referred to the Southern Eastern Victoria Region by contacting [sevr@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:sevr@edumail.vic.gov.au) or 1300 338 738.

Nossal High School may also refer a complaint to Southern Eastern Victoria Region if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.