



# Students and Parents Complaints and Grievance Policy

# Contents

<b>COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE POLICY – STUDENTS AND PARENTS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>POLICY INTENT.....</b>	<b>4</b>
POLICY STATEMENT .....	4
POLICY PURPOSE.....	4
POLICY COVERAGE.....	4
<b>LEGISLATION:.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Other:</i> .....	5
<b>THIS POLICY SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ALTA-1 COLLEGE: .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>DEFINITIONS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION .....	7
<b>CONTACT PERSON .....</b>	<b>9</b>
APPENDIX 1: FLOWCHART FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT: PARENTS/GUARDIAN.....	10
APPENDIX 2: STUDENT-FRIENDLY COMPLAINTS SYSTEM.....	11
APPENDIX 3 – COMPLAINTS/CONCERNS REGISTER.....	14
APPENDIX 4: PROPOSED: GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE; TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE .....	16
<b>POLICY DETAILS AND DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT.....</b>	<b>18</b>

# Complaints and Grievance Policy – Students and Parents

## Policy Intent

Alta-1 College, as a 'Curriculum and Re-engagement in Education' (CARE) School, caters uniquely to secondary students who face educational challenges. By offering an alternative education program under the W.A. School Education Act, 1999, we strive to reconnect students with their educational journey.

*This* Complaints and Grievance Policy is specifically tailored for students and their parents or guardians. It ensures that any issues raised are efficiently addressed, focusing on maintaining a safe and supportive environment. The existence of separate policies—one for students and parents, and another for staff and volunteers—demonstrates our commitment to addressing the distinct needs of our diverse community, ensuring every concern is treated with importance.

## Policy Statement

At Alta-1 College, we value the input from students and their families and recognise their right to voice concerns. Our approach ensures these concerns are dealt with thoughtfully and expediently. We are committed to a fair process that respects the needs of the complainants while focusing on prompt resolution. Every formal complaint will be carefully documented and stored securely to protect confidentiality.

## Policy Purpose

The goal of this policy is to provide a clear and responsive framework for addressing concerns raised by students and their parents or guardians, thereby ensuring everyone's safety and contributing positively to the college's operations.

## Policy Coverage

This policy applies to any concerns or complaints from students and parents or guardians concerning Alta-1 College Ltd. It addresses issues related to the organisation at large, specific campuses, programs, or individuals associated with the College.

## Legislation:

- [School Education Act 1999](#)
- [School Education Regulations 2000 \(WA\)](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act](#)
- [Age Discrimination Act 2004](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [Racial Discrimination Act 1975](#)

- [Sex Discrimination Act 1984](#)

**Other:**

- [National Principles | Child Safe Organisations](#)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Alta-1 College:

- Student Code of Conduct
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff Grievance and Complaints Policy
- Student Recruitment and Enrolment Policy
- Child Safe Policy
- Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy

## Definitions

### Concern

A concern is an expression of unease or worry regarding a situation, issue, or individual that may impact a student or the learning environment. Typically, concerns are addressed informally and directly between the involved parties, facilitating a resolution through open communication.

### Complaint

A complaint is a formal expression of dissatisfaction related to the services, decisions, actions, or conduct of Alta-1 College or its staff, including perceived shortcomings in the complaint management process. Complaints require a structured approach for resolution, following specified channels to ensure procedural fairness and thorough examination.

### Grievance

A grievance arises when a complainant, such as a parent, guardian or student, believes their complaint has not been sufficiently addressed. This may involve concerns about the handling, seriousness, or procedural fairness accorded to the complaint by school authorities, prompting the need for further review or intervention.

### Dispute

A dispute occurs when two or more parties disagree on an issue, and the disagreement remains unresolved. Disputes can manifest as concerns or complaints and often benefit from prompt, informal resolution efforts. However, when informal strategies are insufficient, disputes may escalate and require more formal mediation or intervention processes.

### Director General

The Chief Executive Officer responsible for overseeing educational standards and regulations, appointed as per s.151 of the School Education Act 1999 (WA). This position is currently held by the Director General of the Department of Education, who ensures compliance with legislative and policy requirements for non-government schools.

## Policy Statement

The Policy Statement for Alta-1 College's Complaints and Grievance Policy outlines our commitment to ensuring that all concerns and complaints from students, parents, and guardians are addressed with fairness and diligence.

1. Alta-1 College acknowledges the right of students, parents, and guardians to raise concerns or lodge complaints with confidence that they will be treated with seriousness and appropriate consideration.
2. Alta-1 College is committed to resolving complaints related to students, parents, and guardians fairly and in a timely manner. The processes for lodging complaints are designed to be suitable for the complainant's needs and context.
3. All complaints will be taken seriously, and Alta-1 College will investigate and address them promptly and thoroughly, adhering to non-government school regulations.
4. All relevant documentation concerning a formal complaint will be recorded confidentially and securely in a Complaints Register. This register will be monitored regularly to identify causes, patterns, trends, and systemic failures, informing continuous improvement.
5. Student-friendly complaints-handling systems will be developed in collaboration with students and implemented across all sites to ensure accessibility and effectiveness.
6. All complaints-handling systems will include a system of review, which will be conducted promptly to ensure ongoing effectiveness and compliance.
7. The Board and Senior Executives of Alta-1 will ensure that the consideration of Concerns/Complaints Registers are standing items on agendas at regular meetings, promoting accountability and transparency.
8. Senior Executives will ensure that complaint-handling systems, including the role of the Director General of Education, are published on the Alta-1 website and disseminated through other communication methods, such as digital platforms, to ensure access at all organisational and community levels.
9. Complaints and concerns will be investigated at the location where they are generated, escalating to Alta-1 Senior Leaders only if they cannot be resolved locally.
10. Complaints specifically regarding employees should follow the escalation process to the CEO if resolution cannot be achieved by Alta-1 Senior Leaders. [Note: Staff grievances should be referred to the Staff Complaints and Grievance Policy.]
11. If complaints from parents or guardians cannot ultimately be resolved by the CEO, they must be lodged in writing to the Alta-1 Board, which may opt to enlist the services of an external Grievance Committee appointed by the Board.

## Alta-1's Commitment

Alta-1 College is committed to partnering with parents, guardians, staff, and volunteers to provide the highest quality education and care for students. We ensure that our learning environments are safe, fair, and equitable, and we actively promote respectful relationships to minimise conflicts that could lead to complaints. Concerns about student safety and child protection are promptly recorded in our complaints register for swift resolution and continuous monitoring, in alignment with Alta-1's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety. We act immediately on breaches of

conduct, ensuring our community remains a secure and supportive space for all. Complaints are handled with care, respecting the privacy of the individuals involved. Through clear communication and diligent record-keeping, we manage complaints effectively across all sites and regularly review complaint records to identify and address any patterns or systemic issues.

## Procedures

Alta-1 Regional Principals will ensure that:

- Concerns are listened to and treated seriously. Depending on the nature of a concern, it should be included by the regional principal or other manager, on a **register of concerns**. Concerns will be resolved directly and informally between the parties involved, as soon as possible after having been heard. If they are unresolved they may develop into complaints, with further action being required.
- Processes are in place to ensure complaints are received in a manner that is user-friendly and culturally-and age-appropriate. This may be in writing; either through the complainant sending a letter or email, or by a staff member receiving the complaint verbally in a face-to-face meeting and completing a complaint form which is signed by the complainant.
- Students know they can make a complaint anonymously or verbally to anyone in the school they can trust or feel safe to speak to, knowing that their complaint will be taken seriously.
- Complaint processes are outlined in the following appendices:
  - Appendix 1 – flowchart for making a complaint: parents and guardians
  - Appendix 2 – Student friendly complaints system (including flowchart for making a complaint)
- Complaints are investigated and addressed by appropriate parties according to the level or urgency and risks if not attended to promptly and fairly. Complaints concerning child protection and criminal matters must take precedence.
- All complaints, actions and documentation are recorded in a **complaints register**. Headings of the register are found at appendix 3.
- In processing a complaint, all staff (especially managers) will simultaneously consider whether any other policy or legislation may apply - e.g. Workplace bullying, sexual or racial harassment, child protection reporting, Teacher’s Registration Board Western Australia (TRBWA) reporting and so on.
- Complaints and complaint-handling systems are regularly reviewed to ensure systemic causes are appropriately identified and addressed. Findings of reviews are shared with staff, volunteers, families/guardians, and young people.
- Complainants are informed of their rights of appeal, including appropriate reference to the role of the director general of the department of education. (note that the following paragraph should be published on the college and school websites).

*Role of the Director General of the Department of Education in Western Australia is tasked with ensuring that all schools adhere to the established registration standards, which include maintaining a robust complaints-handling system. Students, parents, and community members have the right to contact the Director General if they have concerns*

*about how a complaint has been handled by the school. While the Director General can assess whether the school complies with these registration standards, they are not empowered to directly intervene or override the school's decisions regarding specific complaints. Detailed guidelines and further information can be accessed on the Department of Education's official website. This aligns with the Department's commitment to uphold high standards of compliance and governance in non-government schools, as outlined in the School Education Act 1999 (WA) and accompanying regulations. ([Concerns about non-government schools - Department of Education](#))*

## Process

### Handling a Complaint (see Appendices 1 & 2 for flowcharts)

If a complaint is made that relates to a member of staff

1. the complainant should raise the complaint with the staff members' relevant line manager/line manager:
  - a) If about a staff member, then with their line manager
2. Once a complaint is raised, at any level, it is recorded in the Complaints Register (see Appendix 3) which is maintained by a member of the Executive team.
3. Ensure cultural support if provided where needed, e.g. English as a second language, in complaints process (this is in line with National Principal for a Child Safe Organisation).
4. Complaints will be discussed with the line manager and investigated. The complainant may be asked to write down the nature of the complaint which may be provided to the subject of the complaint.
5. If a staff member is involved in the complaint, the People and Culture Team will be informed to ensure appropriate support and procedures are followed.
6. Following investigation, the line manager will provide a written response to the complainant by the date indicated in the initial acknowledgement.
7. Successful resolution will be recorded and entered into the Complaints Register.
8. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved at this stage the Line manager will offer to refer the matter to *their* Line manager and the process repeated until the complainant is satisfied and resolution is achieved, which will be recorded in the Complaints Register.
9. If resolution is not achieved within the school site, the issue will be raised with the CEO in writing.
10. The CEO will investigate the process so far used at school site level, and make a decision.
11. If the complainant is a student or member of staff, the CEO's decision will be final.
12. If the complainant is a parent/Guardian who is still not satisfied with the CEO's decision and the complaint is still unresolved, the matter will be referred to the Alta-1 Board Chair in writing (see Appendix 1)
13. The Board Chair will engage the Grievance Committee (see Appendix 5) to investigate and report back .

Throughout the process, confidentiality will be maintained by limiting knowledge of the matter only to those directly involved.

Depending on the issue, and in accordance with other Alta-1 College policies (Student Protection, Managing Reportable Criminal Offences, Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse), third parties outside the school may need to be contacted. Information on file will remain confidential.

*Alta-1 has a Child-friendly Complaints System*, which includes procedures and practices that are focussed on young people and designed to suit their specific school site. In particular, the system is culturally safe and accessible by all young people.

The *Child-Friendly Complaints System* (see Appendix 2) is regularly reviewed and evaluated in order to improve child-safe practices at Alta-1 College

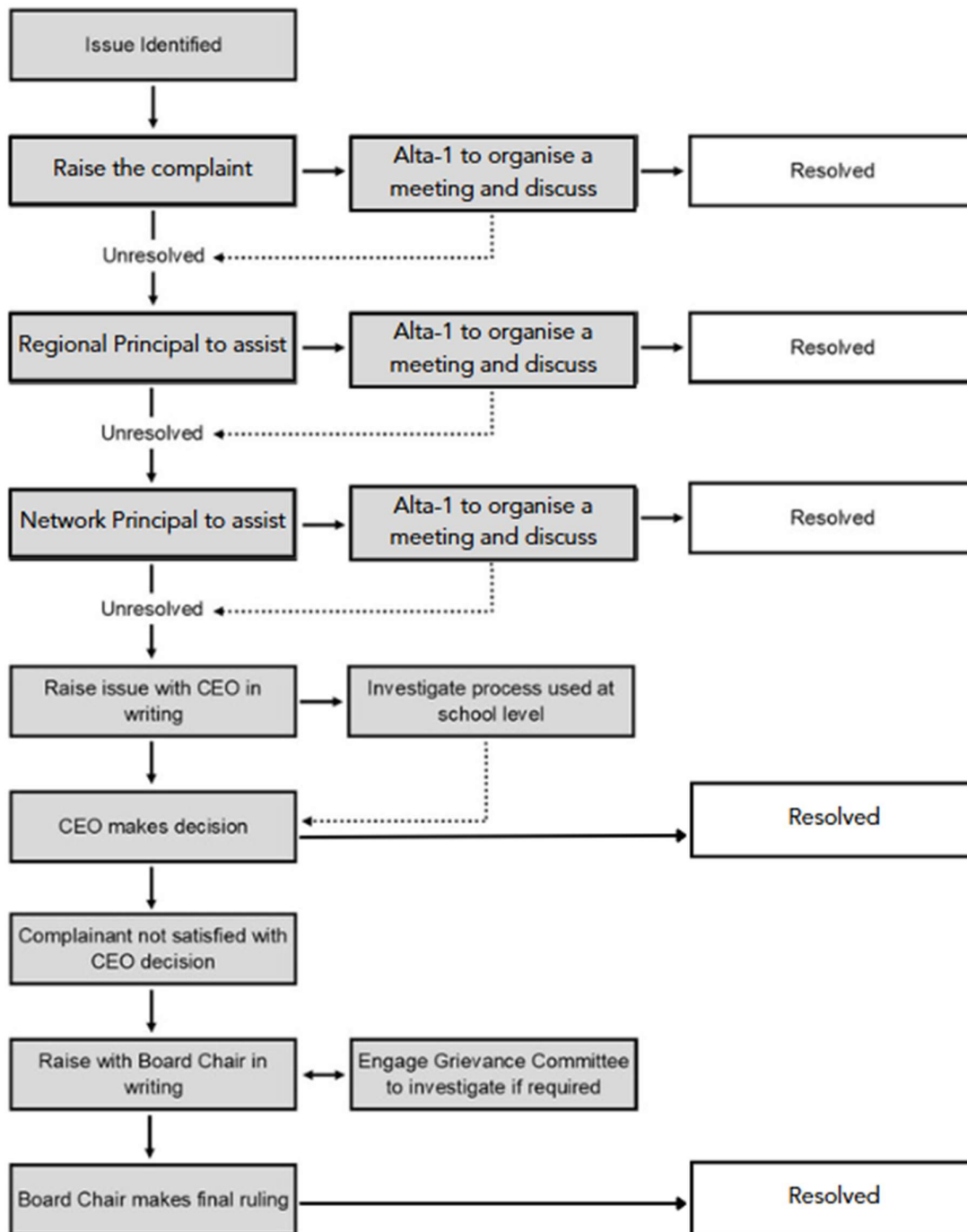
## Implementation

- Staff shall be informed and trained in this policy in accordance with the Alta-1 Training Framework.
- The policy shall be disseminated through the College website, and staff and parent handbooks.
- Students will be advised and reminded of this process as part of their Child Safe training.
- Parents and guardians will indicate agreement to follow this policy through signing the Parent Code of Conduct or the Student Enrolment Agreement, respectively.

## Contact Person

For further advice on this policy, contact Network Principal.

## Appendix 1: Flowchart for making a complaint: Parents/Guardian



## Appendix 2: Student-Friendly Complaints System (including Flowchart for making a complaint)

In alignment with Standard 9.1 of the Western Australian Registration Standards for Non-Government Schools, Alta-1 College has established a comprehensive Child-Friendly Complaints System. This system is designed to be accessible, culturally appropriate, and tailored to the needs of young people across all school sites. Regular reviews ensure its continued effectiveness and alignment with best practices.

### Core Elements of the Complaints System:

#### 1. Focus on Young People:

Young people are recognised as central users of our education services. We are committed to policies and procedures that prioritise their needs and perspectives, ensuring they feel supported and empowered to voice concerns.

#### 2. Visibility and Accessibility:

Our complaints system employs various communication methods, including SMS, email, and telephone, to ensure all students can easily engage. Offices of Regional Principals and key staff display signs inviting students to have open discussions. Each Region has a digital Complaints Booklet—developed with both staff and students—to guide the process clearly and thoroughly.

### Complaints Booklet Headings:

- What is a Complaint? Learn what a complaint means and how it helps us improve things.
- Getting Ready to Complain: Think about what steps you should take before making a complaint.
- Who to Talk To: Find out which staff member is best to talk to about your issue.
- Steps to Make a Complaint:
  - Think about what you want to say.
  - Be clear about what you want to happen.
  - Set up a time to meet with someone.
  - Stay calm during your conversation.
  - Ask about what will happen next and when you'll hear back.
- Keeping Track: Write down important details like the date, time, who you talked to, and what they said they would do.
- Keep Trying: If you're not happy with the response, speak to another staff member to find a solution.

The booklet is integral to students' pastoral care and must be accessible throughout the year, with copies available both on campus and on the Alta-1 website for parental collaboration.

#### 3. Responsiveness:

Staff are trained to handle complaints with urgency and respect, ensuring students' voices are heard. Immediate acknowledgment and established timelines keep students informed throughout

the process. Staff clarify any uncertainties and offer students choices regarding updates on their complaints.

Students who complain are treated with kindness, respect, understanding and helpfulness. Our staff dealing with complaints investigate and check information provided by students and clarify this as necessary. They give students the choice of how they want to be kept informed of the process.

It is only the more serious complaints that require formal acknowledgment, investigation and responses.

#### 4. Confidentiality:

While confidentiality is respected, students are informed of limits, especially where safety is involved. The system includes options for anonymous reporting through a whistleblower channel.

#### 5. Accountability and Continuous Improvement:

The needs of young people are vital to our accountability processes. Regular reviews and data collection—from interviews, witness statements, and complaint resolutions—inform system enhancements. Feedback from student surveys and direct experiences guide improvements.

#### Review and Continuous Improvement:

Alta-1 College conducts regular reviews of the Child-Friendly Complaints System to maintain high standards. Feedback from students who lodged complaints, annual student surveys, and the Commission for Children and Young People's guidelines ensure ongoing refinement. Students are encouraged, through the booklet, to persist if issues remain unresolved, reinforcing their role and resilience in the complaints process.

By implementing these strategies, Alta-1 College creates a supportive environment that ensures each student's concerns are valued and addressed effectively, fostering a secure and harmonious educational community.

# How to make a complaint...

**1 Find support**  
 Ask someone you trust.  
 Like a parent, friend, carer, teacher or coach. You can make a complaint on your own or they can support you to do it. You can also get someone who speaks your language to help you.

**2 Tell your support person**  
 Try to be clear about your problem.  
 • Why are you unhappy?  
 • How has the problem made you feel?  
 • What would help fix it?

**3 Make your complaint**  
 You might feel nervous, worried or upset, just try your best.  
 You or your support person can take notes to remember what was said. You can also ask:  
 • Who will be told about your complaint?  
 • What will happen next?  
 • Who will follow up and get back to you?  
 • How long will it take?  
 • What can you do if the problem is not fixed and you're still not happy?  
 • How will they make sure you're not treated differently because you made a complaint?

**Different ways you can make a complaint:**  
 • face-to-face  
 • by phone  
 • in writing  
 • online.

Your support person can help you find out how to make a complaint.  
 Talk to someone you trust in the organisation or place where the problem is or check their website to find out their way of handling complaints.

Adults should always listen, answer your questions and treat you with respect.

[childsafety.pmc.gov.au/children-speak](http://childsafety.pmc.gov.au/children-speak)

[Child friendly complaint processes and reporting | Commissioner for Children and Young People](#)

## Appendix 3 – Complaints/Concerns Register:

The following headings provide a structured framework for documenting complaints, ensuring clear and comprehensive records are maintained from the initial submission through to the final resolution and review process.

### Complaints Register Headings:

- Date of Complaint
- Name of Complainant and Relationship to the School
- Subject Matter of the Complaint
  - Including the Name of Any Person Complained About and their Relationship to the School
- Complaint Investigator and Position/Role at the School
- Date Investigation Completed
- Whether Complaint Upheld
- Resolution Agreed With or Offered to Complainant
- Date of Referral for Review (e.g., by the Governing Body)
- Complaint Reviewer and Relationship to the School
- Date Review Finalised
- Review Resolution Agreed With or Offered to Complainant

This structured format ensures clarity and comprehensive tracking of each complaint from initiation to resolution.

*Template Example based on Standard 9: Complaints (Guide to Registration Standards and Other requirements for Non-Government Schools 2024)*

Date of Complaint	Name of Complainant and Relationship to the School	Subject Matter of the Complaint Including the Name of Any Person Complained About and their Relationship to the School	Complaint Investigator and Position or Role at the School	Date Investigation Completed	Whether Complaint Upheld or Not	Resolution Agreed with or Offered to Complainant:	Date of Referral for Review (e.g., by the Board, Grievance Committee)	Review Resolution Agreed With or Offered to Complainant
15 April 2023	John Thompson, Parent of Year 10 student.	Concerns regarding the handling of a SEL project. The specific complaint involved Mr. Jane White, campus Teacher, and the complaint pertains to perceived unfair practices.	Ms. Susan Lee, Deputy Principal.	30 April 2023	Yes	The SEL project was re-assessed by a different teacher for fairness, and additional teacher training on assessment practices was implemented.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
5 May 2023	Emily Harris, Parent of Year 11 student.	Allegations of discrimination and unfair disciplinary action against her child, David Harris, by Mr. Mark Taylor, Senior School Teacher West Region. The complaint involved concerns of bias based on David's learning disability, affecting his participation in the recent campus competition.	Network Principal.	28 May 2023	Partially upheld	An independent review of the disciplinary action was conducted, resulting in a formal apology issued by the school to the student. Additionally, sensitivity and inclusivity training sessions for region were scheduled.	15 June 2023	The Governing Board upheld the corrective measures taken and agreed to monitor implementation. They also initiated a comprehensive review of the disciplinary policies to ensure fairness and compliance with inclusivity

								standards. Feedback mechanisms were introduced for continuous parent and student input on disciplinary proceedings.
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---

## Appendix 4: Grievance Committee; Terms of Reference and Dispute Resolution Procedure

### Source of Obligation: Alta-1 Constitution

In the case of Parent cases, where a complainant believes that the CEO has not followed a fair and reasonable process in arriving at a decision, that person may lodge a complaint in writing to the Board asking for review of the process followed by the CEO.

If, following the Board's review and communication, the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, the Board may engage the Grievance Committee to review the processes followed by the CEO and Alta-1 Board. Their role will be to determine whether the processes followed have been fair and reasonable. The committee consists of independent people who will review the processes, but not the original decisions of the CEO and Alta-1 Board.

After conducting its review, the Grievance Committee may then instruct the Board to ask the CEO to revise its process in deciding the grievance. If this occurs, the Board will make its final ruling on the grievance. If the Grievance Committee finds that the process was fair and reasonable, they will inform the Board, and the arbitrated resolution of the CEO will stand.

### Primary Purpose of the Grievance Committee

The Grievance Committee's primary purpose is to review the process used in investigating a complaint at the staff or administrative levels. It is the job of the Committee to evaluate the method used, comprehensiveness, and fairness in a thoughtful, unemotive and respectful manner without bias or prejudice. The Committee will be as impartial as possible and strive not to prejudge any individual or situation.

### Primary Responsibilities of the Grievance Committee

Review of formal complaint initially made	The Committee receives initial complaint to CEO and subsequent grievance lodged with the Board
Fact finding	The Committee receives and reviews any and all documentation related to the complaint; received and generated by the complainant and responses by relevant parties, including the CEO and Alta-1 Board
Grievance process	<p>The Committee considers the processes used by the CEO in investigating the complaint. Processes include written documentation, interview transcripts, records of meetings, relevant policies and any third-party contributions.</p> <p>The Committee considers procedures and communications in terms of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▫ Method used</li><li>▫ Comprehensiveness and thoroughness</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Triangulation of sources - written/oral/ between complainant and investigator and from third party witnesses</li> <li>▫ Fairness and lack of bias</li> <li>▫ Objectivity</li> </ul> <p>Respect shown to the complainant</p>
	The Committee considers the final ruling concerning the complaint by the CEO and Alta-1 Board; the majority of the Committee must support the ruling of the CEO on the complaint for it to be upheld
Decision by Grievance Committee	The Committee informs the Board of their decision
Board Chair considers the decision by Committee	The Board Chair considers the decision by the Grievance Committee and makes final ruling
Complainant informed of Board's ruling	Ruling made; complainant informed in writing All records of process and decision are managed and stored confidentially

# Policy Details and Document Management

## Complaints and Grievance Policy- Students and Parents

Author: Network Principal

Approved by: College Board

Published: 21/02/2025

Review Date: 21/02/2026

Policy Level		Dissemination	For Application	For Information
College Board	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	College Board	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chief Executive Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chief Executive Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Executive Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Executive Leadership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senior Leadership Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Senior Leadership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Central Administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Regional Administration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Teaching Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Access</b>		Campus Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Therapeutic Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community (Parents/Students)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Revision History

Published	Version	Approved by	File Name
26/06/2020	1.0	College Board	Complaints and Grievances Policy
21/02/25	2.0	College Board	Complaints and Grievances Policy was split into two separate policies. Complaints and Grievances – Students and Families, and Complaints and Grievances – Staff.

### Genealogy

This Policy replaces: **Complaints and Grievance Policy**

This Policy was cancelled and suspended by: