1. **RATIONALE**

Scotch College is open to the concerns of parents and students and any complaints will be received in a positive manner and will be taken seriously.

2. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- **Headmaster**: to ensure the policy is in place and to participate as necessary in investigations or reporting
- **Teachers/Staff**: to respond to complaints and/or report as required
- **Parents**: to lodge concerns or complaints as provided for in the guidelines
- **Students**: to lodge concerns or complaints as provided for in the guidelines
- **Chairman of Council**: to be the final arbiter as necessary

3. **TO WHOM DOES THE POLICY APPLY?**

Scotch College staff, students and parents

4. **POLICY**

Parents, students, staff and community members may from time to time have concerns or complaints that they wish addressed. Scotch College is open to receiving concerns and complaints with the view to improving the services provided and protecting the wellbeing of our students.

- General complaints will be handled under the guidelines in Section 5 of this procedure.
- Bullying complaints or concerns will be handled as outlined in the Bullying Policy and Behaviour Management Policy.
- Matters to do with physical, sexual or emotion abuse are outlined below and detailed further in the Mandatory Reporting Policy & Guidelines.

5. **GUIDELINES**

**If the source of the complaint is a parent or guardian:**

Parents are encouraged to make their own decision about the appropriate member of staff in the School to whom their complaint should be made. If in doubt, however, the points below offer some guidance:

- If a complaint to a classroom teacher is of a minor nature and easily resolved then the teacher and parent should act together to resolve the issue between them.
- If the complaint is of a more substantial nature the teacher should refer the complainant to a more senior member of staff in the appropriate area. In the Junior School this would normally be the Head of the Junior School; in the Middle School this would normally be the Head of Middle School; in the Senior School it may be a Curriculum Leader, House Head, Director of Teaching and Learning or the Head of Senior School.
- If the matter cannot be resolved at this level it should be referred to the Headmaster. Failing resolution the parent may request that the matter be referred to the Chairman of the College Council who, together with the Council, is the final authority on matters concerning the school.
If the complaint is against the Headmaster the matter should be referred directly to the Chairman of Council.

In all instances of complaint the School’s representative shall record the issues and steps which have been taken to resolve any complaints.

Headmaster, or senior members of staff, may choose to interview students without parents or staff members being present.

If the source of the complaint is a student:
Students are encouraged to make their own decision about the appropriate member of staff in the School to whom their complaint should be made. If in doubt, however, the points below offer some guidance:

- The teacher and student should act to resolve a minor complaint to the satisfaction of both parties. If the student feels he cannot raise the matter directly with the staff member concerned, he may approach his House Head, the School Chaplain or School Psychologist.
- If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, or if the matter is of a substantial nature, the matter should be referred to an appropriate senior staff member.
- Failing a resolution at that level the matter should be referred to the Headmaster for appropriate action.
- If the complaint is against the Headmaster the matter should be referred directly to the Chairman of Council.
- A record of the issues and steps taken to resolve the matters should be kept by the School’s representatives.

If the source of complaint is a staff member:

- Complaints of a minor nature should be resolved between colleagues. A more senior staff member (i.e. Head of Senior School, Head of Junior School, Chaplain etc) acting as facilitator can be requested by either party.
- Complaints related to sexual or sex based harassment should be dealt with according to the School’s policy.
- Other complaints should be directed to the Headmaster. During any stage of the process, a person may choose to have a supporting person present at discussions or interviews with the Headmaster.
- If unresolved, the staff members may write to the Chairman of Council, who, together with Council, is the final authority on matters concerning the school.
- If the complaint is against the Headmaster the matter should be referred directly to the Chairman of Council.

If complaints relate to physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children, the following steps should apply:

If a teacher, or other member of the School community observes indicators of abuse to a child, or if a student discloses abuse, the responsibility is for a teacher or observer to determine whether they can form a “reasonable belief” that this is abuse of some form:

A. In a case where they are not sure:
COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

- The teacher or observer should follow the School’s internal procedure which is that the student concerned should be directed to the School Psychologist, or another senior member of staff, who should take a record of details from the student or observer.
- The School Psychologist or senior staff member should advise the Head of School and the Headmaster.
- If the complaint is against the Headmaster, then all matters should be referred directly to the Chairman of Council.
- The Headmaster, or senior members of staff will investigate the matter.
- If they remain unsure, they should seek advice from the Department of Child Protective Services – Mandatory Reporting Unit and any other advisers such as AISWA to determine whether other action is required.
- In a case where no further action is deemed necessary the information should be documented and a programme established to observe, and to be vigilant in observation.

B. In a case where a teacher or observer forms a reasonable belief that there has been physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children:

- The teacher or observer should firstly direct the matter to the School Psychologist or senior members of staff who should take a record of the details.
- The School Psychologist or senior staff member should then inform the Head of School and the Headmaster.
- If the complaint is against the Headmaster, then all matters should be referred directly to the Chairman of Council.
- The Headmaster or other members of staff may well investigate the matter further.
- If, after further investigation, it is deemed there is reasonable belief that the matter could be physical, sexual or emotional, this should be reported immediately to the Department of Child Protective Services - Mandatory Reporting Unit.
- This Unit will determine whether parents, guardians or others need to be interviewed and will also determine whether the Police need to be called.
- In matters deemed to be of a Mandatory Reporting nature, the Headmaster will consult with Chairman of Council at the earliest possible moment and determine whether other additional steps need to be taken.

For further information please refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy.

Complaint from students against people outside the school:
- If the Headmaster or member of the Executive is convinced that the complaint is justified and of a serious nature, the matter should be discussed by the Headmaster with the Chairman of the School Council, with a view to making contact with the police.
- In the case of physical, sexual or emotion abuse of a child the Mandatory Reporting Policy and Guidelines will apply.

International Students
International Students should refer to page 6 of the Handbook for International Students for details of additional support available under the ESOS Act. International students have access to an independent International Student Conciliator located at the Department of Education Services. The contact details of the Conciliator are as follows:
International Student Conciliator
22 Hasler Road
OSBORNE PARK WA 6017
PH:  9441 1900
Fax: 9441 1950

5. REVIEW OF POLICY
   Reviewed September 2010

6. RECORDS, FORMS & TEMPLATES

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