



<b>POLICY</b>	<b>Concerns, Complaints and Disputes</b>
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Policy Owner	Board
Function/Area	College Community

## Policy Statement

Tranby College welcomes all feedback from members of the College community, parents, guardians, students (past and present), volunteers and staff. The College recognises that matters of concern, complaint and grievance will arise from time to time. It is hoped that most issues will be easily and quickly resolved by discussing with the relevant people.

For matters that are not able to be resolved quickly and easily then Tranby College has a process that members of the community can engage in. Each and every concern and complaint is taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

Tranby College will handle each complaint according to the rules of procedural fairness and ensures that the procedures are accessible, child focussed and culturally safe. The College acknowledges that each student, staff member, and member of the broader community has a right to express concerns and complaints and will ensure the process is appropriate for each complainant.

Tranby College seeks to ensure their complaint handling system is child-focused by:

- Promoting the rights, safety and wellbeing of its students.
- Providing a complaints handling system that is accessible and responsive to the needs of all students, their parents or guardians, staff, volunteers and other members of the College community.
- Dealing with complaints promptly, thoroughly and fairly.
- Ensuring appropriate communication throughout the process to those involved with the complaint.

To manage complaints effectively, we have established a Complaints Handling Program in line with:

- Principle 6 of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations - Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused, using the Office of Child Safety's "Complaints Handling Guide: Upholding the Rights of Children and Young People."
- Principal 9 of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations - Improvement of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.

## Policy Scope

This policy applies to all current and past students of Tranby College, parents and guardians of past, current and future Tranby students, staff, and other persons.

The framework provides for the resolution of certain matters by employees in circumstances not covered by the current Enterprise Agreement.

Employees are reminded that if they have a grievance that relates to and is defined by the College's Whistleblower (STOPLine) Policy and Procedure, they should refer to this document for further information.

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## Policy Principles

Policy principles are categorised into the following headings:

1. **STUDENT ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE**
2. **BEING FAIR AND OBJECTIVE**
3. **CULTURALLY SAFE COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT**
4. **CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY**
5. **RESOLVING A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT**
6. **CLEAR AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**
7. **REPORTING TO EXTERNAL AUTHORITIES**
8. **RECORDKEEPING & COMPLAINTS DATA**
9. **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**
10. **VEXATIOUS / MALICIOUS DISCLOSURES**
11. **THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL**

### 1. **STUDENT ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE**

The complaints management system is a part of ensuring Tranby College is a child safe organisation that seeks to ensure students are not only safe but also feel safe.

In responding to complaints, Tranby College seeks to implement the ten guidelines from the National Office for Child Safety that demonstrates an effective complaints management system is upholding the rights of children and young people.

The College acknowledges that each student has a right to express concerns and complaints. Through a variety of medium appropriate to each age group of students, the process for making a complaint will be visible. Students can raise a concern or make a complaint in writing or verbally to a trusted person be they a staff member, senior student or other member of the College community.

Students have an equal opportunity to participate in the process if they so choose. Participation in the complaints process for students is voluntary, informed, respectful and meaningful. It seeks to bring no harm to them and address power imbalances and will ensure the process is appropriate for each student complainant.

### 2. **BEING FAIR AND OBJECTIVE**

Each and every concern and complaint is taken seriously whether it is raised by a student, staff member, parent, guardian or other school community member. Each complaint will be responded to promptly and thoroughly. Each case will be examined on its own merit following the rules of Procedural Fairness:

- A hearing appropriate to the circumstances
- Lack of bias
- Evidence to support a decision; and
- Inquiry into matters in dispute

The process will avoid misconceptions and assumptions; address impartiality and bias; recognise and manage conflicts of interest, including potential conflicts of interest and afford fairness to the subject of the complaint. In providing a fair and objective process trust will be built with students, staff and the school community.

Complaints made by parents or guardians will not rebound adversely on their children, and similarly complaints by students or staff will not rebound onto them or onto other pupils or staff.

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All members of staff and volunteers will be given the opportunity to respond to any complaints that are made against them.

Concerns, complaints and disputes that are withdrawn should be done so in writing. The College reserves the right to investigate any concerns complaints and disputes that are withdrawn that are serious in nature and where the College has a duty of care to do so.

### 3. CULTURALLY SAFE COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

Tranby College is committed to providing a culturally safe complaint handling process. This complaint handling process will:

- Ensure barriers to disclosure are overcome.
- Proceed culturally appropriate means of making complaints.
- Ensure the staff responsible for handling complaints are culturally aware and sensitive to the complainant's culture and cultural attitudes including those arisen from historical trauma and mistrust of authorities.
- Ensure access to culturally appropriate therapeutic and other services as required.

### 4. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Confidentiality and privacy are key to creating a safe environment where students, staff, parents, guardians and other members of the community feel comfortable to speak up. It is also a critical element in all parties' right to procedural fairness.

Information in a complaint will only be disclosed to those parties who have a need to know, in order to investigate and resolve the complaint.

There may be situations where the complaint is required to be reported to external agencies as required by law.

### 5. RESOLVING A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

Many concerns and complaints will be suitable for an informal resolution, if:

- The complaint has arisen from misunderstanding or miscommunication.
- The complaint has arisen from a gap in service provision that can be resolved easily.
- The complainant is willing to sit down and discuss the matter informally.

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally or is of a serious nature Tranby College will investigate the complaint using the following process:

- Initial and early response
- Investigation planning
- Evidence gathering
- Assessing the evidence
- Finalising the investigation
- Making and communication findings
- Taking action

More details on the procedure can be found in the Concerns, Complaints and Disputes Procedure. Advice on the Concerns, Complaints and Disputes Procedure may be obtained through the Head of People and Culture. If the complainant is still not satisfied after the matter has been dealt with by the Principal they may write to the Chair of College Board. All correspondence should be labelled *Private and Confidential, Chair of Tranby College* via the Principal's Executive Assistant.

If the complainant is not satisfied after the matter has been dealt with by the College Board, the complainant can refer the matter to the Moderator of the Uniting Church. A request for review by the

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Moderator is a grave situation and will not be resorted to until all internal review processes have been exhausted.

Counselling services are available to employees through Tranby College's Employee Assistance Program. This service is externally provided and completely confidential for employees.

## 6. CLEAR AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

From the outset of the complaint, the complainant will be informed of the process and who will be the contact person. The complainant will be informed of the progress on a regular basis, and outcome of the investigation of the complaint.

Tranby College will handle each complaint according to the rules of procedural fairness and will ensure that the procedures are accessible, child focussed and culturally appropriate.

Every reasonable effort will be made to resolve internal complaints or grievances before the intervention of outside agencies or mediators.

Staff and volunteers will be trained in the complaints procedure and particularly as it applies to student complaints.

## 7. REPORTING TO EXTERNAL AUTHORITIES

Any complaint which involves allegations of criminal conduct or creates suspicion of criminal conduction will be reported to Police.

Depending on the nature of the incident, allegation or concern relating to risk of harm to a student through abuse or neglect will, if required by law or by our child safe policies and procedures, be reported to the Department of Communities' Child Protection and Community Services Division, the Police and/or other relevant external agencies.

Tranby College will not investigate any concern or complaint that has been reported to the Police or other external agency unless it has permission to do so.

**Note:** If at any time there is a situation involving the Police or a lawyer, the Principal must take responsibility for the actions of the College. The Chair of the College Board will be contacted as soon as possible.

## 8. RECORDKEEPING & COMPLAINTS DATA

All reporting, record keeping, privacy and employment law obligations will be met. Confidentiality will be respected and maintained as far as possible. Tranby College will maintain a Complaints Register; this register will have the capacity to record:

- Date of complaint
- Name of complainant and relationship with the College
- Subject matter of the complaint, including the name of any person complained about there relationship to the College
- Complaint investigator and position or role at the College
- Date investigation completed
- Outcome of investigation
- Resolution agreed with or offered to complainant
- Date of referral for review (for example by the governing body)
- Complaint reviewer and relationship with the College
- Date review finalised; and
- Review resolution agreed with or offered to complainant.

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Tranby College will regularly review evaluate complaints, concerns and safety incidents to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement. The findings of these reviews will be reported back to staff, volunteers, students, families and the College community as appropriate.

## 9. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Concerns, complaints and disputes, and the resolution of these, contribute to continuous learning and improvement so that the potential and opportunity for incidents, miscommunication to be repeated are minimised.

## 10. VEXATIOUS / MALICIOUS DISCLOSURES

Where it is shown that a person has knowingly made a false report of improper conduct, and it is evident that the reporter knows, or should have known the report has no substance, then that conduct itself will be considered a serious matter and that person may be subject to disciplinary action which may include dismissal or legal action.

## 11. THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

The Director General of the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the school observes the registration standards, including the standard about its complaints handling system. Any student, parent, guardian or community member is entitled to contact the Director General with concerns about how the school has dealt with a complaint. Information is available on the Department of Education website. While the Director General may consider whether the school has breached the registration standards, she does not have power to intervene in a complaint or override the school's decision.'

The role of the Director General will be communicated to the College community via newsletter and available policies.

## Related Policy and Procedures

Policy	Child Safe / Student Wellbeing Policy
Policy	Critical Incident and Emergency Management Policy
Policy	EEO and Workplace Discrimination
Policy	Performance Management
Policy	Whistleblower (STOPLine)
Policy	Workplace Harassment and Bullying
Procedure	Concerns Complaints and Disputes – All variants
Procedure	Unsatisfactory Performance
Procedure	Workplace Misconduct
Code of Conduct - All variants	
Tranby College Complaints Register Document	

## Applicable Legislation

Child Abuse Prevention Standard 10.9 & 10.10  
 Child Safe National Principal 6 & 9  
 Education Act (1999)  
 Fair Work Act 2009  
 School Registration Standard 9 – Complaints

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## Responsibilities

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### Staff and Volunteer Responsibility

Each Staff member has the responsibility to:

- Know and implement this policy as required.
- Participate in training on this policy and related procedure.
- Respond to every concern or complaint raised with them seriously and without bias.
- Report and record every concern or complaint raised with them in the appropriate data base.
- Seek guidance from the College Leadership team in resolving more serious or complex issues.
- Report to Principal any concerns related to issues of child safety, wellbeing and abuse and allegations of staff/volunteer misconduct.

### Leader's Responsibility

The Principal and the College Leadership has responsibility to:

- Conduct training on this policy and related procedure for all staff and volunteers.
- Investigate serious complaints.
- Maintain the Complaints Register.
- Regularly review the Complaints Register to identify trends to identify risks and inform improvements across the College.

### College's Responsibility

Tranby College has a responsibility to:

- Make the policy available to members of the College community, staff, parents, guardians and students in an accessible, culturally appropriate and child friendly form.
- Ensure that the policy is fairly and justly applied across Tranby College.
- Respond to the needs of a particular individual as appropriate within the values of Tranby College.
- Regularly review the Complaints Register to identify any complaints that indicate a systemic issue and make improvements as necessary.
- Comply with legislated requirements.
- Regularly review the policy.

## Definitions

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**Complaints Register:** *The record of all complaints reported and registered with the College.*

**Complaint:** *An expression of dissatisfaction made to the College related to one of more of the following:*

- *its services or dealings with individuals*
- *allegations about the conduct of its staff, volunteers or other individuals engaged by the College*
- *another child or young person at the College*
- *the handling of a prior concern or about the complaint management process itself.*

**Complainant:** *The person lodging the complaint or grievance.*

**Grievance:** *Is analogous to a complaint although possible of a more serious nature either due to the nature of the allegation.*

**Mediation:** *Is facilitation to enable parties to reach an outcome that is suitable and agreeable to all parties.*

**Principal:** *The Principal or the Principal's nominee.*

**Respondent:** *Is the person against who the grievance is lodged.*

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## Further Information

Further information concerning any aspect of this policy may be directed to the Principal.

## Policy Sign off & Acceptance

Sign off is required by:

**Board**

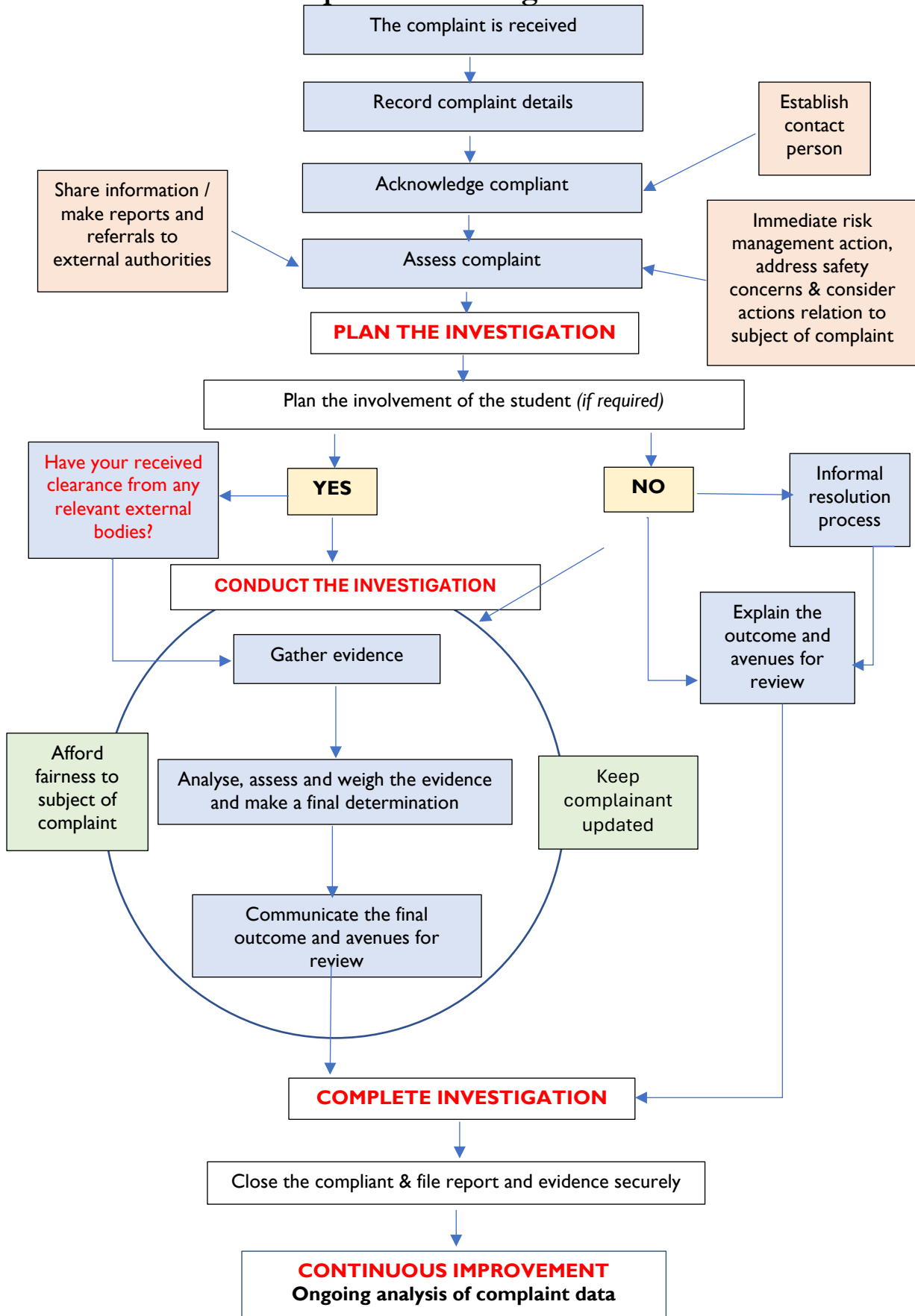
## Revision History *(filled out Board or Principal)*

Version	Approved/ Amended/ Rescinded	Date	Board/ Principal	Approval/ Resolution Number	Key Changes & Notes
-	Approved	June 2021	Board Chair	21.18	-
-		March 2022	Principal	-	Updated job titles
-	Approved	Nov 2024	Board		Revision
-	Approved	June 2025	Board		Revision

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## Appendix A Complaint Handling Flowchart



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## Appendix B

### Student Concerns, Complaints and Disputes Poster

#### Any Problems, Complaints, or Suggestions?

*If so, the College would like to hear!*

Every student in the College has the right to feel speak up about how they feel about something that is affecting them. The right to tell someone if they feel worried, afraid and/or if they do not feel safe. The College will take what you have to say seriously and wants to help.

#### How do I make a complaint?

- By talking about it – or by writing it down if you find that easier.
- You can do it by yourself, with a friend, as part of a group, or through your parents or another adult that you trust and or feel safe with.

#### Who can I talk to?

To anyone on staff, to anyone in the College that you feel safe and comfortable with, or you can talk to a family member that you trust and feel safe with.

#### Does it matter what the issue is?

No, it can be a big problem or a small one. Talking things over can often help to find solutions.

#### What will happen next?

If possible, the staff member will deal with it in person. If not, they will explain who it needs to go to and why. We will ask you how you would like us to keep you updated on what is happening with your concern or complaint and we will support you in managing whatever is troubling you.

#### Do others have to know?

The teacher or the person you talk to will not talk to anyone else about your issue unless they must, for your safety and well-being. If this is the case, we will discuss this with you.

**Even if you find the issue hurtful or embarrassing, we encourage you to talk to us as we want to make sure you feel safe and happy at our College.**

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