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## COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY

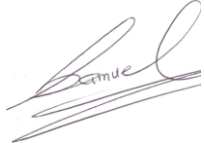
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(Governing Board)**

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### Record of Policy Review:

Date Policy was Issued	Date of Next Review	Reason for Review
09 January 2024	08 January 2026 or as the need arise.	to ensure that the policy document remains up to date
Signature		

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints and grievances process at EDUQUEST COLLEGE so that students, parents 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, grievances and concerns regarding EDUQUEST COLLEGE are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

## **Scope**

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

In some limited instances, we may need to refer a complainant to another policy or area if there are different processes in place to manage the issue.

## **Policy**

EDUQUEST COLLEGE 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 or grievance, it is expected that all parties will:

- be considerate of each other's views and respect each other's role
- be focused on resolution of the complaint, with the interests of the student involved at the centre
- act in good faith and cooperation
- behave with respect and courtesy
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- operate within and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with any applicable legislation and Department policy.

- recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

## **Complaints and Concerns Process for Students**

EDUQUEST COLLEGE acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. EDUQUEST COLLEGE encourages our students to raise issues or concerns as they arise so that we can work together to resolve them.

Students with a concern or complaint can raise them with a trusted adult at school, for example, with a trusted teacher, a Connect teacher, a member of the Student Wellbeing team, an Assistant Principal, or the Principal. This person will take your concern or complaint seriously and will explain to you what steps we can take to try to resolve the issue and support you.

You can also ask your parent, guardian or another trusted adult outside of the school, to talk to us about the issue instead. Information about our parent/guardian complaints and concerns process is outlined further below. The parent/guardian process also applies to students who are mature minors, refer to: Mature Minors and Decision Making.

Other ways you can raise a concern or complaint with us include:

- talking to a member of the student leadership team
- participating in our Attitudes to School Survey
- participating in our student forums

Detailed information and guidance for students on how to raise a concern or complaint at school is available at:

- Resolving complaints at school – A resource for students

## **Complaints and Concerns Process for Parents, Guardians and Community Members**

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

EDUQUEST COLLEGE encourages parents, guardians 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 EDUQUEST COLLEGE (see “Further Information and Resources” section below).

## **Support person**

You are welcome to have a support person to assist you in raising a complaint with our school. Please advise us if you wish to have a support person to assist you, and provide their name, contact details, and their relationship to you.

### **Raising a concern**

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

## **Making a complaint**

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the Assistant Principal, or the 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 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 Principal or Assistant 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:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Assistant Principal/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:** EDUQUEST COLLEGE will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within two school days) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, EDUQUEST COLLEGE 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, EDUQUEST COLLEGE will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Please note that unreasonable conduct (e.g. vexatious complaints) may need to be managed differently to the procedures in this policy.

## **Resolution**

Where appropriate, EDUQUEST COLLEGE 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 and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, EDUQUEST COLLEGE 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 you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved by the school, or if your complaint is about the Principal and you do not want to raise it directly with them, then the complaint should be referred to the nearest Department of Education circuit or Districts office.

EDUQUEST COLLEGE may also refer a complaint to or Circuit or District Offices if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

## **Record keeping and other requirements**

To meet Department and legal requirements, our school must keep written records of:

- Serious, substantial or unusual complaints
- Complaints raised

Our school also follows Department policy to ensure that record-keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints or concerns.

## **Communication**

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website [www.eduquestcollege.co.za](http://www.eduquestcollege.co.za)
- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Annual reference in school newsletter
- Discussed at student forums/through communication tools
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request