



# Hillcrest International Learning Community

## Complaints and Appeals Policy

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A copy of this policy will be provided to the student (or parent(s)/legal guardian if the student is under 18) at a reasonable time prior to a written agreement being signed, and again during orientation or within 7 days of the commencement of student attendance of the enrolled course.

### 1. Purpose

- a) The purpose of Hillcrest Christian College's Complaints and Appeals Policy is to provide a student or parent(s)/legal guardian with the opportunity to access procedures to facilitate the resolution of a dispute or complaint involving Hillcrest Christian College, or an education agent or third party engaged by Hillcrest Christian College to deliver a service on behalf of Hillcrest Christian College.
- b) The internal complaints and appeals processes are conciliatory and non-legal.

### 2. Complaints against other students

- a) Grievances brought by a student against another student will be dealt with under the College's Behaviour and Code of Conduct Policy.

### 3. Informal Complaints Resolution

- a) In the first instance, Hillcrest Christian College requests there is an attempt to informally resolve the issue through mediation/informal resolution of the complaint.
- b) Students should contact the teacher or the Director of International Students in the first instance to attempt mediation/informal resolution of the complaint.
- c) If the matter cannot be resolved through mediation, the matter will be referred to the Executive Head of College and Hillcrest Christian College's internal formal complaints and appeals handling procedure will be followed.
  - i. For academic, subject or procedural concerns in Prep – Year 4 (JLC) contact the Director of International Students, Head of Junior Learning Community; in Years 5-8 (MLC) contact the Director of International Students, Head of Middle Learning Community; in Years 9-12 (SLC) contact the Director of International Students, Head of Senior Learning Community.
  - ii. For personal or social concerns in Prep – Year 4 (JLC) contact the Director of International Students, Deputy Head of Junior Learning Community; in Years 5-8 (MLC) contact the Director of International Students, Deputy Head of Middle Learning Community; in Years 9-12 (SLC) contact the Director of International Students, Deputy Head of Senior Learning Community.

### 4. Formal Internal Complaints Handling and Appeals Process

- a) The process of this grievance procedure is confidential and any complaints or appeals are a matter between the parties concerned and those directly involved in the complaints handling process.
- b) The student must notify the College in writing of the nature and details of the complaint or appeal.
- c) Written complaints or appeals are to be lodged with the Director of International Students.

- d) Where the internal complaints and appeals process is being accessed because the student has received notice by the College that the College intends to report him/her for unsatisfactory course attendance, unsatisfactory course progress or suspension or cancellation of enrolment, the student has 20 working days from the date of receipt of notification in which to lodge a written appeal.
- e) Complaints and appeals processes are available to students at no cost.
- f) Each complainant has the opportunity to present his/her case to the Executive Head of College or Director of International Students.
- g) Students and / or the College may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at all relevant meetings.
- h) The formal internal complaints and appeals process will commence within *10 working days* of the lodgement of the complaint or appeal with the Executive Head of College or the Director of International Students and will be finalised within 10 days or as soon as practicable.
- i) For the duration of the internal complaints and appeals process the student's enrolment will be maintained, as required under the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 and the student must continue to attend classes.

However, if the Executive Head of College deems that the student's health or well-being, or the well-being of others is at risk he/she may decide to suspend or cancel the student's enrolment before the complaints and appeals process has been accessed or fully completed. In such cases, the student may still lodge a complaint or appeal, even if the student is offshore.

- j) Once the Executive Head of College or the Director of International Students has come to a decision regarding the complaint or appeal, the student will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome, and a copy will be retained on the student's file.
- k) If the complaints and appeals procedure finds in favour of the student, Hillcrest Christian College will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventative action required, and advise the student of the outcome.
- l) Where the outcome of a complaint or appeal is not in the student's favour, the College will advise the student within 10 working days of concluding the internal review of the student's right to access the external appeals process.

However, the College is only obliged to await the outcome of an external appeal if the matter relates to a breach of course progress or attendance requirements. For all other issues, the College may take action (including making changes to the student's enrolment status in PRISMS) in accordance with the outcome of the internal appeal.

## 5. External Appeals Processes

- a) If the student is dissatisfied with the conduct or result of the internal complaints and appeals procedure, he/she may contact and / or seek redress through the Overseas Students Ombudsman at no cost.  
Please see: <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students> or phone 1300 362 072 for more information.
- b) If the student wishes to appeal a decision made by Hillcrest Christian College that relates to being reported for a breach of course progress or attendance requirement (under Standard 8), the student must lodge this appeal with the Overseas Student Ombudsman's office within 10 working days of being notified of the outcome of his/her internal appeal.

- c) If the student wishes to appeal a decision made by Hillcrest Christian College that relates to:
  - i) refusal to approve a transfer application (under Standard 7), or
  - ii) suspension or cancellation of the student's enrolment (under Standard 9)any choice to lodge an external appeal with the Overseas Student Ombudsman is at the student's discretion. The College need not await the outcome of any external appeal lodged, before implementing the outcome of the internal appeal.

#### **6. Other legal redress**

- a) Nothing in the College's Complaints and Appeals Policy negates the right of an overseas student to pursue other legal remedies.

#### **7. Definitions**

- a) Working Day – any day other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday during term time
- b) Student – a student enrolled at Hillcrest Christian College or the parent(s)/legal guardian of a student where that student is under 18 years of age
- c) Support person – for example, a friend/teacher/relative not involved in the grievance.

