A GUIDE FOR
PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Working Together With Dignity and Respect

St Francis Xavier College is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment where everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity. We aim to resolve concerns or complaints in a supportive, conciliatory environment.

At St Francis Xavier College, we acknowledge that parents and caregivers can, at times, feel concerned about their child’s education or about something they believe is happening in their child’s school.

We wish to ensure that:
- parents and caregivers may register their complaint with respect for all parties concerned,
- we listen and take complaints seriously,
- we respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way, and
- we take appropriate action with the full knowledge of all parties concerned.

“I am not sure whether to express my concern but there is something bothering me.”

If you have concerns, you are entitled to raise them and we would encourage you to do so as we are here to help.

“What should I do first?”

- Decide whether the problem is a query, a concern or a complaint. Seek clarification. This will help in finding a solution

- Try to identify the issue clearly. If there is more than one, list them to ensure that the extent of the problem is clear.
- Communicate your concerns calmly. Even if you don’t feel it, being calm will help to get your concerns across more clearly than if you are upset or angry.

“How should I register my concern?”

By telephone
Speak to the person most closely concerned with the issue, as he/she may be able to sort things out quickly. However, you may prefer to direct the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example the House Coordinator, the Pastoral Associate, the Director of Learning, or the Deputy Principal.

In writing
As above. Please provide all details including your name, address and contact details.

In person
Contact the College to arrange a mutually convenient time with the appropriate staff member.

“What will happen next?”

If you raise a concern in person or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction. If you have made a concern or complaint in writing we will respond to your concerns as soon as is possible.

In many circumstances, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter further with other staff. You may be invited to a meeting with the appropriate staff member. A letter or report may be sent to you following such a meeting. This will tell you of the outcome of your concern. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

“What happens about confidentiality?”

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect.

It is the College’s policy that complaints made by parents and caregivers should not rebound adversely on their children. Occasionally, it may be necessary to make third parties outside the College aware of the complaint and possibly identify those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child’s safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer the matter to the police. You would be fully informed and involved in such action.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints may not be pursued.

The Principal handles action taken under staff disciplinary procedures in a confidential manner within the College.

“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered. However it is sometimes necessary for the Principal to administer an outcome for the welfare of all parties concerned.
A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

How do I express a concern?

☐ By talking about it – or by writing* it down if you find that easier. You can do it by yourself, or as part of a group, or through your parents/caregivers.

Who do I talk to?

☐ To anyone on staff.

Does it matter what the issue is?

☐ No, it can be a big problem or a small one. By discussing it, you may come up with positive ideas.

What will happen next?

☐ If possible, the staff member will deal with it in person. If not, they will go on your behalf to someone who can help.

Do others have to know?

☐ If you are worried about confidentiality, tell a staff member – he/she will understand.

Even if you find the issue hurtful or embarrassing, don’t worry – it will only be discussed by staff who can help you.

*Anonymous complaints will not be pursued.

A GUIDE FOR STAFF

1. Listen objectively.
2. Acknowledge that the parents/caregivers have a concern.
3. Be familiar with College policy and refer to it as appropriate.
4. Define and separate the needs rather than the wants.
6. Be clear and realistic about agreements and outcomes.
7. Develop a strategic plan, outlining steps that have already been taken.
8. Consider all parties and their issues.
9. Maintain contact with the parents/caregivers.
10. When suitable engage all involved parties to work together to solve the problem as a sound strategy for working through the concerns/complaints. This is a powerful form of internal mediation.
11. Parents should accept the outcome if they are satisfied that a fair process has been followed.