

Grievance Policy and Procedure – Grammar School

1. Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to all students, prospective students and staff of Holmes Grammar School.

2. Purpose

This Policy and Procedure is in place to ensure that Holmes Grammar School has established a fair, objective and accessible dispute resolution principles and procedure to resolve grievances, complaints and appeals effectively and with a spirit of conciliation.

3. Policy Principles

- 3.1 It is the policy of Holmes Grammar School that any grievance lodged by a student will be resolved as swiftly as possible with fairness and equity to all concerned and at no cost to the student.
- 3.2 All student, care provider or agent complaints are to be taken seriously.
- 3.3 The School will take steps to avoid any conflicts of interest. The Head of School shall be the first point of contact for all student complaints. If the complaint is about the Head of School then it should go immediately to the Principal.
- 3.4 If the complaint cannot be settled at the Head of School level, then the matter is referred to the Principal. If the student, care provider or agent is still not satisfied with the complaint outcome, then they can access the School's Appeals process.
- 3.5 Records of the decision-making process of the complaint and the appeals will be maintained in the Student Management System and student eFiles.
- 3.6 The complaints and appeal process is based on the principles of natural justice.
- 3.7 Anonymous complaints and appeals will not be accepted. Each complaint and appeal must address a specific issue, or set of issues, in regard to a specific student.
- 3.8 Complaints and appeals will incur no cost to the student.
- 3.9 Complaints and appeals are handled promptly, fairly and objectively with sensitivity, privacy and in confidence.
- 3.10 Complaints and appeals are handled with an open mind, without prejudice arising from any past history with the student.
- 3.11 The School views complaints and appeals as an opportunity to improve its operations. When a decision results in favour of the student, the student will be informed in writing and the corrective plan will be implemented immediately.

3.12 HGS will take steps to avoid any conflicts of interest. When a grievance or complaint is about a staff member, the grievance or complaint will be investigated by a different staff member. Staff members handling grievances or complaints will report any conflict of interest and recuse themselves from investigations and decisions regarding that grievance or complaint.

3.13 No member of the appeal process will have previously been involved in investigating or adjudicating the previous complaint or making the previous decision.

3.14 Students have a right to escalate an issue to an external dispute resolution service (See Clause 4.12), if all avenues for appeal at HGS are exhausted.

4. Procedure Principles

Lodging a complaint

4.1 In the first instance, the students are encouraged to informally raise the matter with the Head of School/Principal. If the issue raised by the student cannot be solved by an informal process of discussion and resolution, the student can lodge a formal complaint through submitting the completed Grievance Form to the Head of School/Principal.

4.2 Within 10 working days of a complaint being received HGS will commence an internal review. The complaint will be reviewed by the reviewer (Head of School/Principal depending on the nature of the complaint) who will also record details of the complaint in the Complaints and Appeals Register.

4.3 The reviewer will conduct the initial investigation. The student may be invited to provide further information or discuss the matter with the reviewer.

4.4 Generally, a decision will be made and conveyed to the student by the reviewer within 20 working days of the formal complaint being acknowledged. Where resolution takes longer than the 20 working days the student will be informed in writing of the complaint's progress.

4.5 Within 10 days of the matter being resolved all parties will be notified of the resolution and outcomes of the complaint in writing. The correspondence will also outline avenues of appeal in the event the student is dissatisfied with the outcome.

4.6 If the student's complaint is upheld the School will take immediate action to remedy the situation depending on the type of complaint.

4.7 At each stage in the grievance procedure student will be given every opportunity to present his/her case and to be accompanied by a representative of his/her choice.

Lodging an appeal

4.8 If the student is unsatisfied with a decision made by Holmes Grammar School he/she has the right to appeal to the School Council.

4.9 The appeal must be in writing and received within 20 working days of the initial decision being made. This time restriction may be waived at the discretion of the School Council where there are compelling or compassionate circumstances.

4.10 The appeal must set out the grounds of appeal and provide evidence supporting the grounds of appeal or any new information not previously provided in support of the

complaint. It should also specify the outcome sought.

4.9 Within 10 days of receiving a formal appeal the School will commence an assessment of the appeal and record details of the Appeal in the Complaints and Appeals Register.

4.10 Every attempt will be made to resolve the dispute within 20 working days of the notice of the appeal. Where this is not possible due to the nature of the appeal the student will be kept informed as to the progress of the matter.

4.11 Within 10 days of a decision being made on the appeal, the student will be provided with a written statement outlining the outcome of the appeal and giving reasons for the decision. The student will also be advised that they can access external appeals processes for review of the decision should they see fit.

Lodging an external appeal

4.12 If the appeal is still not resolved it may be taken to an appropriate external and independent authority. Provided below is a list of contacts that students may approach for external resolution of complaints and/or appeals regarding their study at Holmes Grammar School. The list is not exhaustive. Before contacting these groups, students should ensure they have exhausted internal avenues within the School. These services are confidential and impartial.

Provider	Service	Contact
Commonwealth Ombudsman (For overseas students)	The Commonwealth Ombudsman receives complaints from intending, current or former overseas students.	http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students Call: 1300 362 072
Resolution Institute (For matters not covered by the Commonwealth Ombudsman and Domestic students)	The Resolution Institute provides dispute resolution service available for matters not within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth Ombudsman. Holmes Institute is a member with the Resolution Institute.	https://www.resolution.institute Call: 02 9251 3366
The Australian Human Rights Commission (For all students)	The AHRC is an independent statutory organisation that investigate and conciliate discrimination and human rights complaints such as discrimination, sexual harassment, victimisation, vilification. The complaint process is free.	https://humanrights.gov.au/complaints#main-content Call: 1300 656 419
The Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC) (For all students)	The ACCC investigates complaints that are in breach of the <i>Competition and Consumer Act 2010</i> .	https://www.accc.gov.au/

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (For all students)	If students think their personal information has been mishandled, they can lodge a complaint with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner for free.	https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-complaints/ Call: 1300 363 992
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4.13 The student's enrolment will remain active throughout the appeals process. That is, the enrolment or COE will not be cancelled while there is an ongoing appeals procedure. However, Holmes Grammar School reserves the right to restrict access to study opportunities should it deem it appropriate. At any time throughout the grievance resolution process the student may have present at any or all discussions a representative of their choosing. Holmes grievance procedures do not circumscribe the student's right to pursue other legal remedies.

Refunds

4.14 Requests by students for refunds of fees paid are to be forwarded to the Principal of the School.

5. Record Management

5.1 Any determination made in relation to a formal complaint or an appeal will be documented in the Complaints and Appeals Register.

5.2 Complaints and Appeals records will be maintained for five years for audit purposes.

Version Control and Accountable Officers

It is the joint responsibility of the Implementation Officer and Responsible Officer to ensure compliance with this policy.

Responsible Officer	School Council		
Implementation Officers	School Principal/Head of School		
Review Date	November 2026		
Approved by			
School Council			
Associated Documents			
Holmes Grammar School Staff Manual Key Documents Development and Review Policy and Procedure Communication Policy and Procedure Student Study Planner			
Version	Brief Description of the Changes	Date Approved	Effective Date
1	New Policy	01/01/2005	01/01/2005

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop Audit – Self Assessment Tool 	08/04/2011	08/04/2011
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop Audit- Self Assessment Tool 	17/04/2015	17/04/2015
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity to reporting process • Statement re confidentiality 	12/08/2021	12/08/2021
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification of timeframes for assessing complaints/appeals • Addition of record management requirement 	November 2023	November 2023