

	<p><b>PARADE COLLEGE</b></p> <p><b>RTO Division</b></p>
<p><b>Complaints and Appeals Procedure</b></p>	

### INTRODUCTORY NOTES

This established and implemented procedure ensures that Parade College maintains an efficient and effective mechanism for handling complaints and appeals. It offers a platform for students and stakeholders to raise any issues related to the nationally recognized training programs offered by the College.

Moreover, the procedure outlines how we will continuously elevate the quality of its services by leveraging feedback from complaints and appeals submitted by its clients and stakeholders.

The essential elements of a complaints handling procedure are to:

- Explain the meaning of ‘complaint and appeal’;
- Ensure confidentiality, fairness and timeliness;
- Explain in detail what a complainant can do – state the different options available;
- Explain what will happen once a formal complaint is made;
- Detail outcomes if complaint is substantiated or unsubstantiated;
- Explain the appeals procedure;
- Detail the names of Compliant Officer/s, and include the right of the complainant or appellant to go outside the College if dissatisfied.

### DEFINITIONS

#### Complaints Process

A process by which a student, parent/guardian, staff member, or other stakeholder may raise a concern about:

- the conduct of the RTO, its trainers, assessors or other staff; a third party/partner organisation providing services on behalf of the RTO, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or a student of the RTO.
- a product or service provided by Parade College.
- Complaints might also encompass reports of mistreatment, abuse, harm and injury to minors (children and young people) involving adults and peers, as well as violations of Child Safe Standards, Child Safety Policy, and the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Where a complaint relates to a third party/partner organisation, the complainant may lodge a complaint with the third party/partner organisation, with Parade College, or both. The process for managing a complaint as detailed below will be followed irrespective of whether Parade College or the third party/partner organisation is managing the complaint.

## Appeals Process

A process by which a student, staff member, parent, guardian or other interested party may dispute a decision made by an RTO or an external entity delivering services on behalf of the RTO. An appeal is generally an escalation of a complaint, where the appellant is dissatisfied with the process or outcome of a complaint.

### PURPOSE OF THIS PROCEDURE

Parade College – RTO Division is committed to providing a safe and pleasant working and learning environment for all students, parents, guardian, staff and visitors. However we acknowledge that sometimes individuals may feel aggrieved about something that is happening at the RTO which appears to be unsatisfactory.

The purpose of this document is to provide a clear procedure by which individuals can have such complaints addressed.

If you feel that you are being harassed or discriminated against, or a product or service of the College's RTO Division or one of its partner organisations is unsatisfactory, this complaints handling procedure is available to you so that your concerns can be addressed.

### KEY ELEMENTS OF THE COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

**Impartiality:** If you make a complaint, it will be investigated in a fair and impartial manner. No judgements or assumptions will be made, and no action taken until the investigation is complete. If a complaint is made against you, your rights will be protected and you will be given an opportunity to tell your side of the story.

**Confidentiality:** You can feel secure that if you do make a complaint under this policy, details of the complaint will remain confidential. The only people who will have access to information about the complaint will be the person making the complaint and the person investigating.

**No Victimisation:** You can also rest assured that if you make a complaint you will not suffer in any way as a consequence. The College authorities will ensure that a person who makes a complaint is not victimised in any way.

**Timeliness:** Each complaint will be finalised within as short a period as possible. All complaints and appeals should be finalised within one month. If for any reason the management of a complaint or an appeal takes longer than 60 days, the complainant/appellant will be informed of the reasons for the delay and will be provided with regular updates on the progress of the matter in writing.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT

#### 1. Approach the person involved.

In many situations, the most appropriate thing to do in the first instance is to tell the person who is the cause of the complaint how you feel. If the complaint is about their behaviour, tell them that is offensive/hurtful/not acceptable. If it is about a product or service tell them the reason for your dissatisfaction. If it is about an assessment decision tell them the reasons for your dissatisfaction. Telling the person will give them an opportunity to stop what they are doing; improve the product or service; or review the assessment decision.

## **2. Go to a member of the Leadership Team**

If you don't feel that you can approach the person directly, then go and explain your concern to your Teacher, the Executive Officer RTO, or a Complaints Officer (the names of Complaints Officers are listed at the end of this procedure). These people have been trained to be the first point of contact for people with complaints. This person will advise you of your options and what will happen if you decide to make a formal complaint. Nothing will be done in relation to your complaint without your agreement.

## **3. What happens next?**

If you decide to proceed to a formal complaint, you will need to put your complaint in writing and submit this to the Executive Officer RTO or a Complaints Officer. Receipt of your written complaint will be acknowledged in writing, and your complaint will be investigated by the Executive Officer RTO or Complaints Officer.

The investigation process will generally include an interview with you. During this interview a number of things will be explained to you, such as what will happen if the complaint is found to be supported by evidence or not found to be supported by evidence. During the interview you should provide details of the complaint and tell the Executive Officer RTO or Complaints Officer what action you would like to be taken, for example an apology from the person, a written warning etc.

The Executive Officer RTO or Complaints Officer will then talk to the person about whom the complaint is being made to hear their side of the story. Any witnesses will also be interviewed. These interviews will be conducted separately and impartially. The importance of confidentiality will be stressed to all parties and they will be warned of the consequences if there is a breach of confidentiality. Any relevant documentation will also be considered.

Based on the outcome of the investigation you will receive written correspondence from the Executive Officer RTO or Complaints Officer, within one month of lodging the written complaint, as to whether your complaint has or has not been substantiated. If the complaint is substantiated, strategies to resolve the complaint will be included. If the complaint is not substantiated, reasons for this decision will be included. You will also be told where you can go for assistance if you are not happy with the complaint process or outcome.

Children and young people may seek support from an adult (family/guardian/a school staff member) to raise a complaint, if needed. Parade College administrative staff will assist children, young people, people with disability and people from diverse backgrounds if they require assistance with lodging a formal complaint. The complainant (including children and young people) will be supported by Parade College personnel and/or external personnel during the complaint resolution process. Parents/guardians/support personnel can accompany children and young students and actively engage in the complaint resolution process (if the complainant is a child/young person).

Parade College will promptly respond to any concerns or complaints of child harm or abuse in accordance with the Commission for Children and Young People. Children and young people will be protected from the person/s against whom they are making the complaint by directly supervision of the impacted children/young people, avoiding any possible interactions between both parties and/or allowing a support person to accompany students if their training and assessment continues at Parade College when the investigation is underway.

Children, young people and their families/guardians will be encouraged to seek required emotional and mental support from relevant practitioners, where appropriate (at their own expense and initiative - for external services). Parade College will report complaints about child abuse and harm to the authorities and cooperate as necessary with law enforcement.

### **APPEALS**

If you believe the complaints process has not been followed or that the outcome is unacceptable to you, you may appeal in writing to the Principal, Parade College.

The Principal will consider the way in which the complaint was investigated and managed, and examine the outcome. If the Principal believes the complaint process was properly followed and that the outcome was appropriate, the Principal will take no further action. If the Principal believes the complaint process was not properly followed, or that the outcome was inappropriate, the Principal will organise for the complaint to be reviewed. In this instance the appeal will be dealt with by someone other than the person who first managed the complaint.

Based on the outcomes of the review, you will receive written correspondence from the Principal, within one month of lodging the appeal, as to whether your appeal has or has not been substantiated. If the appeal is substantiated, strategies to resolve the matter will be included. If the appeal is not substantiated, reasons for this decision will be included. You will also be told where you can go for assistance if you are not happy with the appeal process or outcome.

### **APPEAL AGAINST ASSESSMENT RESULT**

Any student dissatisfied with the mark awarded or the outcome of an assessment task, or the final result for a unit/module because they feel the mark or result is unfair or incorrect, may submit a request to the Executive Officer RTO for review.

In the first instance, such review will be undertaken by the original assessor. If the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome then he/she may lodge a formal appeal. The appeal must be in writing, explaining reasons for the appeal and submitted to the Executive Officer RTO within 10 working days of the student being notified of the review outcome. Where reasonable grounds for appeal exist, the Executive Officer RTO will arrange for an external review to be undertaken. Any costs associated with the external review will be borne by Parade College. Also, there is no cost involved for internal complaints resolutions.

### **GOING TO AN EXTERNAL AGENCY – For Independent Mediation and Consultation**

After exhausting the College's internal complaints and appeals procedure, the complainant/appellant may wish to lodge a complaint or appeal with an external agency. You may take your complaint or appeal to an external agency at any stage of the Complaints and Appeals process if you are unhappy with the management, progress or outcome of your complaint or appeal. Such external agencies include but are not limited to:

- In the Melbourne Archdiocese – the coordinating Chairperson, Pastoral Care Unit, Catholic Education office.
- For Edmund Rice Schools – contact Edmund Rice Education Australia
- The National Training Complaints Hotline – Telephone 13 38 73 (Monday – Friday, 8.00 am – 6.00 pm) or via email to [skilling@education.gov.au](mailto:skilling@education.gov.au)
- Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria, a free mediation service, which may be accessed via telephone Toll Free 1800 658 528 or email [dscv@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:dscv@justice.vic.gov.au)
- Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Organisations and Community Elders
- Commission for Children and Young People – for information and advocacy services

Where a complainant/appellant seeks the assistance of an external agency the complainant/appellant will meet the financial costs of such services.

When engaging with relevant authorities as part of complaints resolution involving children and young adults, consent must be sought from parents/guardians/relevant stakeholders before sharing information and student's personal information.

### **RECORD MANAGEMENT**

All documentation related to a complaint or appeal will be kept in an individual file and stored in a secure area. Documentation related to a complaint or appeal must be stored in such a way that relevant parties cannot be identified or cannot be used for purposes other than which such documentation was intended. All complaints and appeals will be logged on a Complaints and Appeals Register.

Any notes pertaining to complaints about child abuse and harm should be labeled as 'Strictly Confidential' and securely stored in a restricted location. All official communications with the individual filing the complaint or appeal will also be preserved within the same secure space.

Maintain concise notes, capturing only factual and pertinent details provided by the involved parties. Additionally, record dates and times of interactions.

All complaints and appeals, along with the nature and outcomes of each, will be documented in our Complaints & Appeals Register.

Actions resulting from entries in the Complaints & Appeals Register will drive the ongoing enhancement of Parade College's systems and operations. If unsure of recordkeeping, reporting and information sharing requirements, Parade College staff must contact the Commission for Children and Young People – for information and advocacy services.

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Where improvements are to be made as a result of a Complaint or Appeal process, these will be assigned to the relevant staff member/s, recorded on the Continuous Improvement Register and relevant staff/students informed. Parade College will identify potential causes of complaints and appeals and take appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.

**PARADE COLLEGE COMPLAINTS OFFICERS**

- Mr. Andrew Kuppe– EREA CEO/Director of Victorian Schools
- Mr. Mark Aiello – Principal
- Ms. Mary Dourios – Deputy Principal
- Mr. Michael Torpey – Assistant Principal
- Mr. Geoff Caulfield – Assistant Principal
- Mr. Anthony McKay – Executive Officer RTO