Rationale:
The Lakes South Morang College has both a desire and a responsibility to ensure that high standards of communication and conduct are maintained by staff and students at all times, and that parent / guardian concerns or complaints are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with DET guidelines. The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process so that 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 are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

Aims:
The Lakes South Morang College works from a Values system and aims to address our values, Leadership, Respect, Learning and Teamwork when handling parent concerns and complaints. The Lakes approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on our intention;

- To provide a safe and supportive learning environment
- To build positive and genuine relationships between students, parents and staff
- To provide a safe working environment for all staff
- To resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with DET guidelines.

Implementation:
The Lakes South Morang 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, 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
- cooperate 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.
Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

The Lakes South Morang College encourages parents, carers 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

Complaints process

The Lakes South Morang College is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Student concerns in the first instance should be directed to your child’s Home Group Teacher. Should the concern not directly relate to your child, you may wish to make an appointment with a Senior Leader via the front office. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately directed and addressed.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to a member of the Principal Team. 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 relevant staff member, to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are. If you are uncertain about the person you need to contact, the office staff will direct you to the most appropriate staff member. 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 staff member 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 relevant staff member 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, a member of the Principal team may determine that a resolution meeting would not appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.

4. **Timelines:** The Lakes South Morang 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, we 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, The Lakes South Morang College will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.
Resolution

Where appropriate, The Lakes South Morang 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, we 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 North Western Regional Office. The Lakes South Morang College may also refer a complaint to relevant leaders within the North Western Region if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

For more information about the Department’s Parent Complaints policy, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: Parent complaints policy.

Evaluation

The Lakes South Morang College will monitor parent concerns and complaints and consider issues raised throughout this process. Relevant information will be collected and reviewed against the Parent Opinion Survey to support the ongoing development of school policies and procedures. The Lakes will review issues and identify any common or recurring issues that may need addressing, assess the effectiveness of these and other procedures and whether they are being followed or use information provided through the parent opinion survey.

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle

This policy has been endorsed by School Council on 13/08/19.

The Lakes South Morang College Child Safety Statement:

To thrive, children need a safe and supportive environment at school, at home and in the broader community; no exceptions. At The Lakes South Morang College, we believe meeting the physical and emotional needs of our students is paramount in laying the foundations for a fulfilling future. We pledge to provide an environment that has zero tolerance to child abuse and will strive to work in partnership with our parents and community members to keep our students safe every day, in every way.
Personal Details

Title: _______ First Name: _____________________ Family Name: ______________________

Street address: __________________________________________________________________

Telephone: B/H_______________________ A/H ________________________

Email address: _________________________________________________________

Student Details

First Name: ________________  Family Name: _________________________Year Level: ______

Who have you contacted about your complaint?

Class teacher  [ ]  Student Manager  [ ]  Leading Teacher  [ ]

Assistant Principal  [ ]  Principal  [ ]

Complaint Details:
Please provide the following – a description of the incident or problem/ relevant dates, places and times/ details of any phone conversations or meetings/ any explanations that you think are important. Add extra sheets if required and attach copies of relevant documents (if appropriate)

How do you think this issue could be resolved?

Complainant’s Signature & Date

Please place in an envelope addressed to either the Assistant Principal or Principal and hand to the office staff on either campus. Thank you
Parent Concerns or Complaints Process

Phone, visit or write to make an appointment

Student’s Home Group Teacher - for minor incidents and/or classroom issues

Student Manager - for wider year level issues involving other students and/or programs

Leading Teacher for sub school issues such as ongoing or serious issues between students

Resolved to this point, complete Complaint Lodgement Form

Student Wellbeing /Welfare Coordinator - for individual student welfare concerns

Assistant Principal – for issues related to staff members or complex student issues

Principal – for all issues previously unresolved relating to school policy, school management, staff members or complex student issues.