

COMPLAINTS POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the Principal, Stewart Milner.

CONTEXT

The Centre for Higher Education Studies (CHES) is a co-educational, specific purpose, senior secondary school where high-achieving and high-ability (HA) students can extend their learning. CHES offers face to face learning at a state-of-the-art facility in South Yarra and hosts a high-quality virtual platform to enable students to access programs at CHES regardless of where they are located.

Students engage with CHES programs in the following ways:

- direct enrolment of students into select VCE subjects onsite and virtually, including access to Student Enrichment Programs - providing mentoring, workshops, and seminars
- direct enrolment of Higher Education Studies (HES) delivered by partner Universities, including access to Student Enrichment Programs - providing mentoring, workshops, and seminars.

Students participating in CHES programs remain enrolled at their chosen secondary school (base school) and are supported to undertake a course at CHES as part of their VCE program. Working in close partnership with students' base schools, students will be enrolled in a CHES course for a fraction of their timetable (generally 20 per cent), with the remainder of their enrolment and timetable reflecting the subjects being completed at their base school.

CHES shares a joint responsibility with students' base schools to ensure students' social and emotional wellbeing, and also partners with Universities and base schools to ensure students' academic needs are met.

Individual student study arrangements are considered and agreed between the student, parent/carer, base school, and CHES upon enrolment and induction. To formalise individual student study arrangements CHES develop an Individualised Achievement Plan (IAP) which will include:

- study arrangements (CHES program and delivery mode - face to face, virtual, or combination)
- timetable requirements
- travel arrangements (if applicable)
- agreed communication methods between base-school and CHES (who, what, when and how)
- agreed communication methods between partner Universities and CHES (who, what, when and how)

- reasonable adjustments (if required)
- student health care needs including asthma management, administration of medication and individual anaphylaxis management.

All CHES policies are designed to reflect its unique operating environment (physical and virtual), its program offerings, its partnerships with Universities and shared responsibility with students' base schools to ensure students' social and emotional wellbeing and academic needs are met.

CHES has a network of foundation schools and allows the member schools to deliver their own VCE classes within the CHES facility where not fully utilised for CHES programs. This policy does not consider CHES foundation school arrangements.

The Centre for Higher Education Studies (CHES) has a Complaints policy to ensure that a safe and secure learning and teaching environment is provided for all students and staff.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at CHES so that parents and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at CHES
- ensure that all complaints regarding CHES are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

SCOPE

This policy relates to complaints brought by parents, carers, students or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to CHES. In some limited instances, we may need to refer the complainant to another Department of Education and Training process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions, for example, expulsion appeals. This policy includes complaints that arise in relation to all programs offered through CHES, including Higher Education Studies.

POLICY

CHES welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We actively seek feedback from students and parents/carers, including annual Parent Opinion Surveys and Student Attitudes to School surveys. 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 community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and CHES.

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.

- operate 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

CHES 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 and CHES (see “Further Information and Resources” section below).

Support person

You are welcome to have a support person to assist at any time in raising a complaint with our school. Please advise us if you wish to have a support person to represent you, and provide their name, contact details, and their relationship to you. To ensure families are able to engage positively and fully with CHES, we can arrange for translation services to be made available to families where needed or requested.

Complaints process

CHES is always happy to discuss with students, parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. In our University Partnership Agreements, there is a commitment by CHES and universities to working closely together in addressing and resolving complaints and concerns that arise from students or parents/carers. In the first instance, concerns should be directed to the relevant teacher, university staff member, or the Learning Specialist overseeing CHES programs, including Higher Education Studies (HES) programs. Where possible, CHES staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed. CHES works closely with base schools through the School Supervisors to resolve complaints that arise at the base schools.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the Principal.

If you would like to make a formal complaint, in most cases, depending on the nature of the complaint raised, CHES 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 office with the Principal, to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are. 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 Principal or nominee may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others (including university partners and base school supervisors, as appropriate) to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.

3. **Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Principal 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, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
4. **Timelines:** CHES 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 and the number of stakeholders involved, CHES 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, CHES will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Please note that vexatious, querulous, frivolous or malicious complaints may need a customised strategy which does not adhere to this policy.

Resolution

Where appropriate, CHES 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 CHES values that are intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, CHES 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 CHES, 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 South Eastern Victoria Region (SEVR) office of the Department of Education and Training by contacting 1300 338 738 or sevr@education.vic.gov.au

CHES may also refer a complaint to the South Eastern Victoria Region (SEVR) office if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

For more information about the Department's parent complaints process, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Raise a complaint or concern about your school](#) .

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- available publicly on school website
- included in staff induction processes
- included in induction and training for base school supervisors

- provided to external providers, including university partners
- provided to schools that are accessing CHES facilities, including the foundation network of neighbouring partner schools
- made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Department policies and guidelines:

- [Complaints - Parents](#)

The Department's parents website:

- [Raise a complaint or concern about your school](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this policy:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	January 2022
Approved by	Principal, Stewart Milner
Next scheduled review date	February 2024 - to ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 3-4 years thereafter.