1 RATIONALE

The Islamic College of Melbourne is committed to maintaining a professional, respectful and safe environment for staff, students and the wider College community.

The College acknowledges that complaints and grievances must be managed fairly, promptly, and in accordance with procedural fairness. Where grievances involve child safety, the College will respond in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359 (2022) and the College's child safety reporting policies.

2 PURPOSE

This policy aims to:

- Provide a fair process for addressing staff grievances
- Ensure grievances are investigated and resolved appropriately
- Support staff wellbeing and workplace professionalism
- Ensure child safety complaints are escalated appropriately

3 STATEMENT OF CONTEXT

The College is committed to providing employees with a safe and healthy environment. The College acknowledges that there may be occasions where an individual has a concern about the behavior of others or the decisions of others. An employee may have a grievance in relation to a conflict or disagreement which affects their employment and welfare.

The College is committed to the equitable and timely resolution of employee grievances. Investigations will be conducted with due care and professionalism. Confidentiality and impartiality will be maintained.

The College supports a grievance procedure whereby grievances can be lodged and investigated in a proper and timely manner. This procedure comprises:

- where appropriate, raising specific concerns with the person involved in the first instance;
- if unsuccessful (or not appropriate), the employee should approach the designated Contact Officer and lodge a formal complaint; and
- in instances where the complaint cannot be resolved internally, it may be referred to an external mediator.

All complaints will be considered and, where appropriate, investigated promptly and with the utmost confidentiality.

This policy is designed to ensure grievances are resolved in a courteous and respectful manner where there is no victimisation.

4 SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All employees of the Islamic College of Melbourne
- Contractors and volunteers (where relevant)

5 REFERENCE POINTS / BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Employee Code of Conduct
- Bullying and Violence Policy

6 DEFINITIONS

Contact Officer means the Human Resources Manager.

Where a grievance concerns the Contact Officer (Human Resources Manager) or the principal, the complaint must be escalated to the Board Chair or an appointed independent external investigator to ensure procedural fairness and governance of integrity.

Grievance can be any type of problem, concern, dispute, or complaint relating to any aspect of an individual's employment which cannot be resolved through day-to-day communication.

7 LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This policy supports compliance with:

- Ministerial Order 1359 (2022)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)

8 CHILD SAFETY OVERRIDE CLAUSE

Where a grievance relates to:

- suspected child abuse
- grooming behaviour

- reportable conduct
- misconduct involving students
- serious neglect
- child safety risk concerns

The matter must be managed under the College's:

- Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure
- Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse Procedure
- Reportable Conduct Policy
- Crimes Act Policy

These matters must be escalated immediately and must not be managed solely under standard grievance processes.

9 GRIEVANCE HANDLING

All grievances need to be handled with transparency and in a timely manner. The following principles must be adhered to when handling a grievance:

- confidentiality;
- impartiality;
- promptness; and
- sensitivity.

10 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE AND INVESTIGATION

The procedure set out below is only intended as a general guide. The actual grievance handling and investigation procedure adopted in each particular case will be at the discretion of the College.

The College may handle grievances and investigations in the following manner:

Self-Resolution
Where appropriate, employees are encouraged to raise the issues or behaviours with the other person concerned and resolve the issues directly. This may not be appropriate in cases where issues are serious, for example where the conduct, if proven, could warrant disciplinary action being taken.

Informal Complaint
In circumstances where the issue cannot be resolved directly between the parties (or this is not appropriate), employees may approach their designated Contact Officer and may make an informal complaint by raising and discussing their concerns.

The Contact Officer will consider the complaint and, if appropriate, will work with the employees involved to remedy the situation and take steps to prevent similar issues from arising in the future. Every complaint will be taken seriously and will be handled in a confidential manner and without bias.

Formal Complaint
If the issue is not resolved after holding informal discussions with their designated Contact Officer, the employee may choose or be encouraged to lodge a formal, written complaint.

Employees who wish to make a formal complaint will need to document their complaint in writing and where possible state:

- the name of the person against whom the complaint is made;
- the nature of the behaviour complained about;
- date(s) and time(s) when the behaviour complained of occurred;
- names of witnesses to any incidence of the behaviour complained of; and
- any action taken by the employee to stop the behaviour complained about.

Any investigation will be conducted in relation to a formal complaint. An external investigator may be appointed at the College's discretion. Where an investigation is commenced:

- the investigation will be handled impartially, confidentially and efficiently;
- the person against whom the complaint has been made will be provided with details of the allegations and will be given an opportunity to respond; and
- relevant witnesses may be interviewed where necessary and any statements taken will be securely kept to ensure confidentiality.

Where a grievance involves potential criminal conduct or child safety concerns, any internal investigation will be conducted subject to advice from Victoria Police and/or DFFH Child Protection to ensure compliance with legal reporting obligations.

At the conclusion of an investigation, the investigator will prepare a report detailing the steps taken in the investigation process, the issues identified and a conclusion as to whether the grievance has been substantiated. Nothing in this policy and procedure will require the College in any particular instance to provide a person against whom a complaint has been made with a copy of any written complaint or statement of any witness.

If the grievance has not been substantiated, an appropriate manager will meet separately with the employee who made the complaint and the person the complaint was made against and inform them why the grievance has not been substantiated.

If a grievance has been substantiated an appropriate manager will meet separately with the employee who made the complaint and the person the complaint was made against. In these meetings the investigator will:

- inform the employees of the findings of the investigation;
- explain the next steps; and
- give the employees an opportunity to respond to the findings.

After this procedure has been followed the College will determine the appropriate action to be taken and inform the parties involved. Possible outcomes include, but are not limited to:

- a requirement to make an apology;
- changed working arrangements;
- an agreement that certain behaviour will not occur; or
- disciplinary action.

11 ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

Anonymous complaints will be assessed. Where child safety concerns are raised, the College will take appropriate action where sufficient information exists.

12 PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

All investigations will ensure:

- impartiality
- confidentiality
- right of response
- evidence-based decision making

13 NATURAL JUSTICE

All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with natural justice principles.

A complainant generally has rights:

- to withdraw a grievance at any stage;
- to a support person;
- to external advice;
- to respond to what has been said by the person the complaint has been made against;
- not to be victimised;

- to confidentiality.

The person the complaint has been made about generally has rights:

- to a support person;
- to external advice;
- to be advised of the complaint against them;
- to have an opportunity to respond;
- not to be victimised;
- to confidentiality.

14 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- **AT BOARD / PRINCIPAL LEVEL**

  To properly implement this policy, the College, the Board and/or the Principal must ensure:

  - that this policy is endorsed on an three year basis;
  - that copies of this policy are made available to employees, for example on the College intranet, in physical form in the staff room and on employee bulletin notice boards;
  - that this policy is incorporated into the Board's / Principal's record of current policies;
  - that this policy is incorporated into the College's induction program, to ensure that all employees are aware of the Policy, have read and understood the policy, and acknowledge their commitment to comply with the policy;
  - that periodic training and refresher sessions are administered to all employees in relation to this policy;
  - that mechanisms necessary to establish the complaints and grievance process are put in place. This will involve:
    - appointing one or a number of existing employees as Contact Officers;
    - training and educating all individuals involved in handling formal complaints and conducting proper investigations so as to ensure that they understand the steps that must be taken to resolve claims; or
    - generating formal complaints forms for employees to complete, listing all relevant information required to conduct an appropriate investigation.

- **AT OTHER LEVELS**

  To properly implement this policy, all the College's employees, contractors and other authorised personnel must ensure that they will abide by this policy and assist the College in the implementation of this Policy.

15 DOCUMENTATION

All grievances must be documented and retained securely.

Where child safety concerns arise, records must be stored in the College's restricted child safety record system.

16 DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

Approval Date	22 November 2026
Approved By	Board Chair
Supersedes	23 November 2025
Date of Last Review	23 November 2025
Date for Next Review	November 2028, after any significant child safety incident or a change in legislation