



Complaints and Grievances Guidelines

Rationale

A commitment to respond positively to critical feedback ensures that people have the opportunity to contribute to the continued improvement of the schools in the system. Complaints need to be addressed responsively, openly and in a timely manner to increase levels of satisfaction and to maintain harmonious relations in the wider community. Staff should be encouraged to develop an open expectation of a cooperative and genuine effort to resolve any valid complaint.

Aim

This policy describes the process for effectively managing complaints whilst protecting the right of all parties involved and seeking solution to the problem in the best interests of all affected.

Implementation and Procedure

Most complaints can be quickly resolved by talking to the teacher or member of staff concerned. To do this you can contact the school to arrange a time to meet with the person concerned and discuss the problem.

If you cannot resolve the matter directly with the person concerned, you should take it up with the Principal. Again, you can do this by contacting the school and arranging an appointment. It would be helpful if you could put your concerns in writing and let the Principal see them before you meet so that he/she is able to look into the matter and inform you of the situation at the meeting.

It is expected that all staff will demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that a culture of consultation and open dialogue is nurtured at every level, giving every member of the school community the opportunity to express dissatisfaction as well as satisfaction.

In a very small number of cases, the matter may not be resolved after a discussion with the Principal. When this happens, the complaint should be directed to the Catholic Education Office (depending on the nature of the complaint).

While parent complaints are to be dealt with at school level initially, in situations where no resolution is achieved, or where the concern is in regard to systemic policy or practice, a complaint can be made in writing to the Director of the Catholic Education Office.

Normally, all complaints should be handled by CE personnel with no links to the issue of concern, using a fair, unbiased manner to facilitate transparency and objective assessment of the situation under consideration.

The person making the complaint has a right to:

- be heard
- have the issue treated seriously

- information about the process
- be accompanied by a support person at appointments to resolve grievances
- be informed about the decision and the reasons for the decision.

The person against whom the complaint is made has a right to:

- the identity of the person making the complaint
- have time and opportunity to prepare a response
- respond and have their response treated seriously
- information about the process
- be accompanied by a support person at appointments to resolve grievances
- be informed about the decision and the reasons for the decision.

The Principal, or delegate, will act where unacceptable conduct is observed or brought to his or her attention. Formal processes will be used when informal processes haven't been successful, a complainant seeks a formal process, or the Principal believes the complaint warrants formal investigation.

The school Principal will document all discussions and keep all written complaints for record-keeping and documentation purposes. Complaints will be kept in strict confidence. The Principal exercises judgement about the response to anonymous complaints. The Principal will provide community members with appropriate contact names and numbers for Catholic Education Office staff if grievances are not resolved.

Complaints which may involve reportable allegations (Child Protection complaints) must be resolved in accordance with Child Protection – ACT/NSW Policies.

Related School Policies:

Child Protection Policy
Mandatory Reporting Policy

Related CE Policies:

Child Protection (ACT) – Responding to Complaints against Employees
Complaints
Grievance and Dispute Handling
Legal Responsibilities and Authority

Approved by: St Michael's School Executive

Date: 2016

Revision Date: 2018