



TOGETHER AS ONE IN TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS, GRIEVANCE AND DISPUTE HANDLING POLICY

PURPOSE

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

POLICY

St Mary's Primary School is a school in which we strive to be witness to the Gospel values of truth and justice in our relationships with each other and with our community.

It is with these values in mind and a genuine desire for open communication that we encourage all members of our community to respond positively to critical feedback ensuring that all have the opportunity to contribute to the continued improvement of the school.

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 community the opportunity to express dissatisfaction as well as satisfaction.

Complaints need to be addressed responsively, openly and in a timely manner to the satisfaction of all involved and to maintain harmonious relations in the wider community. All are encouraged to develop an open expectation of a cooperative and genuine effort to resolve any valid complaint.

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PROCEDURES

Many complaints can be resolved informally at school level with no need to follow a prescribed process. However, in situations which are more complex, the following processes should be followed:

- The first point of contact for matters related to class matters should be the child's teacher. Parents are asked to contact the teacher to arrange a mutually convenient time for an interview.
- Procedures to be followed for an interview with the person designated as the first point of contact for addressing particular complaints (this is usually the Principal, Assistant Principal or a teacher);
- Catholic Education Office – Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn – Policies and Procedures Manual Complaints procedures are to be followed if a formal complaint is directed against a teacher. (In this situation parents should be encouraged to first bring the complaint to the teacher concerned as open discussion often removes the need for a formal complaint);
- If a resolution cannot be reached through an interview, complaints must be put in writing.
- Normally, all complaints should be handled by 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 about whom a complaint is made must be given opportunity to respond to the complaint.
- Staff dealing with a complaint must protect the confidentiality and privacy of those involved by ensuring relevant information is accessible only to those with a genuine need to know.
- Complainants should be confident that there will be no discriminatory action taken against them as a result of a complaint being lodged.
- Complaints should be monitored to track the nature, frequency and resolution details for future reference. Written complaints are to be acknowledged promptly in writing.

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- Complaints which may involve reportable allegations (Child Protection complaints) must be resolved in accordance with Child Protection – NSW Policies.
- Where no satisfactory outcome is achieved and the matter needs to be taken for further deliberation, either to the School Board or to the CEO, depending on the nature of the complaint, accurate record-keeping and documentation of the process, procedures followed and resolution are essential.

REFERRAL TO CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE

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.

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COMPLAINT FORM

Person lodging the complaint: _____ Date: _____

Details of complaint: _____

Witness(es): _____

Signed: _____

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POLICY REVIEW

POLICY DATES			
<i>Latest Review</i>	2019	<i>Reviewed by</i>	SARAH LOWE
<i>Next Review Due</i>	The policy will be reviewed again in 2020 unless changes are required prior to that date.		
POLICY AUTHORISATION			
<i>Principal</i>	Mrs. Sarah Lowe	<i>Signature</i>	

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