

SACRED HEART PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Policy Number:

Version Number: 3

Approval by: Education Board

Responsible Officers: Education Board

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1. PURPOSE

Sacred Heart Parish Primary School is committed to providing a happy, safe environment. Nevertheless, we recognise the rights of students, employees or parents to register a complaint or grievance about any decision, behaviour, act or omission that they feel is unfair, discriminatory or unjustified. Please note that there is a separate policy to deal with staff grievances.

This policy explains what to do when discussions about an issue or series of issues does not provide resolution. It can also be used for occasions when it is not possible to take up the issue directly with the other party involved. Complaints may be verbal or in writing. It is preferable that complaints requiring further investigation be in writing. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted. Please provide the following information in your complaint submission to the School:

Your Name and Contact Details
Outline / details of your concern
Outcome desired

Complaints will be addressed in a timely and confidential manner.

2. EXCLUSIONS

This complaints procedure does not include

- Child protection issues
- Enrolment
- Employment Relations / Industrial Relations
- Reportable conduct (Policy)

The Principal or Catholic Education Office can advise you about specific procedures for complaints of these types.

3. PRINCIPLES THAT GOVERN THIS POLICY

The principles of procedural fairness will be followed in all aspects of complaint handling. These include:

- giving you the opportunity to put your case forward
- offering reasonable assistance to you to know the complaint handling procedures
- informing the details of both the complaint investigation process and the outcomes to the person about whom the complaint has been made

- handling the complaint process confidentially
- determining complaints as quickly as possible and advising you and the respondent of the outcome of the investigation
- assessing the facts and circumstances of the situation
- determining the complaint fairly and objectively
- providing you with details of the determination and reasons
- informing you and the respondent of any avenue for review

4. PROCEDURES

If you have a problem or concern which you wish to raise you should first talk to the person with whom you have the issue. If you feel that you cannot approach the person directly or you are not happy with their response or the complaint is very serious, you should approach the Principal.

Any complaint received by a school that relates to the Principal may be referred to the Parish Priest or Catholic Education Office.

- Try to identify the problem clearly before contacting the school. If there is more than one problem, list them to ensure that the extent of the problem is clear to the school.
- Decide whether the problem is a concern, enquiry or complaint. This will help in finding a solution.
- Try to stay calm when discussing your concern. Even if you don't feel it, being calm will help you get your concerns across more clearly than if you are upset or angry. It may help to take someone with you.
- Remember, the staff are committed to resolving any issues that parents might have regarding their children and will discuss with you actions that might be taken in regard to your concern.
- If you still do not feel that the matter has been resolved or if your complaint is about a very serious matter, send your complaint in writing to the Principal.
- If necessary, the Principal may appoint a third party to investigate the issue.
- If after your complaint has been dealt with by the Principal, and you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you should send your complaint in writing to the Parish Priest.
- If the matter has still not been resolved, notify the Manager of the Catholic Education Office (Eastern Office), stating your concerns in writing. If no resolution has been achieved, the Manager will arbitrate after thorough examination of the grievance and related issues.

On completion of the investigation the outcomes will be made known to the complainant and their representative at a meeting chaired by the Principal. Should the matter not be resolved satisfactorily then the matter may be referred to the Catholic Education Office.

If matters still remain unresolved you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation and other government commissions such as Human Rights Commission etc. These might entail some financial cost to you.

5. WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES?

A complaint may be resolved in a variety of ways, depending on whether the complaint is substantiated. The complaint is said to be substantiated if the person investigating it believes that the complaint most likely occurred. When the complaint is supportable, satisfactory resolution by empowerment, mediation or conciliation is sought, which may include:

- conciliation and agreement between the parties
- a verbal or written apology
- the review of a policy or procedure
- referral to an external agency
- disciplinary action

When the complaint is unsupported, the complainant is advised accordingly.

6. RIGHT OF REVIEW

When you have concerns about the complaints process or believe the outcome unfair, or your concerns have not been addressed by the school, or the complaint is about the school Principal you may ask the Parish Priest or the Catholic Education Office to review the matter.

7. RECORD KEEPING

Records of complaints, interviews and other documentation relating to a complaint will be kept at the school in a restricted access complaints file.

8. ACT RESPECTFULLY

Arrange a time with the relevant party to discuss the concern. Please DO NOT enter school class rooms or offices about a complaint without prior arrangement. The dignity of each person involved is recognized in the process. All parties should act respectfully and maintain confidentiality on all matters. This includes the manner to which one communicates their grievances.