



CHRIST THE KING PRIMARY SCHOOL COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION POLICY

Rationale:

- Our school has both a desire and a responsibility to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained by staff and students at all times, and that complaints are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.

Aims/Outcomes:

- To provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment.
- To determine whether there has been any unsatisfactory/inappropriate practice or action, as early as possible and in the fairest and most objective manner possible
- To resolve complaints in accordance with relative legislation.
- To implement any necessary changes designed to bring about better educational, pastoral or administrative outcomes, as appropriate;
- To achieve reconciliation between the parties and establish renewed confidence in the relationship.

Implementation:

- It is the Principal's responsibility to provide a healthy and positive school environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. In doing so, the Principal must ensure that all staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- The Principal is required to use local complaints resolution procedures, where appropriate, for resolving complaints in relation to issues that fall within the school's area of responsibility. If the complaint relates to an allegation of serious misconduct of sexual physical or emotional abuse, the Principal must follow the procedures outlined in the **Diocesan Procedures for the Management of Allegations of Misconduct Against Lay Employees in Catholic Schools and Catholic Education Offices.**
- It is incumbent upon the Principal to act where unacceptable conduct is observed or brought to his or her attention.
- A complainant may at any stage choose to take their complaint directly to an external agency such as the Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission or the Ombudsman.
- It is important that all complaints, ensuing procedures and outcomes are fully documented.

Local Conflict Resolution Procedure

- The Principal may choose to respond to a complaint through an informal process in cases where the complaint is deemed minor, the complainant wishes the matter to be dealt with informally or the complaint has arisen from lack of or unclear communication.
- In the first instance, the parent, student (if appropriate) or staff member who has made the complaint should be requested by the Principal or other senior staff member who receives the complaint, to discuss the concern with the teacher or other staff member concerned.
- 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 Formal Process

Where, in the professional judgement of the Principal or appropriate senior staff member who has received the complaint, there is a need for a complaint to be addressed, the teacher or staff member concerned must be informed and involved.

Step 1 - Redirection To Teacher/Staff Member Concerned

Step 2 – Further Discussion Necessary

If, following redirection to the teacher or staff member concerned, the complainant does not feel the matter to be resolved, and further raises the concern with the Principal or other Senior staff member (as appropriate), the Principal will either:

(a) discuss the matter further with the complainant, and where the concern is based on misinformation, misunderstanding or is vexatious or misconceived, clarify the matter. In this instance, the teacher or other staff member concerned should be informed that the complainant further discussed the matter with the Principal or Senior Staff member (as appropriate), and the outcome of the Principal's discussion; or

(b) discuss the matter further with the complainant, and where the Principal (or other senior staff member, as appropriate) forms the view that the concern is not vexatious nor misconceived, nor based on misinformation/ misunderstanding, will discuss the concern with the teacher or other staff member concerned.

Step 3 – Formal Investigation

Investigating the complaint involves formal interviews, written statements, conveying the details of the complaint to the respondent in writing providing the opportunity for a written response.

Step 4 – Resolution

Resolution of the complaint may involve conciliation, mediation, counselling or verbal or written warnings etc.

Step 5 – The Principal or senior staff member will prepare a detailed confidential report.

Step 6 - Monitor the situation.

Documentation

- ▶ Records of the complaint, the process for handling the complaint and any outcomes should be kept. Where the complaint is found to be vexatious or based on misinformation etc, any record pertaining to the complaint or handling of the complaint should be kept in a separate file from the concerned teacher or staff member's personal file.
- ▶ Where a complaint is addressed or acted on, a copy of any reports related to the handling of the complaint must be given to the teacher or staff member concerned.
- ▶ Teachers and staff members must have access to the files kept on them by the school.
- ▶ Policy and procedures will be consistent with the procedures outlined in the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (COEM) Policy 2.3

Grievances

If a teacher or other staff member believes that the process of handling the complaint and/or the outcome of the complaint have been unfair and /or inappropriate, they have the right to pursue grievance procedures. In such situations the teacher or other staff member concerned should be granted access to all file notes.

- Parties dissatisfied with the process can appeal to the Catholic Education Office Regional Manager – Western region.
- All matters must be treated with utmost confidentiality, and professional respect at all times.