



Complaints Resolution Policy

1. RATIONALE

St Benedict's Primary 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 relevant legislation.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a harmonious, positive and productive school environment; and an environment where complaints are resolved fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relevant legislation.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

- a) The Principal will ensure that all staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities with regard to responding to complaints.
- b) It is incumbent upon the principal to act where unacceptable conduct is observed or brought to his or her attention. Unacceptable conduct by the principal should be brought to the attention of the Parish Priest and/or Catholic Education Melbourne.
- c) The principal will use local complaints resolution procedures where appropriate: for resolving complaints in relation to issues that fall within the school's area of responsibility. All cases of serious misconduct – sexual offences, criminal charges, or other serious incidents – must instead be referred to the Catholic Education Melbourne.
- d) Where a complaint concerns the school's compliance with the VRQA minimum standards for school registration, the formal processes will involve notifying the Catholic Education Office Melbourne of the complaint and cooperating with the Office with regard to investigating the complaint and acting on the outcome.
- e) A complainant may at any stage choose to take their complaint directly to an external agency such as the Catholic Education Office Melbourne, the Victorian Institute Teaching, Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission or the Ombudsman, the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority, law enforcement agencies such as Victoria Police.

4. KEY ELEMENTS OF THE COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE:

- a) **Impartiality.** If a complaint is made, it will be investigated in a fair and impartial manner. No judgments or assumptions will be made, and no action will be taken until the investigation is complete. If a complaint is made against an employee, the employee's rights will be protected and he/she will be given an opportunity to tell his/her side of the story.
- b) **Confidentiality.** A person can feel secure that if a complaint is made under this policy, it will remain confidential to only those who need to be informed or involved. Normally, the only people who will have access to information about the complaint will be the person making the complaint, the person investigating and the person against whom the complaint has been made.
- c) **No victimisation.** A person can also rest assured that if he/she makes a complaint he/she will not suffer in any way as a consequence. The school/college authorities will ensure that a person who makes a complaint is not victimised in any way.
- d) **Timeliness.** Each complaint will be finalised within as short a period as possible.

5. ACTIONS

- a) No further action will be taken when the complainant is satisfied with the explanation given at the time of making the complaint or enquiry except when the complaint refers to matters that must be investigated under Child Protection legislation or are criminal.
- b) All complaints, ensuing procedures and outcomes will be fully documented.

- c) The principal, or those persons authorised by the principal to deal with complaints, may choose to respond to a complaint through an informal process in cases where the complaint is minor, the complainant wishes the matter to be dealt with informally, or where the complaint has arisen from lack of or unclear communication.
- d) Formal processes will be used when informal processes haven't been successful, a complainant seeks a formal process, or where the complaint warrants formal investigation.

Informal resolution process:

In less serious matters in which there is no risk of harm to any person, those involved will be encouraged to deal with the issue directly. Normally this would mean that the relevant people would discuss the issue of concern with a view to reaching an amicable resolution.

Formal resolution process involves:

1. Investigating the complaint including formal interviews, written statements, conveying the details of the complaint to the respondent in writing and providing the opportunity for a written response.
2. Dismissing or accepting the complaint.

If the complaint is proved, the following are possible outcomes:

- o a written apology;
- o an official warning;
- o counselling;
- o disciplinary action

If the complaint is unproved (not enough evidence), possible outcomes are:

- o relevant training for all staff; and/or
- o monitoring of behaviour of employees.

If the basis of the complaint claim are proven to be false, such that there was not sufficient grounds for a complaint the school will provide

- o counselling for the person who made the complaint;
- o a written apology;
- o an official warning;
- o disciplinary action

3. Preparation of a detailed confidential report.
4. The Principal will make sure that whatever outcome is decided upon actually happens. He/she will also assess the effectiveness of the outcome from time to time.
5. If a complainant believes that the complaints procedure has not been followed properly, or that the outcome is unacceptable, he/she may appeal to the Principal Consultant (East Central Zone) at the Catholic Education Office Croydon

*If the principal is the person who the complaint is in relation to, the matter and resolution process will be investigated by and followed up by the Parish Priest and Catholic Education Melbourne.

6. EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four-year review cycle or as required.

7. RATIFICATION

Updated	June 2018
Responsible Person	School Education Board
Date for Review	2022