



## COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY - STAFF

### Rationale:

St Scholastica's Primary School has the desire and 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.

### GOALS:

- At St Scholastica's we aim to provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment for all stakeholders.

We acknowledge that employees and students can sometimes feel aggrieved about an issue or incident at the school which appears to be discriminatory or constitute harassment or detract from a positive learning and working environment.

- At St Scholastica's we aim to resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.

### Implementation:

#### Key Elements of Complaints Handling Procedures

**Impartiality** – A complaint will be investigated in a fair and impartial manner with no judgements or assumptions made with no action taken until the investigation is completed.

If a complaint is made against an individual their rights will be protected and their story heard.

**CONFIDENTIALITY** – Any complaints made will remain confidential and people involved in the investigation will be asked to maintain confidentiality.

**NO VICTIMISATION** – If a complaint is made, the school authorities will ensure the person is not victimised.

**TIMELINESS** – Each complaint will be investigated and processed as soon as possible.

- It is the principal's responsibility to provide a healthy and positive school environment and workplace 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 procedure, 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 serious incidents- must be referred to the Catholic Education Office and the police where appropriate.
- It is incumbent on the principal to act where unacceptable conduct is observed or brought to their attention
- If it is inappropriate for the principal or deputy principal to deal with the complaint then the complainant may refer the issue to the parish priest or the Catholic Education Office.
- A complainant may at any stage choose to take their complaint directly to external agencies such as Merit protection Boards, Australian Education Board, Victorian Equal Opportunities Commission, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission or the Ombudsman.
- All complaints and ensuring procedures and outcomes should be fully documented.
- The principal may choose to respond to a complaint through an informal process where the complaint is minor, the complainant wishes the complaint to be dealt with informally or the complaint has arisen from lack of or unclear communication.
- Formal processes will be used when informal processes are deemed to be unsuccessful, a complainant may seek a formal process, or if the principal believes the complaint warrants further investigation.
- Full details regarding formal complaint resolutions procedures are contained within the "Local Complaints Resolution Procedures" Catholic Education Office.
- The formal process involves:
  - Investigating the complaint including formal interviews, written statements, conveying the details of the complaint to the respondent in writing providing the opportunity for a written response
  - Dismissing or accepting the complaint. Acceptance may involve verbal or written warnings, conciliation, counselling or consequences.
  - Preparation of a detailed confidential report
  - Monitoring of the situation
- Parties dissatisfied with the process can appeal to the previously mentioned external agencies.
- All matters must be treated with utmost confidentiality and professional respect at all times
- If there is not enough evidence to prove the complaint, then relevant training or monitoring of employee behaviour may be required.
- If the complaint is proved to be incorrect then the complainant may require counselling, a written apology or official warning. Legal advice may be required.

## **Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the St Scholastica's review cycle 2024

Reviewed 2020

## **Related policies:**

Anti-bullying in the workplace Policy

## **Resources:**

CEOM Pastoral Care Policy

"Local Complaints Resolution Procedures" Catholic Education Office