



Complaint Policy and Processes – Parents, Students, Community

Purpose

Within the reality of school life at CBC St Kilda, it is recognised that from time to time misunderstandings and issues will arise, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily in partnership with members of the school community. When these situations arise, it is an opportunity to model our belief in the dignity of each person, on respect, compassion, integrity and truth.

As a Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition, CBC strives to be a community that resolves conflict and misunderstanding by enacting our values of faith, hope, love and justice. We aim to be a community where communication takes place in an environment that balances the need for rights of privacy with transparency, respect, compassion, fairness, inclusion and a Christian concern for all.

Rationale

Having an effective complaints management process at CBC:

- enhances staff relationships with parents, students and the broader school community
- encourages the resolution of concerns and disputes at the earliest possible stage
- creates expectations that the complaints management process will be respectful and courteous
- avoids escalation of vexatious or frivolous complaints
- empowers staff by giving them a clear path to resolve issues in a consistent, systematic and responsive way
- enables valuable feedback about where the school is not meeting parents' and students' needs
- ensures that a school complies with its legal obligations
- assists a school to continually improve its internal systems and controls
- protects and enhances a school's reputation.

Definition and Scope

A grievance or complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived issue at a school where a response or resolution is expected.

The dissatisfaction will usually arise from a perception that the school, or member of the school community, has:

- done something wrong
- failed to do something it should have
- acted unfairly or inappropriately.

The complaint may be about an individual staff member, a student or a policy or procedure.

Examples may include issues related to:

- student discipline procedures
- learning and teaching
- students requiring educational adjustment
- damage/loss of personal property

- bullying and harassment by students against other students.

This Policy **does not** cover complaints:

- that are of a child protection nature. These must be addressed in accordance with child protection laws and reporting obligations (see [*PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools*](#))
- from staff about aspects of their work or employment conditions. These matters are managed in accordance with relevant internal policies and processes regarding these matters, and consider as appropriate the [*Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013*](#) (VCEMEA).

Principles Guiding Complaints Management and Resolution

Through CBC's complaints process:

- All complaints will be treated seriously, addressed professionally, competently and in a timely manner, and apply principles of procedural fairness and confidentiality
- All parties will conduct themselves, in ways that are respectful and consistent with the EREA Code of Conduct
- An indication is given whether the process is an informal or formal process for resolving the complaint
- An indication is given whether complainants should consider resolving the grievances at least, initially in an informal manner
- Sets timelines for complaint management
- Describes the process for making a complaint and specifies who complainants should contact in the first instance when they have an issue
- Provides flexibility in methods of making a complaint, such as provision for verbal and written complaints, e.g. a dedicated email address, a phone number, or a form on the website
- Parties will be informed of the possible outcomes of the process, including what to do if the matter is not initially settled to the complainant's satisfaction.

CBC St Kilda's complaints policy and procedures are effectively communicated through a range of means such as CBC's:

newsletters, website and enrolment procedures.

Complaints Processes

CBC St Kilda will

- Acknowledges the complaint through either:
 - A verbal phone conversation or in a formal meeting
 - In writing – especially in response to a written complaint
- Provide the complainant with the school's policy and procedures for managing complaints when a grievance or complaint is made.
- Have a process for recording and tracking complaints and outcomes, such as a software program or complaints register
- Ensure that grievances or complaints are recorded in the agreed system or register and contain the following information:

- the contact details of the parent/guardian/carer
 - the date of the complaint and the way it was communicated to the school (e.g. in person, phone call, email, letter etc.)
 - the nature of the complaint and the requested resolution
 - the member of staff handling the issue
 - the actions and time taken, minutes of meetings, and communications
 - a statement of the outcome, including a closure date and the date of advising the complainant of the outcome.
- Securely and confidentially stored all information in accordance with the school's privacy policy.
 - Ensure that:
 - staff have received appropriate and adequate training on how to identify a complaint, when a complaint can be managed informally and when it should be referred.
 - The school leaders responsible for managing, investigating and dealing with escalated and or serious complaints that may be of a complex and difficult nature have received training in handling complaints.
 - Staff have received appropriate and adequate training on how to identify a complaint, when a complaint can be managed informally and when it should be referred.

The school regularly reviews its complaints-handling process to ensure continual improvement of school policy and procedures for effective complaints handling.

Consultation

CBC St Kilda consults with staff, the CBC Board and other members of the school community for input and support in planning and developing the school's complaints management policy and process.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample Acknowledgment Letter to Complainant

Dear [NAME]

I refer to information provided by you/your son/your daughter, [child's name], to [name], [position], regarding the attached complaint.

The matter has been referred to me and I propose dealing with it by (state the process).

Please let me know if you have any comments or requests about the process of resolving the complaint.

You will be contacted at various stages of the process regarding progress of the complaint. If you require any information, please contact me on (telephone number).

Yours sincerely

Name

Date

Appendix 2: Sample Complaint Form

1. YOUR DETAILS			
Family name:	Given name(s):		
Address:			
Contact number:	Email:		
2. YOU ARE: (PLEASE TICK ONE)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/caregiver <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)		
3. SUBJECT OF THE COMPLAINT (PLEASE TICK ALL RELEVANT BOXES)			
<input type="checkbox"/> School	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff member	<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy/Procedure
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)			
4. DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINT			
(Please attach additional page(s) if space is insufficient. You may also attach further documentation if you wish.)			
5. DETAILS OF THE OUTCOME YOU ARE SEEKING			
(Please attach additional page(s) if space is insufficient.)			
6. HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY RAISED THIS CONCERN WITH A STAFF MEMBER? (PLEASE TICK)			
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	If yes, when?	
Who dealt with the matter?			
What was the result?			
Signature:		Date:	
School Office use: RECORDING OF OUTCOMES			
<i>For matters which have been resolved:</i>			
Resolution options			
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-resolution	<input type="checkbox"/> Supported self-resolution	<input type="checkbox"/> Facilitated mediation	<input type="checkbox"/> Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Investigation
Actions undertaken:			
Outcome:			
Date matter is finalised:			
Name of staff member:		Signature:	

<i>For matters which need further action:</i>	
Referred to: Name:	Date:
Referred by: Name:	Signature:
Outcome:	
Name of staff member:	Signature:

Sample Flow Chart of Procedures for Handling Complaints

