

RESOLVING COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY (PARENTS) Policy 1.1.12

Preamble:

The resolution of conflict is vital to the wellbeing and success of the school community. St. Joseph's School recognises that staff members, parents and care-givers must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns/complaints in a supportive conciliatory environment. Grievances are caused by ongoing concern/s or complaints that have escalated over a period of time or have not been successfully resolved. Issues should usually be raised with the person concerned.

We aim to:

- Develop a positive and collaborative relationship between home and school.
- Welcome and value diversity of opinion.
- Have clear and open communication within the community.
- Have fair and reasonable procedures

Parents and care-givers may have concerns about:

- Children's learning, behaviour or welfare.
- School organization and management.
- Student health and safety issues.
- A child's or parent's conflict with a staff member.

Family rights and responsibilities:

- Any parent or care-giver has the right to raise a concern and have it responded to without fear of repercussions and according to principles of procedural fairness.
- Confidentiality will be respected and maintained by all parties involved.
- Parents may request an advocate attend meetings with them and have minutes taken.

Staff members' rights and responsibilities:

- Any staff member has the right to raise a concern and have it responded to promptly, fairly and without fear of repercussions, according to principles of procedural fairness.
- Confidentiality will be respected and maintained by all parties involved.
- Staff may request an advocate attend meetings with them and have minutes taken.

What is the process?

- Most concerns would normally be resolved informally.
- Generally, issues involving an individual child should be raised first with the class teacher.
- When the unresolved issue involves a staff member as the complainant and he/she is unable to resolve it directly with a parent, the matter should be taken up with the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- If the unresolved issue involves the Principal the matter should be taken up with the Assistant Principal or Parish Priest.
- Where the issue involves another parent, the matter should be discussed with the Principal or Assistant Principal.

- Under no circumstance is any parent to approach or speak to a child, not his/her own, about that child's behaviour. The matter should be brought to the attention of, or discussed with, the classroom or supervising teacher, Principal or Assistant Principal.
- Grievances caused by ongoing concern/s or complaints which have escalated over a period of time or have not been successfully resolved must be dealt with by the Principal or delegate. It will be discussed further with the appropriate staff members and contact the child's parents or guardians. Outside agencies will be involved if necessary.
- Where despite every effort being made, a satisfactory resolution cannot be found at the school level, the Catholic Education Office (CEO) will be asked to mediate.
- In serious matters, outside agencies will be called for support (for example, Catholic Education Office, Department of Human Services, Police)
- Certain matters concerning child protection or other areas covered by specific legislation will be referred immediately to the relevant external agency.
- Mandatory Reporting legislation requires that teachers are legally bound to contact Child Protection in some circumstances where children are believed to be in danger.

What you should expect from the school:

- Confidential response to concerns, according to principles of procedural fairness.
- Feedback to all parties regarding the procedure and/or outcome of investigation into the concern.
- In consultation with all parties involved in the dispute (including the Catholic Education Office when necessary), the setting of appropriate goals for future action/s.
- Issues should be addressed in a fair and reasonable time frame.