

Grievance and Complaints Policy



St Josephs
College

Rationale

The issues of dignity, equity and justice in the relationships between all people within the school community are of fundamental importance. Our mission calls us to be people *concerned always for justice, truth, reconciliation and peace, and be people who build bridges with others and remain open to change*. Our school has both a desire and a responsibility to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained by staff, students and parents at all times, and that grievances are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation and Catholic Education Melbourne requirements.

Definition

Grievances occur when an employee, parent or student complains that an action or decision has been taken (or not taken) at the school that he/she believes to be in breach of a relevant Policy, Act, Regulation or Order, infringes upon the principles of merit and equity, or is otherwise unreasonable.

Principles

- Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and dignity.
- The College recognises the rights of its employees, parents/guardians and students to register a complaint or grievance about any decision, behaviour, act or omission that they feel is unfair, discriminatory or unjustified.
- All staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy will work within the expectations set out in the St Joseph's College Child Safety Policy.
- Resolution of grievances at the local level, where appropriate, is the desired outcome.
- A harmonious, positive and productive school environment is to be fostered.
- Grievances will be resolved fairly, efficiently and in accordance with requirements.
- The principles of due process and natural justice will provide a sound and fair basis of information dissemination, conciliation, investigation and decision-making.
- The rights of complainants and respondents are upheld at all times, including the use of fair, confidential, impartial and dignified resolution procedures.

Implementation

- Staff, parents/guardians and students are initially encouraged to try to resolve grievances personally by talking with or writing to the person whose behaviour is of concern.
- Staff, parents/guardians and students may choose to seek assistance from staff in positions of leadership, Deputy Principals or the Principal. In such circumstances, the leaders will use local complaints resolution procedures, including private discussions, mediation, monitoring, training or counselling.
- It is incumbent upon College leaders to act where unacceptable conduct is observed or brought to their attention.
- When allegations of child abuse are made, the College will follow the procedures as outlined in the St Joseph's College Child Safety and the Reporting Obligations Policies
- The Principal will exercise judgment as to whether or not anonymous complaints will be acted upon.
- Staff, parents/guardians and students are encouraged to lodge formal complaints in serious cases with the Principal.
- Complaints will be handled in accordance with the procedures outlined in the CECV's publication, Complaints Management – Practical Guide for Schools (2017).
- All formal complaints, discussions, ensuing procedures and outcomes will be fully documented and

stored appropriately for future reference if required.

- Recording of complaints, investigation, correspondence, meetings and resolutions should be documented in a Communication Log. Once the matter is resolved, the Communication Log will be printed and placed on file.
- Complaints will be received and managed in accordance with the principles of natural justice and bias, prejudice, personal feelings and beliefs and pressure to conceal information in order to protect the reputation of parties involved will not be tolerated.
- At times, mediation processes may be implemented to assist in the resolution of a grievance.
- Any party to a dispute has the right to be accompanied by another person, in a support role, at any meetings convened to discuss resolution of the grievance.
- Staff may choose to seek assistance from Catholic Education Melbourne, who will work within the CEM and CECV policies and guidelines.

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