



## GRIEVANCE POLICY

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### **Rationale**

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear and effective processes for resolving grievances between school community members: parents, staff, school. Our school prides itself on clear, consultative and open communication with staff, parents and children. However there may be times when members of the school community disagree or are misinformed and or are unaware of all the relevant information regarding an issue. Effective processes for resolving complaints assist in the building of strong relationships, dispel anxiety and ultimately provide students with a positive learning environment and staff a safe workplace.

### **Aims**

To provide clear, positive and fair processes that allow grievances to be aired and resolved in a timely, fair and effective manner

### **Guidelines for Implementation**

If any member of the school community has a cause for concern regarding an issue at school, then it is best dealt with in an environment of mutual respect for all parties involved – this is also what we aim to model for our children.

- Where appropriate, issues are on most occasions are best handled by discussion directly with the person involved
- In issues that are more serious or have a high emotional content, the Principal or Parish Priest is to be consulted
- Try to establish the facts as clearly as possible (be wary of hearsay)
- It is advisable to make an appointment with the person or people concerned so that the matter can be handled in an appropriate manner
- The Parents and Friends Association and School Education Board are not appropriate forums for airing grievances

### **Classroom Issues**

It is important to understand that it may not be possible for teachers to respond immediately to phone calls or emails particularly out of hours or during teaching time (8:30am-3:45pm). The classroom teacher will endeavour to return your call or email as soon as possible. If you have a sensitive issue or would like to discuss a concern, please make an appointment with your child's classroom teacher to discuss either in person or via phone conversation (avoid doing so via email). Please remember that email is an effective communication tool when used effectively for positive communication. Emails deemed to be inappropriately negative will be forwarded to school leadership and contact will be made directly with the parent.

### **School Issues**

An appointment should be made with the Principal or Deputy Principal to discuss issues involving school policy, operations beyond your child's classroom, concerns about staff or any other sensitive issue. All formal discussions, processes and outcomes involving complaints will be documented.

### **Confidentiality**

All grievances are to be kept confidential

### **Professional Reputation of Staff**

The school places high value and priority on maintaining a safe and respectful working environment for our staff. We regard certain behaviours as harmful and unacceptable in so far as they compromise the safety and professional wellbeing of our staff. These behaviours include, but are not limited to;

- shouting or swearing, either in person or on the telephone
- physical or verbal intimidation
- aggressive hand gestures
- writing rude, defamatory, aggressive or abusive comments to/about a staff member (emails/social media)
- racist or sexist comments
- damage or violation of possessions/property.

When a Parent/Guardian/Carer behaves in such unacceptable ways, the Principal or a senior staff member will seek to resolve the situation and repair relationships through discussion and/or mediation. Where a parent's behaviour is deemed likely to cause ongoing harm, distress or danger to the staff member and others, we may exercise our legal right to impose a temporary or permanent ban from the Parent/Guardian/Carer entering the school premises. In an extreme act of violence that causes physical harm to the staff member and his/her property, the matter may be reported to the police for investigation.

*Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines (Catholic Education Commission Victoria, 2014)*

In the event that staff safety and wellbeing is compromised as per any of the above, the staff member(s) will take steps to conclude the communication and ask the Parent/Guardian/Carer to leave and seek administrative support.

### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the schools cyclical review process.

Policy ratified by School Educational Board: 02/08/2016

Next review date: 02/08/2019

Person responsible: Principal and Administration Officer