



St Paul's Primary School

Complaints Handling

Policy

St. Paul's Primary School recognises that from time to time there might be instances where individuals or organisations disagree with the way the School has handled matters and may wish to lodge a complaint. Such individuals may include parents, students, suppliers, local residents, and other external bodies with whom the School has dealings.

Why Do Concerns Arise?

- Schools are very busy places, with lots of things happening and many decisions needing to be made every day.
- At the same time, the community is quite diverse, with many individuals or groups having vastly different opinions on how things should be done.
- It is inevitable, therefore, that times will arise when some parents or guardians agree with the school's actions, while others may disagree and wish to discuss a matter with the school
- We welcome discussions and encourage parents & guardians to raise issues, in order that they may be dealt with speedily and resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned.
- Both concerns and complaints should not be considered as a negative experience, in so far as they are dealt with positively by all parties concerned.
- A process for presenting and managing community complaints or concerns has been developed.

Things to Always Remember

- Problems are best resolved using a positive attitude; anger is usually counter-productive to solving problems.
- People need time to investigate and resolve many problems; a 'quick fix' is not always possible or desirable.
- Schools are large and complex, so therefore, very few decisions will suit everybody.

- There are always at least two sides to every 'story'; with students there are often as many stories as there are children.
- Not all disagreements can be resolved; there are times when it may be agreed to disagree.
- Opinions vary widely; disagreement is a natural part of life.
- Everybody is doing what they believe is right, even if it may be different to what we think.

Agreed Complaints Process

The following procedures are to be used to resolve complaints or concerns at our school:

STEP 1

Try to find out the facts; this may require you speaking with your child's teacher. Your child's teacher should always be your first point of contact, as they know your child best. Many concerns are quickly resolved once the parent is aware of all the facts.

STEP 2

Let the school know via email, letter, telephone or in person, that you have a concern or issue, providing details of that concern or issue.

STEP 3

The school WILL investigate the concern and the most appropriate person will contact you to discuss the matter, or to organize a meeting. The vast majority of problems are resolved by this point

STEP 4

If, however, the matter remains unresolved, make a formal appointment to discuss the issue with the Principal.

STEP 5

The Regional Office can be contacted to help solve problems (see contact details contained herein).

The school acknowledges that complaints present an opportunity to improve and is fully committed to resolving them in an efficient, fair and timely manner. The school recognises that its complaints handling procedures must be fair to the complainant, as well as to the person about whom the complaint is made, if it is of a personal nature. Accordingly, the school will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **1** working day;
- Treat all parties with sensitivity, respect & courtesy and ensure procedural fairness is observed;
- Investigate matters impartially and fairly;
- Provide all parties with a response within **14** days, or provide interim information if a response is not yet available;
- Provide clear reasons as to why any actions have been taken or are proposed to be taken

- Keep matters confidential;
- Monitor the effectiveness of outcomes; and
- If the matter cannot be resolved at the school or if the complainant is not satisfied with the school's response, the complainant may contact the school's Regional General Manager.
- Appeals of the Principal's decision may also be directed to the Regional General Manager

Making a Complaint

Complaints of a school-based nature are best received at the school level (as per the aforementioned procedures), with parties involved expected to act in good faith and work together with respect & openness to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties. We ask that, where appropriate, you first raise the matter directly with the relevant staff member or the Principal. If that is not appropriate or the complaint is about the Principal, the complaint should be directed to the Parish Priest or to the Catholic Education Melbourne Regional General Manager, Northern Region.

Regional General Manager - Northern Region

Cnr. Howard & Rosslyn Streets

West Melbourne Vic 3003

Phone: (03) 8387 3200

Complaints Relating to Child Protection Incidents

There may, at times, be concerns or complaints relating to the school's Child Safety & Child Protection Program, for example regarding the school's management of a child protection incident.

When a child protection-related complaint is made, the school will first consider whether the complaint raises any concerns about unreported abuse and/or risk of abuse at the school.

If concerns of this nature are raised by the complaint, all school staff, the Principal, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers, will follow the [Four Critical Actions for Schools Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#), which are reflected in the School's Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse.

Child protection complaints that do not raise concerns of unreported abuse, or a risk of abuse at the school, will be managed in the same manner as other complaints received by the school. The complaints will be recorded to ensure that any further developments relating to the same incident or issue are monitored.

Developed: 2017

Ratified: 2018

Reviewed: