

St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Albion Park



COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

Purpose of a Complaints Procedure

At St Paul's Catholic Primary School we are committed to providing a safe and supportive working and learning environment for all employees and students.

We acknowledge that an employee, student, parent or community member may have a complaint about any decision, behaviour, act or omission (whether by the Principal, members of the leadership team or other staff/students) that they feel is discriminatory or unreasonable.

Complaints can be addressed directly with the person involved however that is not always possible. Whilst most issues can be resolved through direct discussion with the parties, there may be instances in which it is necessary to take up the issue with the other person on a face-to-face basis. At times this is not possible and therefore such guidelines are necessary.

Complaints Covered by this Procedure Include:

- issues related to student discipline procedures
- issues related to learning and teaching
- damage/loss of personal property
- bullying and harassment

Complaints of a more serious nature must be considered in light of relevant legislation, guidelines, *policies* and *procedures* pertinent to the issue, including for instance:

- Occupational Health and Safety issues
- Child Protection issues, eg
- *The Care and Protection of our Children and Young People*
- *Professional Conduct and Child Protection*
- Enrolment Policy and Procedures
- Suspension Exclusion Policy
- Staff Relations Policy

Making a Complaint

Some complaints, because of the seriousness of their nature, should be referred immediately to the Principal – e.g. *complaints about behaviour which places others at risk of serious harm*. **Parents are advised not to approach the children of other families with a school related complaint.** All complaints will be addressed following the key elements of the Catholic Education Office complaints handling procedure. (See Appendix 1)

What to do if you have a Complaint – (All employees and students)

1. If a problem or concern arises within the school, resolution should firstly be attempted by discussing the problem or concern directly with the person/s involved. In many situations, the most appropriate thing to do first is to inform the person who is the cause of the complaint how you feel. If the complaint is about their behaviour, inform them that

it is offensive/hurtful/not acceptable. If it is about a work decision, inform them why you think it is discriminatory or so unreasonable.

Telling the person will give them a chance to stop or change what they are doing or explain what they had decided and why.

2. When the problem or concern cannot be resolved with the person/s involved then the relevant stage coordinator will be engaged to mediate and attempt a resolution. *(This process should involve raising the concern and obtaining all the facts)*
3. If a resolution has not been achieved then the Principal and/or the Assistant Principal will seek to resolve the problem or concern through mediation. *(Refer to CEO Complaints Handling Policy)*

What to do if you have a Complaint – (Parents of the school community, Members of the wider community)

1. ***Approach the appropriate staff member concerned***
If you have a complaint about an action or decision that you believe to be unacceptable, discriminatory or unreasonable approach the staff member concerned. Inform the staff member how you feel. Informing the staff member will give them the opportunity to stop or change their actions or explain the reasoning behind their decision.
2. ***Contact the School***
Where you feel you cannot approach the person directly or you are not happy with their response or reaction, then you can explain the problem to the appropriate person at the school (See Flowchart). An inquiry at the school office may be the first point of contact for people with complaints. You will be advised as to the person designated to deal with the nature of the complaint. This person may be a Coordinator, the Assistant Principal or Principal. The designated person will advise you about what your options are and what will happen if you make a formal complaint.
3. ***Contact the Catholic Education Office - Head of School Services- Primary – SE Region***
Where you feel you cannot approach the person directly or you are not happy with their response or reaction, and you have a good reason not to raise the issue either with the school designated person or the school Principal, then you can contact the Catholic Education Office (CEO) and explain the problem and issues. The CEO officer will usually discuss with you the need to raise your concerns at the school level. The CEO officer can also advise you about your options.

Please note:

If the CEO officer forms the views that your complaint is more appropriately dealt with at the school level, then you will be advised of that and the school will be advised as well.

Where students and parents make complaints these will automatically be referred back to the school unless the complaint is against a decision of or about the Principal and has previously been raised with the Principal without resolution.

Designated Persons for Complaints

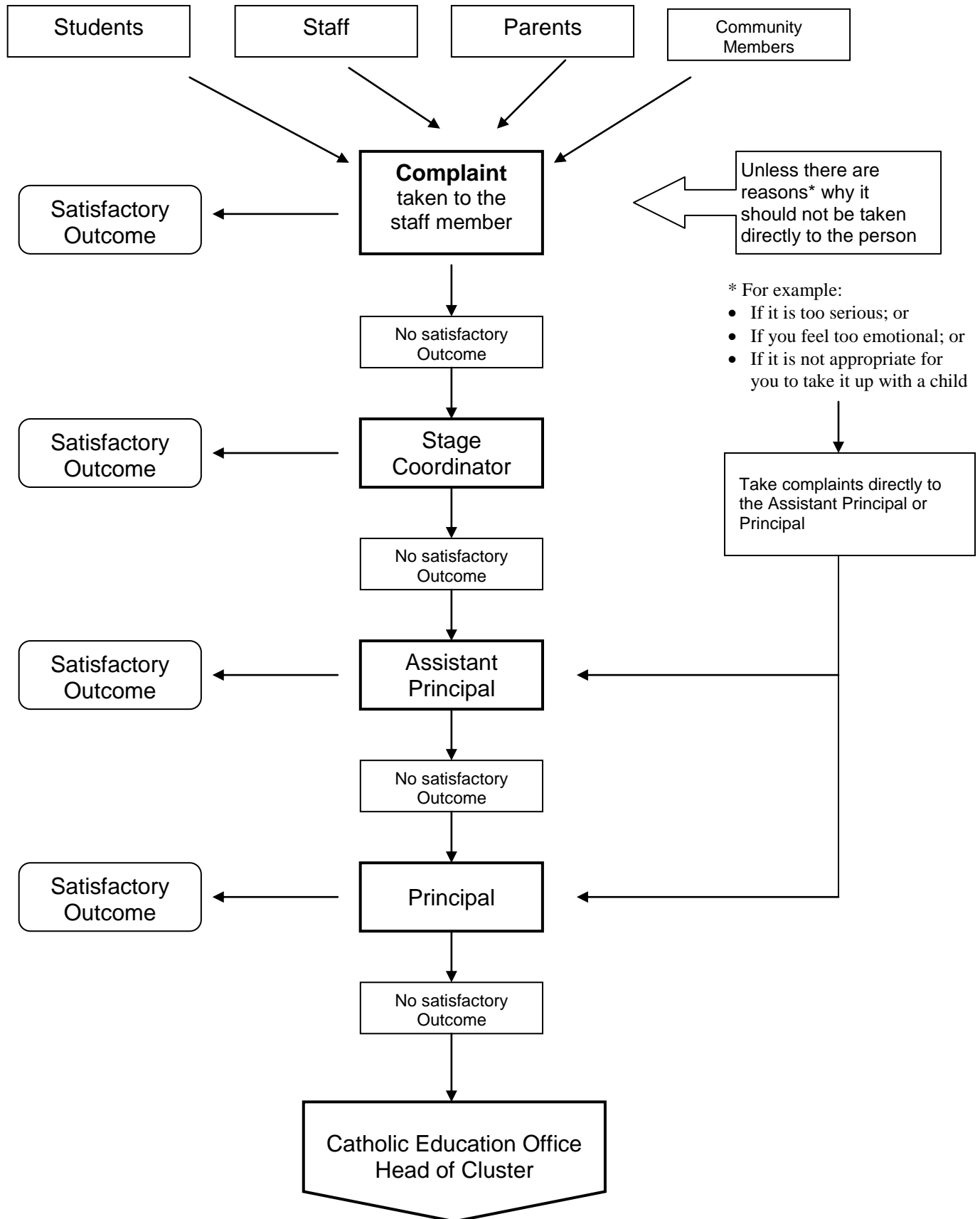
At St Paul's Catholic Primary School the Leadership Team will be responsible for dealing with complaints as outlined in the attached flowchart.

1. Initially take complaint to the Classroom Teacher.
2. If you are not satisfied with the outcome take complaint to Stage Coordinator:

Early Stage 1 (Kinder)	– Mrs Lisa Mammone – Middle Leader
Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2)	– Mrs Janet Sykes – Middle Leader
Stage 2 (Years 3 & 4)	– Mr Justin Devlin– Assistant Principal
Stage 3 (Years 5 & 6)	– Mr Simon Farrugia – Middle Leader
3. If you are still not satisfied with the outcome speak to the Assistant Principal, Mr Justin Devlin.
4. Finally, if there is still no resolution take the complaint to the Principal, Mrs Colleen Easton.

If a satisfactory outcome has not resulted the Head of School Services - Primary South East Region, from the Catholic Education Office, Mr Noel Henry should be contacted.

School Based Process for Resolution of Complaint



APPENDIX 1

KEY ELEMENTS OF OUR COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

1. **Impartiality**

If you make a complaint, it will be investigated in a fair and impartial manner. No judgements or assumptions will be made, and no action will be taken until the investigation is complete. If a complaint is made against you, your rights will be protected and you will be given an opportunity to tell your side of the story.

2. **Confidentiality**

You can feel secure that if you do make a complaint under this procedure it will remain confidential. The only people who will have access to information about the complaint will be the person making the complaint, the person to whom the complaint is made, the person investigating and Catholic Education Office staff who may be involved. The person about whom the complaint is made also has a right to be informed.

3. **No victimisation**

You can also rest assured that if you make a complaint you will not suffer in any way as a consequence. The Principal of the school will ensure that a person who makes a complaint is not victimised in any way.

4. **Vexatious or malicious complaints**

There is an underlying assumption that complaints are made in good faith (and with good will) and with an intention for resolution as opposed to retribution.

5. **Timeliness**

Each complaint will be finalised within as short a period of time as possible. Complainants will be advised if the matter cannot be finalised within one month.



COMPLAINT FORM

1. Your details

Family Name: _____

Given Name (s) _____

Address: _____

Phone Numbers: (home) _____ (work) _____

(mobile) _____

2. Are you a (please tick relevant box)

- Student
- Parent or Caregiver (Name of Student) _____
- Staff
- Other (Please specify) _____

3. Have you discussed your matter with a designated staff member?

- Yes No

If Yes, when? _____

Who dealt with the matter? _____

What was the result? _____

4. Please give details of complaint and outcome you are seeking:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please mail this form or hand it in at the school office.

Privacy Notice:

The information provided on this form will be used by the school to follow up your complaint. The information may be provided by the school to the Catholic Education Office who monitor the services provided by the school or to the police for law enforcement purposes. The provision of this information is voluntary. It will be stored securely. You may correct any personal information provided at any time by contacting the school office.