



1. Introduction

At Catholic Regional College Melton we are committed to building a school culture that features positive and respectful relationships. As a Catholic school, these relationships are grounded in the values of the gospel, in particular the values of justice, compassion, reconciliation, truth and love. In keeping with Catholic social teaching, a respect for the innate dignity of each person shapes all our relationships.

In building and nurturing this culture, we acknowledge that students and parents can sometimes feel aggrieved about something that is happening at the school. Every member of our school community has a right to have their grievance or complaint addressed, and we will work positively and resolutely to achieve a satisfactory outcome for the people involved.

This policy outlines our principles and procedures for receiving and resolving complaints other than those of a criminal nature. It ought to be read in conjunction with related policies and core documents of the school, namely:

- Parent – College Relationships Code of Conduct
- College's Child Safety Policy

2. Complaints resolution: Guiding principles

In receiving and responding to complaints, the following guiding principles will direct and shape the school's actions:

- We will acknowledge the complaint and work with the complainant with respect, courtesy and openness and with a genuine desire to achieve fair and reasonable decisions.
- The complaint will be resolved as quickly as possible.
- Confidentiality, impartiality and the principles of natural justice will form the basis of our complaints resolution process.
- The person(s) facing the complaint will be provided with detailed information about the substance of the complaint and will have the opportunity to respond.
- Personal information disclosed will be treated as confidential.
- Our resolution process will be grounded in sound and fair procedures for information sharing, conciliation, investigation and decision making.
- If a satisfactory outcome cannot be achieved, the school will provide the complainant with options for having the decision reviewed or mediated via an external authority.
- The communal needs of the school community will in most instances exceed the needs of any individual.

3. Expectations of people making a complaint

In making a complaint, the school requests and expects that the complainant will:

- raise the concern or complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen;
- communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair and respectful;
- provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint;
- observe confidentiality and a respect for sensitive issues;
- act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties;
- have realistic and reasonable expectations about possible outcomes/remedies.

If as a complainant you are a parent, and your concern/complaint relates to your child's treatment by another student or students while at school, the school expects that you will refer your complaint directly to the school, via your child's class teacher, homeroom or year level coordinator.

Under no circumstances should you approach another student while in the care of the school to discuss the issue or chastise him or her. Direct contact with parents to resolve the matter is also discouraged if the complaint pertains to issues or incidents that have arisen at the school.

3.1 Key Referral People

Complainants are encouraged to make contact with members of the school staff who are most closely connected with the complaint/concern. For parents, this will be your child's class teacher, homeroom or year level coordinator. If there is any uncertainty about the most appropriate person to address a concern or complaint, you are encouraged to contact the school. Reception staff will refer you to the appropriate person.

4. Procedures

4.1 Informal Resolution Procedures

- contact the class teacher to make an appointment for either a phone conference or a face-to-face meeting;
- outline the nature of the concerns, either verbally or in writing. Complainants are asked to outline concerns or issues (e.g. learning program, discipline, student/peer incidents) so that the staff member can prepare for the meeting/phone conference. Complainants and staff are strongly discouraged from sending or discussing confidential, contentious and/or emotional information via email. These matters are best discussed face-to-face or over the phone.

4.2 Formal Resolution Processes

If an informal resolution procedure between the parties does not resolve the complaint, the matter will be referred to the year level co-ordinator.

- contact the year level co-ordinator to make an appointment for either a phone conference or a face-to-face meeting;
- outline the nature of the complaint in writing, and the steps taken to resolve it (see Complaint Form Appendix 1)
- the year level co-ordinator will seek advice from a senior member of staff.

A senior member of staff will:

- acknowledge the complaint and record it in the College Complaints Register/records management system;
- organise a meeting/phone conference;
- fully document the complaint, any actions taken to resolve it and outcomes of those actions further and fully investigate the matter;
- ensure that no one is victimised as a result of a complaint being made if necessary, enable a complainant to be accompanied by another person of his/her choice as a support person;
- enable the person against whom the complaint has been made to respond, and to be accompanied to any meeting by another person of his/her choice as a support person;
- organise a process of mediation if a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the school.

4.3 Serious or Repeated Complaints, or Allegations of Misconduct

Where a complaint relates to an allegation of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, or when complaints are sufficiently serious or repeated, the principal will take action to report the matter to the appropriate authorities, ensure a comprehensive investigation, and work with all parties to facilitate a resolution.

4.4 Review

If the complaint or concern is not resolved it will be reviewed by the Principal who will make a final decision on the outcome of the complaint.

4.5 Avenues of Appeal

If a complaint remains unresolved, or if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, the complainant has the right to seek other avenues of appeal through authorities such as the Catholic Education Office or Father Maurie Cooney, Canonical Administrator of Catholic Regional College.

4.6 Assistance from an external agency

If you are not satisfied with the way your complaint has been dealt with by the College, you may wish to go to an external agency for further advice and assistance. You may take your complaint to the external agency at any stage in the procedure if you are unhappy with progress in dealing with your complaint. Refer to the appendices at the end of this policy for names and addresses of external agencies

4.7 External Agencies

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au

ACCESS Employee Assistance Program 1300 66 77 00

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Complaint Form

Appendix 2 Complaints Procedures Flowchart

Complaint Form

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| 1. YOUR DETAILS | | | |
| Family name: | Given name(s): | | |
| Address: | | | |
| Contact number: | Email: | | |
| 2. YOU ARE: (PLEASE TICK ONE) | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/caregiver <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | | |
| 3. SUBJECT OF THE COMPLAINT (PLEASE TICK ALL RELEVANT BOXES) | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff member | <input type="checkbox"/> Student | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy/Procedure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | | | |
| 4. DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINT | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| (Please attach additional page(s) if space is insufficient. You may also attach further documentation if you wish.) | | | |
| 5. DETAILS OF THE OUTCOME YOU ARE SEEKING | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| (Please attach additional page(s) if space is insufficient.) | | | |
| 6. HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY RAISED THIS CONCERN WITH A STAFF MEMBER? (PLEASE TICK) | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | If yes, when? | |
| Who dealt with the matter? | | | |
| What was the result? | | | |
| Signature: | | Date: | |
| School Office use: RECORDING OF OUTCOMES | | | |
| <i>For matters which have been resolved:</i> | | | |
| Resolution options | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> Supported self-resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitated mediation | <input type="checkbox"/> Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Investigation |
| Actions undertaken: | | | |
| Outcome: | | | |
| Date matter is finalised: | | | |
| Name of staff member: | | Signature: | |
| <i>For matters which need further action:</i> | | | |
| Referred to: Name: | | Date: | |
| Referred by: Name: | | Signature: | |
| Outcome: | | | |
| Name of staff member: | | Signature: | |

Appendix 2 Complaints Procedure Flowchart

