



## GRIEVANCE POLICY

### RATIONALE

Sacred Heart College acknowledges that parents, guardians, carers, students and staff have a right to raise concerns and have them addressed. The pastoral care of teachers and students will be paramount. At all times the College will uphold its obligations to address legitimate concerns raised by parents, students and staff members, and will protect all parties from unjust claims and accusations. This policy reflects the Mercy Education values of Justice and Respect.

### DEFINITIONS

- A grievance or complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived issue at a school where a response or resolution is expected.
- The complainant is the person raising the concern
- A complaint may be about an individual staff member, a student or a policy or procedure.
- Bullying is defined as repeated unreasonable behaviour directed at a person and creating a risk to health and safety.
- IEU Independent Education Union
- VCMEA 2013: Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013

### POLICY STATEMENT

If there is a practice that is detrimental to students' welfare or learning, the situation will be addressed, appropriate action agreed to, and support provided.

When addressing concerns, consideration will be given to the learning needs of our students and to maintaining a professional, collegial workplace for staff.

The goals of this policy are to:

- Improve the professional relationship between the parties involved in the complaint, ie. student/teacher, teacher/teacher, parent/teacher or teacher/administration.
- Respond to complaints in a prompt, impartial and just manner
- Develop a better understanding of and sensitivity towards professional relationships, including an appreciation of each teacher's personal style and experience.
- Provide training for staff in the area of conflict management and resolution.
- Provide training for students to enable them to present their appropriate ideas and concerns clearly, politely and assertively, without resorting to aggression.

Conflict resolution processes will reflect the principles of participation, co-responsibility and subsidiarity.

Examples of complaints

**Informal verbal** - the complainant will be encouraged to document the issue. If this does not occur, the Principal or delegate will assess whether the complaint merits further investigation.

**Anonymous** - Information received will be assessed by the Principal or Principal's delegate to determine whether the complaint merits further investigation. The complaint and any action taken will be documented.

### **Guidance for resolution of complaints**

1. All complaints received are acknowledged in writing
2. Complaints will be escalated if and when satisfactory resolution is not attained.
3. Procedural fairness will be followed in all aspects of complaint handling, including:
  - Giving the complainant the opportunity to present their case.
  - Informing the subject of the complaint that it has been received and what the allegations are.
  - Giving the subject of the complaint an opportunity to respond.
  - Advising all parties of the outcome of the investigation.
  - Informing parties of any avenue of review.

Complainants will be encouraged to address their issues with the subject of their complaint personally in the first instance, without third-party involvement. Assistance will be provided where appropriate.

Both the person raising the complaint and the subject of the complaint will receive appropriate information, support and assistance in resolving the grievance.

Wherever possible, grievances should be resolved by a process of discussion, cooperation and conciliation. The aim is to reach an acceptable outcome that encourages positive/affirming conflict resolutions and minimises any potential detriment to ongoing relationships.

No person will be victimised because they raise a complaint or are associated with a grievance.

Members of a school community should not instigate complaints that are frivolous, vexatious or malicious. All individuals are expected to participate in the complaint resolution process in good faith.

Matters involving allegations of potential misconduct or misbehaviour, performance, conduct, capacity or any other matter deemed serious in nature, the Principal or Senior Member of staff will refer to the procedures as outlined in the VCMEA 2013, clause 13 (or its successors) clause 13.

A staff member may choose to seek guidance from IEU directly, or from the IEU School Representative, who may provide advice, support and direct representation. In the case of both parties, that is, the complainant and the teacher or staff member about whom the complaint is made, being members of the union, IEU will assign a separate IEU officer to provide advice, support and representation for each member.

Complaints and their resolution will be fully documented.

Complaints will be handled in a manner that is consistent with current Australian legislation and practice, and relevant industrial agreements.

Matters relating to child protection will be handled in accordance with child protection laws and reporting obligations as outlined in the SHC Culture of Child Safety Policy.

Where the matter is deemed to be about bullying, the Principal or Senior Staff member will refer to the Bully and Harassment Policy and Procedures (Student) and Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy (Staff).

Appropriate levels of confidentiality will be adhered to at all times. Complainants should be advised that for legal reasons absolute confidentiality may not always be possible. These reasons include, but are not limited to, duty of care, workplace health, and safety and mandatory reporting.

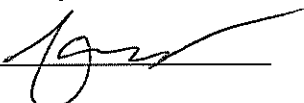
**ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES**

Managing Grievance or Complaints Procedure  
Flowchart of Procedures for Handling Complaints  
Diocesan Procedures for the Management of Allegations of Misconduct Against Lay Employees in Catholic Schools and Catholic Education Offices

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Mercy Education Policy 1.06A Complaints Management  
Mercy Education Procedures 1.06B Complaints Management  
Mandatory Reporting Policy  
Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedures (Students)  
Anti-Bully and Harassment (Staff) Policy  
Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013

**Document Control**

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Signature:	
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