

# Complaint Response and Resolution

## Procedure



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**CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE**  
 PO BOX 179 TORRENSVILLE PLAZA SOUTH AUSTRALIA 5031  
 TELEPHONE: (08) 8301 6600 FACSIMILE: (08) 8301 6611

[www.cesa.catholic.edu.au](http://www.cesa.catholic.edu.au) August 2017

## 1 Purpose

This procedure explains the measures available to respond and resolve complaints from staff, students, their families and the public.

## 2 Scope of Procedure

This procedure applies across Catholic Education SA. It relates to complaints about decisions and actions undertaken in the provision of education and care services by Catholic schools and Catholic Education Offices.

The procedure does not apply to matters that are subject to external determination such as through any court, tribunal, commission or statutory authority or to matters that are the subject of civil litigation.

## 3 Definitions

**<sup>1</sup>Complaint** refers to an expression of dissatisfaction with an action taken, decision made, service provided or handling of an issue at a Catholic school or Catholic Education Office.

## 4 Procedure

### General complaints or concerns

4.1 To lodge a complaint, complainants should:

- Contact the relevant person (e.g. teacher, school leader, CEO leader) and outline (either in writing or verbally) their concerns.
  - Clarify the issue – be clear about the topic or issue.
  - Include all the relevant facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue.
  - Think about what would be an acceptable outcome.
- Be prepared to speak further with the relevant person to discuss the complaint in more detail, as required.
- Allow the relevant person(s) sufficient time to take the steps required to resolve or address the concerns.

### Actions taken following receipt of a complaint

4.2 Following receipt of a complaint, the teacher, school leader, CEO leader will endeavour to:

- acknowledge the complaint in a timely way and make the complainant aware of the complaints response process;
- assess the complaint to determine the most appropriate course of action in responding to it;
- follow-up with the complainant for more information and to further discuss the issues and preferred outcome, as necessary;
- as applicable, inform the relevant senior leader of the receipt of the complaint and provide them with the details and further assist as required;
- advise the complainant if any delays occur in the timeline;
- inform the complainant when an outcome has occurred; and

- maintain adequate written records of the complaint and outcome, along with any supporting documentation, as applicable.
- 4.3 Following receipt of a complaint, the CEO leader/teacher/senior leader may seek further assistance or advice as necessary and explore appropriate options with the complainant.

### Unresolved complaints

- 4.4 If the issue remains unresolved after discussion with the relevant person(s), discuss the concern with a senior leader (i.e. relevant Assistant Director, Principal or Deputy Principal).

**Note:** the senior leader may ask another suitable staff member to either represent her/him at the meeting, or attend the meeting with him/her.

### Complaint escalation

- 4.5 If the matter cannot be resolved at the local level, or if the complaint is about the Principal of a school, complainants may contact the Director, Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Adelaide or the Director, Catholic Education, Diocese of Port Pirie as appropriate.

### Anonymous complaints

- 4.6 Anonymous complaints will be responded to, as appropriate. In some situations, complaints may not be able to be fully addressed if they are made anonymously or without sufficient detail being provided to enable an investigation or resolution of the matter. To ensure procedural fairness, respondents have a right to know the particulars of the allegations being made against them, and be given an opportunity to respond to them.

### Specific complaints

For complaints pertaining to some specific matters (see below), separate procedures are available as follows:

#### 4.7 Discrimination, Bullying & Harassment

For complaints relating to discrimination, bullying and harassment by a staff member, the Discrimination, Bullying & Harassment Procedure applies.

#### 4.8 Child Abuse

For complaints relating to child abuse or neglect by a staff member, the [Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect](#) apply.

#### 4.9 Misconduct or serious misconduct

For complaints relating to alleged misconduct or serious misconduct (not involving child abuse or neglect) by a staff member, the [Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct Procedure](#) applies.

#### 4.10 Complaints about a Principal

For complaints about a Principal by a parent/guardian, caregiver, student, visitor, volunteer or contractor, the [Resolving Concerns and Complaints](#) document on the 'Contact Us' page of the CESA website explains the process.

For complaints by a staff member about a Principal, or a decision they have made, relating to a matter arising under the South Australian Catholic Schools Enterprise Agreement (EA), the National Employment Standards or an industrial matter affecting or relating to employment rights, privileges or duties, Clause 10 (Dispute Resolution) of the EA applies.

## External Agencies

5.0 At any time it is open to a complainant to seek advice from and/or to lodge a complaint with any of the following:

- [Equal Opportunity Commission](#);
- [Department for Child Protection](#) - Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) 131 478
- [Fair Work Commission](#);
- [Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Independent Education Union of Australia \[IEU\]](#);

Note: If a formal complaint is lodged with an external agency, any internal process underway may be placed on hold, pending the outcome of the external process.

## 5 Responsibility for implementation, monitoring, and continual improvement

Responsibility for implementation, monitoring and review of the policy is vested at the level appropriate to the following roles:

Governing entity/authority	Schools
Directors	Principals
Principal Consultants/School Consultants	School Boards/Governing Councils

## 6 Related policies, procedures and support documents

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with, and is additional to, any other relevant South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) policy, procedure, guideline or support document, including the following:

- South Australian Catholic Schools Enterprise Agreement 2017 (or its successor documents)
- Responding to Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Procedure
- [Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect](#)
- [Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct Procedure](#)
- [Resolving Concerns and Complaints](#)
- [SACCS Privacy Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct for Staff Employed in Catholic Schools](#)

## 7 Revision Record

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