



St Mary's Primary School

Positive Relationships (Grievance) Policy

Policy Statement

St Mary's School respects the right of all members of the community to have access to a process which will give full and fair consideration to any grievance that may arise. The process endeavours to hear in a timely and equitable manner any grievance raised to ensure that the principles of natural justice are followed. The Code of Canon Law requires that justice and reconciliation are at the heart of grievance procedures (Code of Canon Law, 1983 Canon 1733(1)).

Rationale

St Mary's is a community based on Christian gospel values and it is firmly intended that these are lived values throughout the whole community day to day. We strive to create an atmosphere of belonging and pride in the school where the richness, equality and contribution of all is appreciated and respected. This environment is characterised by social justice, mutual trust, respect, open communication, tolerance and reconciliation.

A complaints handling procedure helps build a safe and supportive culture as it:

- encourages early intervention in issues before they negatively affect sound relationships
- ensures that behaviours destructive to positive relationships are identified as being unacceptable and are appropriately managed
- ensures that complaints are dealt with consistently
- enables the school community to identify patterns of unacceptable conduct, enabling prevention strategies to be developed and implemented
- encourages individuals, with support, to resolve issues directly, without third party intervention.

Definitions

Grievance is any written complaint (see Appendix 2) made by:

- a) A member of the school community, or;
- b) Any member of the public, or;
- c) Any legal identity against a member of the school community, or school in respect to any action, policy, process or situation relevant to the operation of the school.

Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with an action taken, decision made, service provided or handling of an issue at St Mary's School.

Implementation

The process will ensure that:

- all proceedings remain confidential to the parties except where the school must by law inform external authorities
- all parties will be treated with respect and dignity
- the respondent will be informed of the nature of the claims made against him/her
- all parties have a right to a fair hearing
- all relevant evidence/submissions will be considered when determining the dispute
- only matters relevant to the particular complaint will be considered

- all parties will be given a written record of proceedings where appropriate and will be asked to attest to its authenticity. Where a party feels that they cannot attest to authenticity, that party will be given a chance to record their version of events/facts.
- there is no recrimination.

Parties involved need to have made an effort to resolve their issues directly with a Restorative Practice approach (**See Appendix 1**).

If this has been unsuccessful then the following steps are followed.

Complainant:

1. State as clearly as possible, in writing (**see Appendix 2**), the exact nature of the grievance.
2. Submit to the Principal or Parish Priest by email or in writing.

School:

1. The receiving or responsible party reviews the grievance, effectively and efficiently .
2. The receiving or responsible party either:
 - a. Responds to the complainant directly, or;
 - b. Seeks further advice or information for clarification prior to responding.
3. If the grievance continues to be unresolved, the matter may be referred to the Principal, Principal's delegate or Parish Priest according to the next relevant escalation pathway.
4. Further, if the matter continues to be unresolved, the complainant will be referred to Catholic Education Melbourne.

Approved by the Board: 3 December, 2018

Review Date: To be reviewed as part of the school's cycle

Appendix 1

What is Restorative Practices?

At St Mary's, **Restorative Practices** is a positive way of working together to create a safer school community through restoring relationships by taking responsibility for our actions.

Leading a Restorative Conversation between affected parties involves three main focus areas.

1. Focus on the specific behaviours or incidents without blaming
2. Draw out who was affected and how they were affected
3. Direct questions toward problem solving what needs to happen to make things right.

Appendix 2

Grievance Form

Please complete this form and return to the Principal or Parish Priest. A letter of acknowledgement will be

sent to you and will inform you of the next step in the process.

Your details:

First name:	Family name:
Relationship with the school (e.g. parent, staff, student, neighbour, etc):	
Your address:	Phone (work):
	Phone (home):
	Mobile:
	Email:

Details of your grievance:

Please include as much information as possible, e.g. witnesses, dates, events, etc. Add extra pages or any documentation that you believe is relevant.

Actions already taken:

What actions have you already taken to resolve the problem? Who have you spoken to? What was said? What was done?

Actions needed:

What action do you believe is needed to now resolve the problem?

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Your Signature:	Date:
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For School Use Only:

Date form received:	Received by:
Date acknowledgement sent by:	Acknowledgement sent by:
Complaint referred to:	Date:

Other notes:
