



Complaint Handling Policy 2014



Our Lady Queen of Peace Greystanes

COMPLAINT HANDLING POLICY

Introduction

Our Lady Queen of Peace School and Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta are committed to developing an educational and organisational culture based on mutual trust and respect. We are committed to providing a safe and supportive work and learning environment for all employees and students.

We acknowledge that employees, students and parents may sometimes have a complaint about a decision; behaviour, act or omission that they feel is unacceptable. Whilst most issues can be resolved through direct discussion with the parties, there may be instances in which this is not possible.

Scope of the policy

This policy provides a process for those employed by the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) and those receiving services from the Catholic Education System to raise a complaint. This includes students, employees, parents, pastors and members of the wider community.

Complaints may relate to any practice or policy of a school or CEDP related to the treatment of or education of students. CEDP has specific complaints processes that address issues regarding child abuse and reportable conduct; Industrial issues and complaints of harassment, bullying and discrimination. Nothing in this document replaces the processes outlined in CEDP policy documents.

Underlying Principles

OLQP is committed to the following principles to ensure complaints are addressed appropriately.

- Complaints will be investigated in a fair and impartial manner.
- A person facing a complaint is entitled to know detailed information about the substance of the complaint and to have the opportunity to respond.
- Confidentiality will be observed.
- The complaints management process will be conducted in a manner that is respectful of all parties.
- Persons making a complaint will not be victimised.
- It is expected that complaints are made in good faith and are not vexatious or malicious.
- Complaints will be addressed in a timely manner and complainants will be advised if the matter cannot be finalised within one month.

PROCEDURES

Parent Complaints

Any complaints or grievances pertaining to classroom issues or that relate to other children are to be dealt with by school personnel.

It is not appropriate for parents to approach other parents or their children with the intention of resolving the issue, either in person or over the phone.

1. Contact the school office to make an appointment with the teacher concerned.
2. If parents are not satisfied with the solutions offered or believe that they have not been given a fair hearing, they are encouraged to contact the office staff to make an appointment with the Assistant Principal or Principal, to discuss the issues further.
3. If the matter is not resolved by the school executive, parents may wish to contact the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta office (9840 5611). All enquiries or complaints will be documented.
4. An intake form can be completed if parents wish to record an incident (Appendix 1).

Student Complaints

1. If and when issues arise in the classroom, students are encouraged to speak to their class teacher in order to seek assistance in finding a resolution.
2. Children encountering problems on the playground are asked to talk to the staff member on duty at the time of the incident. ***If they believe that their concern has not been adequately addressed they are encouraged to speak to their class teacher.***
3. Children have the right at all times to speak to the Principal, Assistant Principal or any other staff member about issues, complaints or grievances they might have.

Addressing complaints

No further action will be taken when the complainant is satisfied with the explanation given at the time of making the complaint or enquiry except when the complaint refers to matters that must be investigated as inappropriate behaviour or under Child Protection legislation.

Staff Complaints

General Options available to persons with complaints:

- * Deal with the situation personally

In less serious matters in which there is no risk of harm to any person it may be preferable to discuss the issue of concern with the relevant person to endeavour to reach an amicable resolution.

- * Contact the School Executive

A person may feel unable to approach the relevant person directly or not be satisfied with their response. Each grade has a Co-ordinator who is responsible for teaching and learning matters within that grade. Advice can be sought from the grade co-ordinator who is part of the School Leadership Team. Serious issues should be raised with the Assistant Principal or Principal.

- * Contact CEDP

There may be occasions when a person wishes to take their concern directly to the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta Office. It may be they are not satisfied with the school's response or other legitimate reasons for not approaching the school directly, such as a conflict of interest.

CEDP has a community liaison line for taking general inquiries or concerns (9840 5611). The CEDP officer will take the complaint and refer it to the relevant personnel. In some instances the CEDP officer may advise that the complaint is more appropriately dealt with at the school level. In general, the Officer will refer the complaint to the Director of System Performance for the school involved.

For matters concerning CEDP staff, in the first instance the complaint would be taken to the person's immediate supervisor. If the complainant is not satisfied they may address their concern to the Director of the relevant department.

Intake Process

All school personnel who are responsible for taking enquiries/complaints will complete a signed and dated Intake Form (Appendix 1).

1. Record the complaint/enquiry by clearly recording the following information:
 - contact details of the complainant
 - nature of the matter including the details of the complaint (what is the matter, who is involved, when it happened, where it happened, any contextual information) and the resolution that is sought
 - any advice provided
 - any action taken including the referral of the complaint.

2. Assess how the complaint will be managed
 - The intake form is forwarded to the person responsible for assessing how the complaint is to be managed. In schools this would be the Principal or their delegate. In CEDP in the first instance it will be the Director of System Performance.
 - The assessment section of the Intake Form is completed to clarify how the complaint or enquiry will be managed.
3. Maintain accurate and confidential records
 - The Intake Form is filed in the school/CEDP Complaints Register.
 - A copy of the Intake Form is forwarded to the person responsible for following up the complaint/enquiry.
 - In cases where an inquiry/investigation into the matter proceeds, a separate file is established or documentation is included in the relevant staff or student file.
 - The Intake Form identifies any relevant file that has been established or utilised in relation to the matter
 - When the enquiry is finalised/closed, this is noted on the Intake Form.

Addressing complaints

No further action will be taken when the complainant is satisfied with the explanation given at the time of making the complaint or enquiry except when the complaint refers to matters that must be investigated under Child Protection legislation.

Complaints assessed as relevant to a particular school or CEDP procedure will be handled in accordance with the relevant procedure, for example student management procedures, child protection procedures, Maintaining Right Relations procedures, employee disciplinary procedures.

Complaints that do not relate to a particular school or CEDP procedure will be addressed as follows:

- Record the complaint
- Clarify what resolution is sought
- Advise the person/s against whom the complaint has been made of the concern and provide them with the opportunity to respond.
- Obtain other relevant information eg from witnesses
- Resolve the matter

Appeal

A person who is not satisfied that the matter has been resolved appropriately may choose to appeal to the Principal of the school if the Principal has not been involved in investigating or examining the complaint, or is not the person named as the source of the grievance.

Alternatively an appeal may be made to the Director System Performance of the relevant school who may be contacted at CEDP (phone 9840 5600).

For Catholic Education Office matters an appeal may be made to the Director of the relevant department.

In the final instance an appeal may be made to the Executive Director of Schools.



Complaint Handling Form

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Date:	Phone Call	Email	Letter
Name of person making contact		Phone:	
Name of person processing complaint			
Nature of the matter:			
Advice/ Action:			
Report to DOCs <input type="checkbox"/> Police <input type="checkbox"/> CEDP <input type="checkbox"/>			
Matter Resolved. No further action required <input type="checkbox"/>			