

# Complaints Policy for Parents, Caregivers and Volunteers



## 1 Rationale

There are times when parents/carers or volunteers can have a grievance about an issue or concern relating to a decision, behaviour, act or omission that they feel is unreasonable. A grievance exists where a person believes a complaint or concern has not been responded to appropriately or where they believe their needs have not been adequately met. This policy exists to provide an effective mechanism for fair resolution of grievances.

## 2 Application

There is an underlying assumption that complaints are made in good faith and with an intention to seek resolution (as opposed to retribution) and are not vexatious or malicious.

This policy applies to parents of students at St Joseph's College and volunteer workers at the College.

- This policy excludes complaints regarding anti-discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying or industrial matters which are governed by their own policies.
- Certain matters concerning child protection or other areas covered by specific legislation may need to be referred to an external agency.
- College actions relating to secondary school curriculum may be governed by Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) regulations. In some circumstances students, parents or caregivers may appeal to the QCAA for decisions that affect the Queensland Certificate of Education, VET certification and Tertiary Entrance Score (OP).
- Complaints by members of the broader community are not covered by this policy

## 3 Definitions

**'College'** refers to St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace.

**'EREA'** refers to Edmund Rice Education Australia.

**'Principal'** refers to a person who has delegated responsibility for the day to day operations of the College.

**'Parent'** refers to parents, legal guardians and carers.

**'School'** refers to St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace.

**'Vexatious'** means an allegation made without substance and with the intent of being malicious or to cause distress to the person against whom the allegation was made.

## 4 Policy Statement

Grievances should be resolved in a timely manner and as harmoniously as possible with careful attention to procedural fairness and the principles of natural justice.

## 5 Principles

Catholic schools in the Edmund Rice tradition:

- Model Gospel values of forgiveness and reconciliation by the manner in which conflict is resolved.

- Recognise and act upon the central place of the Gospel commitment to the marginalised through a preferential option for the poor. They demonstrate this preferential option by standing in solidarity with those who are powerless and marginalised.
- Provide pastoral care that nurtures the dignity of each person as a child formed in the image of God.
- View diversity as beneficial to a liberating education
- Recognises the primary role of parents and guardians in the growth and development of the child and provides opportunities for their participation in the life of the school.
- Adopt a prophetic stance in the light of Gospel values and are involved in advocacy for just causes.

## 6 Procedure

- 6.1 Parents and volunteers are encouraged in the first instance to raise concerns with the appropriate person at the school level and to seek to resolve such matters locally. The most effective and lasting resolutions will usually be achieved at the level closest to the issues giving rise to the concern. In this regard the Principal has a key role in resolving problems.
- 6.2 These procedures are to be used only in circumstances when a person (as in Par 2) has made a complaint at the school level to the Principal and they believe that the matter has not been responded to appropriately. Grievances are regarded as matters of a more serious nature.
- 6.3 A grievance that is not resolved at the school level or any serious complaint involving the Principal should be made in writing and addressed to the Regional Director EREA.
- 6.4 The complaint should set out clearly the grounds of the grievance and any information to support that complaint.
- 6.5 On receipt of the written complaint the Regional Director EREA shall consider the complaint and decide whether the complaint warrants investigation.
- 6.6 At all times appropriate levels of confidentiality will be maintained.
- 6.7 In the event that the Regional Director EREA decides that the complaint warrants investigation he/she shall inform the person against whom the complaint is made of the existence and particulars of the complaint and give him/her an opportunity to provide a response. The Regional Director EREA shall undertake such investigation as he/she deems appropriate. Upon completion of the investigation the Regional Director EREA shall decide whether any action is warranted and take any necessary steps to facilitate the implementation of any recommended action.
- 6.8 The Regional Director EREA will confirm in writing to the complainant and the person(s) against whom the complaint was made the outcome of any investigation including any actions to be taken. This shall conclude the grievance process.
- 6.9 All stages of this Grievance process must be handled promptly and confidentially.

<b>Responsible Officer</b>	College Principal	
<b>Review</b>	Every 5 years	
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