



Complaints Policy

1. Rationale

As a School in the Edmund Rice Tradition, St Patrick's College seeks to fulfil its mission to provide a holistic education grounded firmly in the four Touchstones of the Edmund Rice Charter. Integral to the mission of the College is the imperative to continuously improve outcomes for its students and promote a professional and enriching work environment for its staff.

2 Introduction

There are times when parents/carer or volunteer 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.

3 Definitions

In this policy document the term 'School' refers to St Patrick's College The term 'Principal' refers to a person who has delegated responsibility for the day to day operations of the school. The term 'parent' refers to parents, legal guardians and carers. '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 Purpose

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 complaints made by:

- A "person" includes students, parents/carers, former students, parents/carers of former students, members of the wider College community, strategic partners, regulators, and can even extend to competitors and members of the public generally. A person may be a natural person, an organisation, or a representative of an organisation
- 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.
- School actions relating to secondary school curriculum may be governed by Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) (formerly known as Queensland Studies Authority) regulations. In some circumstance's students, parents or caregivers may appeal to the QCAA for decisions that affect the Queensland Certificate of Education, VET Certification, Tertiary Entrance Score (OP) and ATAR Score.
- Internal suggestions and complaints received from staff are not managed through this Program.
- Internal complaints received with respect to student behaviour, such as bullying or aggressive behaviour, are not managed through this Program.

5 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.

6 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.

7 Procedure

Step 1 -All formal complaints are logged through our online complaints management system where they are screened by one of our Complaints Officers, the Complaints Manager, or, in the case of a complaint directly related to conduct by the Principal, Deputy Principal or Member of the School Board, the EREA Regional Director.

Step 2 – All valid complaints will be acknowledged in writing as soon as practicable, and in any event within 10 business days. They will be allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is our policy, where possible, to commence an initial investigation and make a preliminary determination within 10 business days of acknowledging the complaint.

Step 3 – The Complaints Officer shall conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.

Step 4 - Following the determination, if appropriate, the Complaints Officer shall formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

Step 5 - If the initial response is not acceptable the matter will be reviewed internally by the Principal or the Principal's delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Principal or their delegate seek to resolve all disputes within 20 business days of the acknowledgement of the complaint. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal, or their delegate, is accepted. Where appropriate, the matter may be escalated to the EREA Regional Director.

Step 6 - All complaints received will be entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

Step 7 - If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and, if relevant to a person against whom a complaint is made. The College is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process.

Personally identifiable information about a complainant will only be made available for the purpose of addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) will be actively protected from disclosure.

8 Review

This policy will be reviewed every five years

Responsible Officer	Deputy Principal		
Review	Every 5 years		
Associated Documents	EREA Complaints Policy EREA Privacy Policy EREA Code of Conduct St Patrick's College's Complaints Guidelines		
Version	Authorisation	Approval Date	Effective Date
1.0	College Principal	15 July 2020	15 July 2020