



# COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURES

## Procedure Statement

The Complaints Handling Procedures should be considered alongside the *Complaints Handling Policy*.

For employment related complaints, these procedures supplement the grievance resolution procedures available under applicable awards for employees.

- Build authentic partnerships between school, parents and carers and the wider community.

## Implementation

### A. Making and receiving complaints

1. Most complaints will be resolved informally

2. Where a complaint cannot be resolved informally:

#### 2.1 School based complaints

a. the complaint will be put in writing (see complaint form) and given to the principal (complaint manager)

b. the principal will establish a process to deal with the complaint by:

- assessing seriousness of the complaint
- assessing appropriateness of each option for resolution
- keeping the resolution as close to the source of the complaint as possible

#### 2.2 All complaints

2.2.1 If the complaint is against the principal

a. the complaint will be put in writing (see complaint form) and given to:

- (i) Executive director C.E.O Sandhurst office (complaint manager), or
- (ii) member of the C.E.O Sandhurst executive leadership team (complaint manager).

b. the complaint manager will establish a process to deal with the complaint by:

- assessing seriousness of the complaint

- assessing appropriateness of each option for resolution
- keeping the resolution as close to the source of the complaint as possible

2.2.2 If the complaint is against a leadership team member

- a. the complaint will be put in writing (complaint form) and given to the principal
- b. the principal will establish a process to deal with the complaint by:

- assessing seriousness of the complaint
- assessing appropriateness of each option for resolution
- keeping the resolution as close to the source of the complaint as possible

2.2.3 If the complaint is against a teacher

- c. the complaint will be put in writing (complaint form) and given to the principal (complaint manager)
- d. the principal will establish a process to deal with the complaint by:

- assessing seriousness of the complaint
- assessing appropriateness of each option for resolution
- keeping the resolution as close to the source of the complaint as possible

2.2.4 If the complaint is against the executive director of schools

- e. the complaint will be put in writing (complaint form) and given to the bishop's office (complaint manager)
- f. the bishop's office will establish a process to deal with the complaint by:

- assessing seriousness of the complaint
- assessing appropriateness of each option for resolution
- keeping the resolution as close to the source of the complaint as possible

2.2.5 If the complaint is received by the Catholic Education Office

- g. the complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing (complaint form) and will be returned to  
the relevant head of service (complaint manager)
- h. the head for service will establish a process to deal with the complaint by:

- assessing seriousness of the complaint
- assessing appropriateness of each option for resolution

- keeping the resolution as close to the source of the complaint as possible

In some situations, having assessed the complaint, the executive director of schools may direct that an

alternative person is best suited to deal with a particular set of circumstances.

### **3. Assessing and referring complaints**

The principal will assess and decide on the appropriate option for resolution of the complaint.

Assessment of a complaint will be guided by assessing and referring complaints.

The options for resolution of the complaint are:

#### 3.1 Informal options

- self-resolution – handle the issue personally
- assisted resolution – seek to reach resolution with the help of a colleague, support person or complaint manager
- facilitation of communication, options and resolution
- mediation

#### 3.2 Formal options

- Intervention Procedure
- Investigation Procedure
- System Improvement Procedure

Information about these options is detailed in the explanation of options for resolution.

### **4. Obtaining advice and delegation**

The complaint manager may obtain advice and, based on assessment, delegate the responsibility for handling the complaint to completion.

### **5. Access to support**

The person who made the complaint and the person responding may access support. If meetings with the parties are held, the parties may have a support person present.

Students under the age of 18 who make a complaint are to be offered the support of an adult support person. This may be a parent, guardian, teacher or other significant person.

A complainant who may require support in putting their complaint in writing will be offered appropriate assistance. All employees participating in the complaints process may access a confidential counseling service which is made available by contacting the employee assistance program on 1800 81 87 28.

## **B. Natural justice integral to complaint management**

The principles of natural justice apply to all complaints. However, the extent to which principles of natural justice apply will depend upon the seriousness of the matter.

Natural justice is also known as procedural fairness and applies in situations where a decision is to be taken which could have a detrimental effect on the rights, interests or legitimate expectations of a person.

The more serious a complaint the more important it is to ensure procedural fairness. Procedural fairness requires that parties to a complaint are:

**a. treated impartially** – this means that investigations are conducted impartially, and decisions are made without bias

**b. informed of concerns or allegations being made** – this means that the person about whom the complaint is made will be informed of the content of the complaint and, in most cases of the identity of the complainant at a point in time when it is clear what the issues are and who needs to respond to them

**c. given the opportunity to respond** – this means that where a concern is raised which may result in action being taken against a person, that person will normally be given an opportunity to respond

**d. informed of complaints process and review process**

Other key aspects of procedural fairness are:

**e. timeliness**

**f. records of complaints must be maintained**

## **C. Confidentiality**

To maintain confidentiality in so far as that is reasonable all participants in the process should restrict the information about the complaint to those who need to know of the complaint in order to:

- a. refer the complaint
- b. manage the complaint
- c. provide advice and support in the process
- d. review and decide upon appropriate complaint mechanisms
- e. manage the workplace
- f. apply the process

## **D. Record keeping**

Complaint managers will keep written records of the complaint resolution process and outcomes. Complaint records will be filed and stored appropriately.

## **E. Reviews**

Either party may request a review of a decision. The review will be undertaken by the decision maker's supervisor. Where that person should be excluded on the grounds of procedural fairness, the principal will nominate an appropriate person to conduct the review.

The request for a review must be made within 10 days from the date of the finding and detail the grounds for the request.

The person conducting the review will:

- review all relevant material
- make further inquiries, if necessary
- decide whether further action is necessary
- make a decision
- advise parties in writing of the decision and the reasons for the decision

The person conducting the review will decide whether or not the decision that is being reviewed will be put on hold until the review is complete.

There is no option of review if the matter has been resolved by agreement of the parties.

The reviewer will record action taken.

The reviewer's decision is final.

# Galen Catholic College – Complaint Form

## Complaint Form

| 1. YOUR DETAILS |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Family name     | Given name(s) |
| Address         |               |
| Contact number  |               |
| Email or Fax    |               |

| 2. YOU ARE: (PLEASE TICK)                       | 3. THE COMPLAINT IS ABOUT EVENTS AT: (PLEASE TICK AND GIVE DETAILS) |
|---|---|
| Student <input type="checkbox"/>                | A school <input type="checkbox"/>                                   |
| Parent/caregiver <input type="checkbox"/>       | CEO office <input type="checkbox"/>                                 |
| Staff <input type="checkbox"/>                  | Specify location and address: <input type="checkbox"/>              |
| Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/> |   |

| 4. PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINT |
|---|
|   |
|   |
|   |
|   |
|   |

(Please attach additional page if space is insufficient. You may also attach further documentation if you wish.)

| 5. PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF THE OUTCOME YOU ARE SEEKING |
|---|
|   |
|   |
|   |

(Please attach additional page if space is insufficient.)

| 6. HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY RAISED THIS CONCERN WITH A STAFF MEMBER? (PLEASE TICK) |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| No <input type="checkbox"/>   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If yes, when:   |                              |
| Who dealt with the matter?  |                              |
| What was the result?  |                              |

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form or hand it in to the complaint manager (see [assessing and referring complaints](#))

**Office use**

**For matters which are resolved at intake:**

Advice/Action: .....

Options:  Self-resolution  Assisted resolution  Facilitation  Mediation  Intervention  Investigation  
 Systems improvement

Outcome: .....

Date matter is finalised: .....

Name of complaint manager: ..... Signature: .....

  

**For matters which need further action:**

Referred for: Further assessment (see optional Managing Complaints Checklist)

Referred to: Name: .....

Referred by: Name: ..... Signature: .....

Date: .....