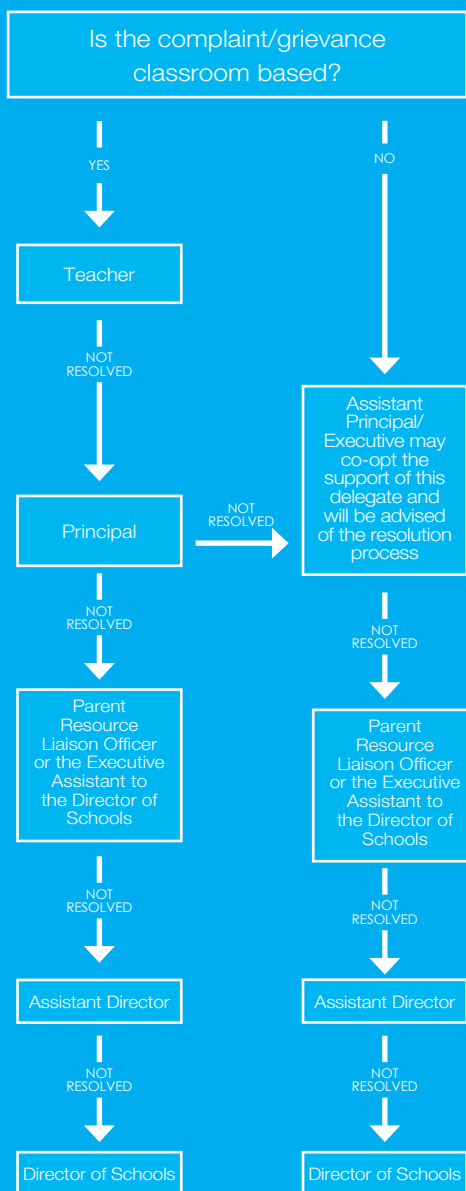


COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCES RESOLUTION PATHWAY

The Key steps followed in the process are dependent upon whether the complaint and/or grievance emanates from a Primary or a Secondary setting.



IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Problems are best resolved using a **positive** attitude. Anger is usually counter-productive to finding a resolution to complaints and grievances.
- Schools need **time** to investigate complaints and grievances. A quick fix is not always possible or desirable.
- Schools are complex environments - **not all** complaints and grievances can be resolved. Opinions vary widely.
- With students there are often as many perspectives as there are children.
- Schools endeavour to act in the best interests of **all**.
- Confidentiality and privacy are respected. **There will be times when actions taken in resolution of the complaints and grievances are not able to be discussed.**
- In the interests of Procedural Fairness & Restorative Justice it is counterproductive to discuss Complaints & Grievances outside of this process.
- Social media is not an appropriate forum to discuss Complaints & Grievances

Contact

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PO BOX 714 Newcastle NSW 2300
Phone 02 4979 1200 **Fax** 02 4979 1209
Email info@mn.catholic.edu.au
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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE
PARENT LIAISON AND RESOURCES OFFICER
Phone 02 4979 1303
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ZIMMERMAN SERVICES - CHILD PROTECTION UNIT
50 Crebert Street, Mayfield NSW 2304
Phone 02 4979 1390
Email dcppcu@mn.catholic.org.au

COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCES RESOLUTION

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INFORMATION BROCHURE

An agreed process for positively resolving concerns in our school community



INTRODUCTION

Diocesan Schools are committed to providing a positive, safe environment for all staff and students. There are occasions however, when members of our schools and wider community can sometimes be concerned about something that is happening at a school that appears to be unsatisfactory or unreasonable.

This brochure explains what to do when discussions about an issue or series of issues does not provide resolution.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern with a school or the Catholic Schools office regarding policy, procedures and/or actions and decisions made.

A grievance is a real or imaginary wrong causing resentment and regarded as grounds for a complaint a feeling of resentment or injustice at having been unfairly treated.

Complaints and grievances are addressed in a timely and confidential manner at the appropriate management level, in order to prevent minor problems or concerns escalating. The dignity of each person involved will be respected in the process, with all parties maintaining confidentiality. A Complaints & Grievances policy has been developed to provide a consistent approach for all Diocesan schools.

*Anonymous Complaints:
If you choose to remain anonymous, the complaint may not be acted upon.*

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Complaints will be dealt with responsively and confidentiality will be preserved.

PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

The principles of procedural fairness will be followed in all aspects of complaint handling. This includes:

- Giving you the opportunity to state your case
- Offering reasonable assistance to enable the complaint to be made
- Informing the parties of the nature of the complaint investigation process including outcomes
- Handling the complaint process confidentially
- Addressing complaints as quickly as possible and advising all parties of the outcome of the investigation
- Assessing the facts and circumstances of the situation objectively and determining the complaint fairly
- Advising parties of the outcome of the investigation
- Informing parties of the avenue of appeal

INCLUSIVITY

Our schools strive to be inclusive. This means schools are respectful, supportive and equitable environments.

DUE DILIGENCE

Our schools have a duty of care to all students and staff. Therefore prudent action must be taken in all cases.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

The overriding principle of all our interactions is that we strive to restore relationships; holding parties accountable with the aim to repair any harm that may have been done.

AGREED COMPLAINTS PROCESS

STEP 1

Complaints and Grievances should be raised at the earliest possible time. Classroom based complaints and grievances should be raised with the student's class teacher. All other complaints and grievances should be directed to the principal and/or their delegate.

STEP 2

Where the classroom based complaint and grievance is not resolved by the teacher this should also be directed to the Principal and/or delegate.

STEP 3

Where a complaint or grievance is not resolved by the Principal after all efforts have been made to do so, or the complaint or grievance is about the Principal, the parent/carer should refer the concern to the Catholic Schools Office via the Parent Liaison Officer. The Parent Liaison and Resource Officer will refer the matter to the relevant Assistant Director for resolution.

STEP 4

Where a complaint or grievance remains unresolved the Parent/Carer or the Assistant Director may refer the matter to the Director of Schools for review. A formal avenue of appeal is available in accordance with the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy. All such appeals should be made to the Director of Schools in writing and in a timely manner.

STEP 5

If ultimately the Parent/Carer is not happy with the way their complaint or grievance has been dealt with by the school or the Catholic Schools Office, they may wish to go to an external agency or legal advocate for advice and assistance.