



# Grievance Policy

*At Sacred Heart Parish School, we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment which promotes open communication, respect, fairness and positive relationships. We believe that the partnership between home and school is a very important part of ensuring that children are happy, secure and open to learning. As a school community we are committed to working together to meet the various needs of our school community. Central to achieving this is trust and open, effective communication between all members of the school community. As a Catholic school the Gospel values form the basis for a proactive approach to communication and problem solving.*

## Rationale

Each Catholic community, organisation and individual collaboratively engaged in the educational ministry of the Church in the Archdiocese of Brisbane is called to:

### Teach

We promote faith in Jesus Christ, teaching and learning about Jesus, the gospel and the faith of the Catholic Christian community. Learning is lifelong, life-giving and engages the whole person.

### Challenge

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we challenge those we educate to live in communion with God, others and the whole of creation in prayerful, sacramental, just, peaceful, inclusive and reconciling communities.

### Transform

We educate for a transformed world in communion, by nurturing the gifts and potential of each person, enacting shared leadership, and exercising a preferential option for the poor and the marginalised.

## Sacred Heart Vision/Mission

To develop Spirit, Mind and Body in Our Catholic Community. We will achieve this by:

- Living Catholic Faith, Values and traditions that acknowledge our heritage.
- Delivering a holistic education that supports the development of the life long learner.
- Developing positive and inclusive relationships based in Christian Values.

The Vision Statements for Catholic Education and Sacred Heart underpin and guide the development and implementation of this policy.



## **Policy Statement**

The concepts of acceptance, understanding and celebrating differences, along with negotiation and respect underpin some of the key values considered in dealing with conflict. When it comes to community situations, we are regularly challenged to show genuine tolerance and open-mindedness. We are also challenged to be part of a forgiving and reconciling community which demonstrates maturity in the handling and resolution of conflict. As staff in a Catholic school there is an expectation that we will model exemplary behaviour. As co-educators of their children and vital members of the Sacred Heart school community, parents have a right to be involved in their child's learning, to be informed about their child's progress and to voice their concerns when issues arise. Parents have a responsibility to adopt the spirit and actions of conflict minimization.

## **Purpose**

Sacred Heart Parish School is a community that strives for harmonious relationships and strong partnerships but acknowledges that despite best efforts, there will be times when conflict may arise.

As Christians we have an obligation to work at resolving conflicts peacefully and with due respect for the dignity of all people involved. At Sacred Heart we encourage conflict resolution strategies which promote and support the dignity of parents, staff and children. We have an obligation to restore relationships broken or affected by conflict. Through open, honest and respectful communication, we fulfil our obligation to avoid initiating or escalating conflict situations.

## **Scope**

The parents/carers, students and staff each have specific responsibilities to ensure conflict is handled in a mature responsible manner, resulting in a minimisation of conflict.

## **Key Elements for handling complaints**

### **Impartiality**

- If you make a complaint, it will be investigated in a fair and impartial manner. No judgements or assumptions will be made and no action will be taken until the investigation is complete. If a complaint is made against you, your rights will be protected and you will be given an opportunity to tell your side of the story.

### **Confidentiality**

- You can feel secure that if you make a complaint under this policy, it will remain confidential. The only people who will have access to information about the complaint will be the person making the complaint and the person investigating.

### **No Victimisation**

- You can also rest assured that if you make a complaint you will not suffer in any way as a consequence. The school will ensure that a person who makes a complaint is not victimised in any way.

### **Timeliness**

- Each complaint will be finalised within as short a period as possible.



# Grievance Procedures

## Parents/Carers - What do I do if I have a concern?

1. Reflect on the issue or concern - Jotting these concerns down on a piece of paper may be helpful in clarifying the problem for you.
2. As the initial point of contact regarding an issue should always be the teacher concerned, contact the office to arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss the concerns or send a note/email asking for an appointment with that teacher.
3. At the meeting, identify and communicate your feelings about the issue in a non-threatening way.
4. Do not approach other children to discuss or investigate your concerns.
5. After an issue is raised with the teacher, wait for the teacher's verbal report on what has been done to address the issue.
6. If dissatisfied with the outcome, contact the school office and make an appointment with a member of Admin (Principal, APA, APRE) indicating the concern to be discussed.
7. Check that the steps have been followed as outlined above – The Admin team will support this process and remind parents to follow the steps in order.
8. Participate in a meeting convened by the Admin member for those involved.
9. Should a parent have a concern of a serious nature about a teacher's professional behaviour e.g. physical or sexual abuse of a child, the parent should put the complaint in writing addressed to the Principal. This could happen before or after an appointment with the Principal or delegate.
10. At no stage are parents to approach a teacher in an aggressive or threatening way.

## Students - What do I do if I have a concern?

1. Try to deal with the problem yourself by talking and aiming to "Work It Out" to reach a Win/Win situation. Use "I Statements" to speak confidently to individuals involved. Avoid using Flight or Fight responses.
2. If problems cannot be resolved, get help from an adult such as a Teacher, School Officer, Peer Mediator, Buddy or your Parents.
3. Report any incidents when they happen. Waiting until arriving at home makes issues difficult to act on promptly.
4. Tell your parents about the problem and what you have tried or would like to try to do in order to solve it.
5. If you are being bullied or you see someone being bullied report it. See our Bullying Policy for other ideas.

## Staff - What do I do if I have a concern?

1. Deal with the problem as soon as possible.
2. Be clear about the issue. Writing it down can be helpful. Talk it out with a third party to clarify the issue(s) and to receive confirmation and feedback.
3. Separate the problem / issue from the person. Try to avoid the pitfall of the conversation shifting focus from issues to personal attack/abuse.
4. Identify and communicate your own feelings about the issue in a non-threatening way.
5. Listen sensitively to the other point of view and be open-minded.
6. Be prepared to negotiate and compromise when such is possible.



7. Be forgiving should there be admission of fault or neglect.
8. Be willing to be reconciled.
9. Seek mediation if the issue cannot be resolved amicably.
10. Personal conflicts and disagreements are matters to be worked through by the parties concerned and cannot be allowed to interfere with professionalism in the school environment.
11. Complaints regarding the professional integrity of another staff member need to be substantiated. The Principal will exercise professional discretion as to how matters are dealt with.

<b>Associated Documents:</b>	<b>Policy:</b> Attendance Policy <b>Related Policy:</b> Bullying Policy Communication Policy
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