



## Procedures

These procedures would usually be followed by a parent/ care giver when parents/care givers of students of a DOBCEL school community wish to raise a concern, complaint or grievance.

In the spirit of partnership and in acknowledging the Catholic Social Principle of subsidiarity and where appropriate concerns, complaints and grievances should initially be addressed by the school.

When grievances about an apparent breach of policy or matter of compliance with the minimum standards for school registration cannot be resolved at the school, the CEOB will seek to assist in resolving the issue using procedures and processes that are fair, consistent and safeguard the dignity of all parties.

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARE GIVERS

The relationship between the home and the school is a very important part of ensuring that children are happy, secure and open to learning. Parents, care givers and school staff need to work together to provide the best educational opportunities for children. We encourage you to discuss your child's progress with his/her teacher and to let the teacher know if you have any concerns so the school can work with you to resolve these as promptly and effectively as possible.

### **What to do if you have a problem:**

- Try to identify the problem clearly before contacting the school. If there is more than one problem, list them to ensure that the extent of the problem is clear to the school.
- Decide whether the problem is a concern, complaint or grievance. This will help in finding a solution.
- Make an appointment to meet with your child's class teacher. The best way to do this is to contact the school office to arrange a mutually convenient time for a telephone call or meeting.
- If you do not feel after your meeting that the matter has been resolved or if you have a complaint about the teacher or another staff member, make arrangements to meet with the relevant staff member in the school. This may be the Principal or Deputy Principal or the school may nominate another member of staff.

- Try to stay calm when discussing your concern. Even if you don't feel it, being calm will help you get your concerns across more clearly than if you are upset or angry. It may help to take someone with you.
- Remember, the staff are committed to resolving any issues that parents and care givers might have regarding their children and will discuss with you actions that might be taken in regard to your concern.
- If you still do not feel that the matter has been resolved or if your complaint is about a very serious matter, send your complaint in writing to the Principal.
- The School Principal will ensure that your complaint is addressed. Please note that addressing your complaint does not equate to you achieving the outcome you would prefer. The School Principal will determine a just outcome for all.
- After your complaint has been addressed by the School Principal you may not be satisfied with the outcome. If you are not satisfied with the outcome because the school did not follow stated policy or is in breach of the Minimum Standards, you should then send your complaint in writing to the Manager Safeguarding and Standards (Catholic Education Office Ballarat) via [complaints@ceob.edu.au](mailto:complaints@ceob.edu.au). The Manager Safeguarding and Standards will arbitrate after examination of the grievance and related issues. The Manager Safeguarding and Standards will only address complaints if the school has not followed stated policy or is in breach of the Minimum Standards.
- If the matter has not been resolved you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation and other government commissions such as Human Rights Commission etc. These might entail some financial cost to you.

**Note:** The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and the Secretary of the Department of Education **do not** deal with complaints within the Catholic Education system except in so far as those complaints relate to Standards required by the VRQA.

#### **When you make a complaint:**

- If a complaint is made against a person, that person will be informed of the nature and content of the complaint and will have the right to respond.
- Discussions of complaints are confidential.
- Complaints may be made verbally or in writing. Written complaints would usually result in a written reply. Verbal complaints would usually be responded to verbally.
- All complaints, the actions taken to resolve them and outcomes of those actions will be documented.
- A person who has made a complaint may withdraw it at any time. If the complaint is in writing, the withdrawal should also be in writing.
- No one will be victimised as a result of taking out a formal grievance.
- At the formal stage, a person who has made a complaint has the right to be represented and supported by another person eg. a friend or other person of his/her choice as a support person.
- A process of mediation is an option at any stage of the process.