



Concerns and Complaints Policy

Rationale

Our Lady's Primary School acknowledges that parents and caregivers have a right to raise concerns and complaints they may have and to have them attended to in an appropriate way.

Our Lady's system of addressing concerns and complaints is based on a commitment to:

1. Provide a safe and supportive and learning environment;
2. Provide a safe environment for all members of staff;
3. Create positive relationships between students, staff and parents

This policy and the procedures outlined help ensure that parents and caregivers concerns and complaints are handled in a timely and fair manner with the intention to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

Purpose

This policy and its associated procedures aims to resolve issues involving:

- General matters concerning student behaviour;
- Bullying, harassment or discrimination;
- Education programs, assessments and reporting of student learning;
- Communication between staff and parents/caregivers;
- General administrative issues;
- School fees/payments;
- Other issues relating to the school including excursions, camps, parent-teacher interviews, etc.
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Application

Raising a concern or complaint

Parents or caregivers should follow the procedure outlined in this policy.

A parent / caregiver can raise concerns or complaints about any aspect of the school's operations in the following way:

ISSUE/CONCERN	WHO TO CONTACT FIRST	HOW
Classroom activities, class curriculum and learning environment, friendship issues	Your child's classroom teacher/s or applicable specialist Teacher	Via telephone, email or arrange an appointment
Complicated student issues, Student Welfare, School Curriculum, staff members	Member of school leadership team	Via email, telephone, letter, or arrange an appointment.
School Policies or school organisation and management	Principal or deputy principal/s	
School Fees & payments, general enquiries	Office Staff	Telephone or in person at the office

*Please note, if your concern or complaint is not sufficiently addressed by the first point of contact, please contact a member of the school leadership team.

When voicing your concern/complaint please remember:

1. Raise your concern in a timely manner in relation to when the issue occurs
2. Remain respectful, honest and calm
3. Respect all parties entitlement to privacy and confidentiality
4. Be understanding that other parties may have a different point of view
5. Recognise that a resolution will need to be reached that is acceptable to all involved.

The following behaviour will not acceptable when voicing your concern complaint:

1. Shouting at a member of staff, either via telephone or in person
2. Physically or verbally intimidating a staff member
3. Using aggressive hand gestures/ body movement
4. Making or writing rude, defamatory or abusive comments about a staff member
5. Swearing using offensive language
6. Using any form of physical violence towards a staff member.

Confidentiality

The school will endeavour to provide clarity as to what information will and will not be treated with confidentiality. In order to maintain a reasonable degree of confidentiality, all parties should only share information about the complaint to those who need to know in order to :

1. Refer the complaint
2. Manage the complaint
3. Provide advice and support in relation to the process
4. Review and provide a decision as to the outcome of the complaint

Recording Complains

The school will keep a record of all complaints and concerns, including minor complaints.

The record will contain the following information:

- Contact details of person making the complaint
- Date of the complaint and method in which the complaint was communicated and to who the complaint was communicated to
- Details of complaint and requested resolution if provided

- Member of staff handling the issue
- Any action taken, investigations, etc.
- Outcome of complaint including the date the resolution was reached

Options for resolving a complaint or concern

There are both formal and informal options for resolving a complaint/concern. It is recommended that informal options are used first prior to formal resolutions however every concern/complaint will be reviewed individually.

Informal options:

1. Self-resolution: The parties involved may resolve the concerns in an open discussion. This option generally includes clarification as to the circumstances of the complaint. This option involves a large amount of reflection and respectful conversation.
2. Supported self- resolution: the parties may be provided with assistance to resolve the issue with the support of a staff member, member of leadership or school principal.
3. Facilitated informal mediation: The parties may be assisted by a facilitator who has experience in mediation who will assist in identifying issues, exploring options and considering alternative approaches in order to reach a resolution. The facilitator could be an external mediator, a member of leadership, the school psychologist or principal.

Formal Options

1. Intervention: The school principal or another member of the school leadership team may meet with the parties involved either jointly or separately. If this does not resolve the issue then the principal/ member of leadership may make a decision for resolution and notify the party/parties of that decision.
2. Investigation: A complaint about a person concerning alleged breach of legislation or school policy may require an investigation prior to attempting to resolve the issue.

Addressing concerns or complaints:

Our Lady's will make every endeavour to attempt to resolve concerns and complaints prior to involving the Catholic Education Melbourne ("CEM"). Once the school receives all information relating to a concern or complaint, the school will decide whether it should be managed through the school's procedures or via an avenue provided by the CEM.

The school will endeavour to address all complaints and concerns in a timely and efficient manner. Whilst investigating the complaint, the school will ensure that the party to has made the complaint is kept well informed. If the complaint or concern is complex or involves multiple people whether it be students or staff, the school will require additional time to sufficiently investigate the issue with an attempt to resolve it. Further, the school may require advice and assistance from the CEM which may take extra time.

Referral:

If a parent or caregiver who has voiced a concern or complaint is unsatisfied with the school's resolution of the issue, they may contact the CEM. The CEM may require information from the parent or caregiver relating to their opinion that the school did not adequately resolve the issue to their satisfaction.

Possible Resolutions

Resolution for a parent/caregiver may involve:

- Feeling that their concern has been considered and addressed seriously
- Knowing the school is aware of the issue
- Achieving an outcome or resolution which may be different to the one they initially sought but which they perceive to be appropriate
- Receiving an apology from appropriate party
- Concern/complaint resulting in a change to a policy, procedure, rule which may prevent the issue from reoccurring.

Resolution for the school may involve:

- Reaching a compromise with the parent/caregiver
- Dismissing the complaint (if appropriate)
- Upholding a complaint and implementing a specific action, including overturning a particular decision or providing an apology
- Improving procedures or processes
- Increasing staff training and development
- Taking any other action which will ensure that the problem will be handled in an appropriate manner in the future.

Communication and training:

The school will ensure that information relating to the procedures for addressing concerns and complaints are easily accessible to all parents and caregivers. The school will ensure that all staff members are kept informed in relation to the procedures for resolving complaints. Additionally, the school will provide all staff members with support and training in relation to their responsibilities in addressing complaints and concerns.

Review:

This policy and its applicable procedures will be reviewed yearly or when relevant legislation requires its amendments.

Date: June 2020