

## COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY

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### 1. MISSION AND VISION

**Mission:** Excellence in education within a Christ-centred environment in which all flourish.

**Vision:** An inclusive, innovative system of Catholic schools in which lives are transformed through witness to Christ.

### 2. PURPOSE

Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst (CEDB) is committed to providing a harmonious and safe environment for all students, parents/carers, and staff. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are received, managed, and resolved fairly, efficiently and effectively. This Policy provides guidance on the key principles of the Complaint Resolution processes for those who wish to make a complaint.

### 3. EXPECTATIONS

It is expected that all staff, students, community, volunteers and contractors at CEDB and in CEDB schools will adhere to the scope and guidelines outlined in this document. A school Complaints Management Policy is not required. Schools will develop, document and implement school specific practices in relation to the Complaints Management Policy.

Schools must have a copy of the Complaints Management Policy on their school website.

### 4. SCOPE

This document applies to complaints raised by:

- parents/carers
- visitors
- volunteers
- community members

While these guidelines provide a framework for addressing concerns, the specific approach may vary depending on the nature, circumstances, and seriousness of each complaint.

These guidelines do not address child protection matters, child safety complaints or safeguarding allegations against staff members. (Please refer to CEDB Child Safe Policy.)

## 5. GUIDELINES

The following inform this policy:

1. Resolve issues directly
  - Complaints should if at all possible be resolved at the lowest possible level and especially resolution should generally be sought at the school before referral to the CEDB
  - The CEDB may refer complaints back to schools if they have not been addressed at this level
2. Good Faith
  - All parties are responsible for participating in the process in good faith and will be treated with respect, impartiality, dignity, privacy and confidentiality
  - Malicious or vexatious complaints do not meet the good faith criterion
  - Anonymous complaints may not be fully investigated as they may not meet the good faith criterion and may contain insufficient detail
3. Procedural Fairness
  - The principles of procedural fairness and timeliness will be applied in all complaints
  - Complaints will be treated confidentially and all parties involved must adhere to confidentiality principles
  - Any investigation will be open and unbiased with all parties receiving a fair hearing
4. Conflict of Interest
  - If a Conflict of Interest or perceived Conflict of Interest exists, the complaint will be investigated accordingly
5. Record of Complaints/Appeals
  - Schools and the CEDB maintain a Complaints Register
  - Documentation from the investigation and any appeal is attached to the register and retained for the required period
6. Timeliness
  - All phases of the process should be completed in a timely manner and communicated to the complainant if the process cannot occur in the recommended time frames.
  - The initial acknowledgement of the complaint should occur within 48 hours

## 6. PROCEDURES

### The Complaint process

#### TABLE FOR RAISING CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS FOR PARENTS OR CARERS\*

I have a concern/complaint in regard to...

My child's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning</li> <li>• Homework</li> <li>• Behaviour</li> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Wellbeing</li> <li>• Uniform etc</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious Education/Mission</li> <li>• Staff professional conduct</li> <li>• Dangerous student behaviour</li> <li>• Suspension of students</li> <li>• Behaviour of students outside of school</li> <li>• Sport selection and pathways</li> <li>• Other serious matters</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrolments</li> <li>• School fees</li> <li>• Change of contact details</li> <li>• Use of ICT</li> <li>• Other administrative services</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>
Make an appointment to speak with your child's class teacher (primary), subject teacher/year coordinator/subject coordinator depending on the issue and the school's processes (secondary)	Raise the concern with your child's Leader of Learning or wellbeing or the Assistant Principal	Contact your school office to discuss with the admin staff
Was the concern resolved Yes (no further action required) No ↓	Was the concern resolved Yes (no further action required) No ↓	Was the concern resolved Yes (no further action required) No ↓
Raise the concern with your child's Leader of Learning or wellbeing or the Assistant Principal	Make an appointment to speak to your school principal	Make an appointment to speak to your school principal
Was the concern resolved Yes (no further action required) No ↓	Was the concern resolved Yes (no further action required) No ↓	Was the concern resolved Yes (no further action required) No ↓
Make an appointment to speak to your school principal	Contact the CEDB Telephone: (02) 6338 3000 Email: <a href="mailto:complaints@bth.catholic.edu.au">complaints@bth.catholic.edu.au</a>	Contact the CEDB Telephone: (02) 6338 3000 Email: <a href="mailto:complaints@bth.catholic.edu.au">complaints@bth.catholic.edu.au</a>

\*This flowchart is a guide. It is not meant to be exhaustive

While it is recommended that a complaint is sought to be resolved in this order, it is also recognised that in some circumstances this may not be appropriate and it may be necessary to commence with a later option.

If the complaint relates to corrupt conduct the complaint should be referred directly to the CEDB external Whistleblower Hotline via the following channels: Phone: 1300 304550. Email: [cebd@stopline.com.au](mailto:cebd@stopline.com.au)

If the complaint relates to the principal this should be referred to the PA to the Executive Director of Schools who will direct your complaint to the relevant Consultant to Schools ([complaints@bth.catholic.edu.au](mailto:complaints@bth.catholic.edu.au)).

If the complaint relates to the Executive Director of Schools the complaint should be referred to the Chair of the CEDB Board by contacting the company Secretary at [cosec@bth.catholic.edu.au](mailto:cosec@bth.catholic.edu.au).

### **Appeals**

Any appeal must be in writing and clearly articulate

- a. the name of the designated person who handled the complaint
- b. the handling, investigation or processes which they are dissatisfied with

There are two avenues of appeal if the complainant feels that the complaints procedure has not been followed correctly. Appeals should be directed to the school if that is where the complaint was handled, and to the Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst if that is where the complaint was handled.

#### **1. Appeals at School Level**

Appeals at school level are directed:

- to the Principal, if the Principal has not been involved in investigating the complaint, and is not the person named as the source of the grievance
- to the CEDB if the Principal has been involved

This appeal will consider:

- whether the complaint was handled properly in line with the Complaints Resolution process
- the outcome of the process and the basis for the appeal

The decision of the appeal process will be provided to the complainant, with that decision being final. No further correspondence will be entered into unless new information has been provided, even if the decision is not the preferred outcome of the complainant.

- Appeals documentation must be recorded and stored.

#### **2. Appeals to the CEDB**

Appeals to the CEDB are directed:

- to the Personal Assistant to the Executive Director of Schools. The Executive Director of Schools will determine who will undertake a review of the outcome and process at CEDB. This will be managed by someone not involved in the original decision.

This appeal will consider:

- whether the complaint was handled properly in line with the Complaints Resolution process
- the outcome of the process and the basis for the appeal

The decision of the appeal process will be provided to the complainant, with that decision being final. No further correspondence will be entered into unless new information has been provided, even if the decision is not the preferred outcome of the complainant.

- Appeals documentation must be recorded and stored.

## 7. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

*Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*  
*Racial Discrimination Act 1975*  
*Disability Discrimination Act 1992*  
*Sex Discrimination Act 1984*  
*Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011*  
*Ombudsman Act 1976 (NSW)*

## 8. RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

*Policy for the Conduct of Schools, Parents and Volunteers* Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst  
*Our Catholic Community Working Together A Charter for Schools, Parents and Volunteers in the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Bathurst* Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst  
*Workplace Grievance Policy* Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst  
*Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy* Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst  
*Workplace Health and Safety Policy* Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst  
*Child Protection Policy* Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst  
*Registration Systems and Member Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual* NESA  
*Code of Conduct for Employees* Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst  
*Staff Discipline Policy* Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst

## 9. POLICY ADMINISTRATION

This policy has been approved by the Board of the Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst and implemented and will be reviewed periodically, or in the event of any information or incident that indicates the need for a review, or following relevant legislative or organisational change.

It is the responsibility of anyone accessing this document to ensure that the current version is downloaded from the Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst website.

DATE	MAJOR AMENDMENTS	DATE APPROVED BY BOARD
2009	Date of Implementation	Reviewed by LT April 2025
2025	Major Amendments Simplification of the policy Define coverage of policy and complaints steps	Approved by Board May 2025
Person Responsible for Review		Head of HR, Risk & WHS
Next Review		May 2027

## Appendix 1 Definitions

### **Complaint**

A complaint involves an expression of dissatisfaction or a concern with

- a service provided by the CEDB schools
- behaviour or decisions of staff members, including Principals and CEDB staff
- CEDB and school practices, policies or procedures

Complaints are an opportunity to identify issues and take action to improve the situation or relationship and drive a culture of continuous improvement.

### **Complainant**

A person, organisation or advocate making a complaint.

### **Good Faith**

A sincere intention to deal fairly with others without malice or the desire to harm others.

### **Procedural Fairness**

This is the right of an individual to be heard and to an impartial decision in relation to a matter through a defined, fair and proper procedure. Procedural fairness is a basic right of all individuals. All individuals have a legitimate expectation that any investigator and/or decision maker will follow these principles when decisions are made affecting their rights and interests.

### **Resolution**

A complaint is resolved when the issue raised has been dealt with in line with Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst Management of Complaints Policy. The resolution may or may not be to the complainant's satisfaction.