



# GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION

## Policy

***“Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.” Colossians 3:13***

### Rationale

Dignity, equity and justice in the relationships between all people within the Our Lady of Sion College community are of fundamental importance. Our mission and the charism of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion call us to be people of dialogue, *concerned always for justice, truth, reconciliation and peace, and [to] be people who build bridges with others and remain open to change.* Our school has both a desire and a responsibility to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained by staff, students and parents/guardians at all times.

Grievances occur when an employee, parent/guardian or student feels that any decision, behaviour, act or omission at the school is unfair, discriminatory or unjustified or is in breach of a relevant Policy, Act, Regulation or Order, which results in a complaint. Serious complaints include but are not limited to child safety, reportable conduct, bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Grievances and complaints will be treated seriously, addressed professionally, competently and in a timely manner in accordance with College values, relevant legislation and Melbourne Archdiocese of Catholic Schools requirements. At all times procedural fairness, and where appropriate, confidentiality will be maintained.

### Principles

- Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and dignity
- The College recognises the rights of its employees, parents/guardians and students to register a complaint
- Where appropriate, resolution of complaints at the local level is the desired outcome
- All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and religious will work within the expectations set out in the Our Lady of Sion Child Safety Policy
- The principles of due process and natural justice will provide a sound and fair basis of information dissemination, investigation, conciliation and decision-making
- The rights of complainants and respondents are upheld including the use of fair, confidential, impartial and dignified resolution procedures
- Procedures for grievance resolution are transparent, visible and promoted
- It is incumbent upon College leaders to act where unacceptable conduct is observed or brought to their attention.
- Complaints will be handled in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria’s publication, Complaints Management – Practical Guide for Schools (2017)

### Implementation

#### Communication Plan

- The College will make its policies and procedures relating to the handling of complaints easily available to all members of the community through a range of communication including but not limited to the school website, staff handbook, newsletters, enrolment information

#### Staff training

- Staff will be provided opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in handling complaints through a range of methods including Professional Practice Consultations, staff professional learning, staff induction

### Managing Complaints

- Staff, parents/guardians and students are encouraged to initially resolve grievances personally by talking with or writing to the person whose responsibility it is to address the complaint
- Complainants are asked to refer to the most appropriate person to resolve the complaint (table below)
- Complainants may choose to seek assistance from the College Contact Officer(s) whose role is to provide appropriate support and options for the complainant to consider, including possible strategies and potential outcomes
- In most instances, it is expected that the Complainant will have raised their complaint at Our Lady of Sion before taking it further with Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS).



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- If the matter is raised directly with the teacher, they should acknowledge any email within two working days, and seek to resolve the matter via a phone call or meeting. If the matter is confidential, contentious or of a sensitive nature, the complaint should be addressed at a meeting.
- If the issue is unresolved, staff, parents/guardians and students may also choose to seek assistance from staff in positions of leadership, Deputy Principals or the Principal. In such circumstances, the leaders will use local complaints resolution procedures, including private discussions, mediation, monitoring, training or counselling.
- For serious complaints including:
  - allegations of child abuse and reportable conduct, the College will follow the procedures as outlined in the Our Lady of Sion Child Safety and the Reporting Obligations Policies. Such complaints should be directed to the Child Safety Team (Deputy Principals and Principal)
  - breaches of legislation, school policy or procedures including but not limited to bullying and harassment, discrimination, drug and alcohol issues, self-harm or at risk behaviour should be reported to Deputy Principals and Principal
  - those that pertain to compliance, industrial matters, professional conduct should be reported to Deputy Principals and Principal
- Complainants may choose to seek assistance from MACS who will work within MACS and CECV policies and guidelines
- Complainants may also choose to seek assistance from external agencies or providers such as but not limited to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, Independent Education Union, FairWork, Victorian Institute of Teaching
- Any party to a dispute has the right to be accompanied by another person, external or internal, in a support role at any meetings convened to discuss resolution of the grievance
- At times, the College may not be able to fully address complaints that are made anonymously or without sufficient detail being provided to enable an inquiry, investigation, or resolution of the matter. Where possible complainants are encouraged to give their names and to be reassured that we will deal with complaints professionally and in accordance with procedural fairness and confidentiality. Ultimately, the Principal will exercise judgment as to whether or not anonymous complaints will be acted upon.
- Complaints about the Principal may be directed to the MACS Eastern Region [ero@macs.vic.edu.au](mailto:ero@macs.vic.edu.au) or the Chair of the Our Lady of Sion College Board of Directors: [boardchair@sion.catholic.edu.au](mailto:boardchair@sion.catholic.edu.au)
- A complaint can be withdrawn at any stage during the process but should be done so in writing and documented

### **When a complaint is received, the following steps will be taken by the College:**

- the complaint will be acknowledged and documented
- a determination of the seriousness of the complaint will be made by the appropriate person or body
- the complainant will be directed to the College's Grievance Resolution Policy
- a determination will be made regarding the most appropriate person to investigate the complaint
- an option for resolution will be determined depending on the seriousness of the complaint
- an unresolved informal complaint may be moved to a formal process
- an unresolved formal complaint can be referred to an external agency
- the process and outcomes are recorded and stored consistent with Privacy Policies

### **Documentation**

The following information about complaints received will be recorded:

- date of complaint and method of communication
- name and contact details of the complainant
- nature of the complaint and the requested resolution
- name of staff member handling the issue
- any action and the timeframe taken, minutes of meetings and communication
- a statement of the outcome, including the closure date and date of advising the complainant of the outcome

## **Expectations**

In making a complaint, Our Lady of Sion College requests and expects the complainant will:

- raise the concern or complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen
- communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair and respectful
- provide complete and factual information about the concern and complaint



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- observe confidentiality and a respect for sensitive issues
- act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- have realistic and reasonable expectations about possible outcome/remedies

### Resolutions

- For the complainant may include:
  - feeling that their concern has been considered seriously
  - knowing that the College has been alerted to a possible problem
  - achieving an outcome which may be different from the one they sought, but which they perceive to be well considered
  - receiving a verbal or written apology
  - an understanding that the behaviour will not happen again
  - achieving a change to a policy, procedure or practice that would prevent a recurrence of similar complaints
- For the school may involve:
  - reaching a compromise solution
  - dismissing the complaint, eg. no breaches have occurred
  - upholding the complaint and implementing a specific action, such as overturning a decision, mediation, giving an apology
  - improving processes
  - increasing staff development, training or performance improvement
  - the enactment or review of school policies and procedures including disciplinary action in line with the Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2018
  - the enactment of Child Safety and Reportable Conduct procedures
  - taking other actions to ensure that the matter is handled appropriately in the future

### Related Policies

Our Lady of Sion Child Safety Policy  
Whistleblower Policy  
Sexual Harassment Policy  
Code of Conduct  
Code of Belonging  
Privacy Policy  
Staff Anti-Bullying Policy  
Student Behaviour Management Policy  
Drugs in Schools Policy

**Review Date:** 2025

**Ratified by the College Board:** August 2021



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Sample Area of Complaint	Teacher	Wellbeing and Growth Leader or Learning Area Leader	Deputy Principal	Principal	Board/MACS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pastoral Care Concern</li> <li>• Behaviour between students</li> <li>• Day to day College Operations</li> </ul>	Homeroom	Wellbeing and Growth Leader			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching and Learning Concern</li> <li>• Assessment result/Reports</li> </ul>	Subject	Learning Area Leader			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject Selection</li> </ul>			Learning and Teaching		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith and Mission program</li> </ul>			Faith and Mission		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour Management of students (including in public)</li> </ul>		Wellbeing and Growth Leader	Student Wellbeing	Principal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying and Harassment of a student</li> </ul>		Wellbeing and Growth Leader	Student Wellbeing Learning and Teaching	Principal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying and Harassment of a staff member/parent/guardian</li> </ul>			All	Principal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Safety (including Child Abuse or Sexual Assault)</li> </ul>			Student Wellbeing	Principal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reportable conduct</li> <li>• Professional conduct</li> </ul>			Student Wellbeing Learning and Teaching	Principal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of Employment</li> <li>• Serious Misconduct</li> <li>• Leadership Team Member</li> </ul>				Principal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clergy or Religious Persons</li> </ul>				Principal	Professional Standards Unit of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal</li> </ul>					Chair of the College Board or MACS Regional Manager