



# ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

## Grievance Handling Policy

### RATIONALE

Reviewed Term 2, 2020

At St. Mary's we are committed to providing a pleasant work environment for all employees, students and parents. We acknowledge, however that employees, students and parents can sometimes feel aggrieved about something that is happening at St. Mary's School which appears to be discriminatory or unjust. An employee, student or parent can have a complaint about any decision, behaviour, act or omission [whether by the Principal, members of the Leadership team or other staff/ students] that he/she feels is discriminatory or deems to be unjust.

The purpose of this document is to provide a procedure by which employees/students/parents can have such complaints addressed.

If you feel that you are being discriminated against or treated unjustly, this grievance handling procedure is available to you so your concerns can be addressed.

### ST MARY'S VISION & GRADUATE OUTCOME STATEMENT LINKS

#### Vision:

At St Mary's we believe that:

- We are called to be living witnesses to the Gospel values of love, forgiveness, understanding and respect.
- We create and maintain a spirit of social justice and selfless giving making Jesus real in our everyday lives.

#### Graduate Outcomes:

We aim that the children who graduate from St Mary's are:

- Respectful in their interactions with others, the environment and accountable for their choices.
- Compassionate and have a sense of social justice based on Gospel values.

## AIMS FOR A GRIEVANCE HANDLING POLICY

We aim to:	We will do this by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide impartiality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Investigating complaints in a fair and impartial manner.</li> <li>● No judgements or assumptions will be made, and no action will be taken until the investigation is complete.</li> <li>● 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.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide Confidentiality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide the security that if a complaint under this policy is made, it will remain confidential. The only person who will have access to information about a complaint will be the person making the complaint and the person investigating. However if a formal investigation is to be undertaken, you will be informed that other people might be spoken to about the complaint and they will also be asked to keep the matter confidential.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be Free of victimisation</li> </ul>	<p>If a complaint is made that person will not suffer in any way as a consequence. The St Mary's School leadership team will ensure that a person who makes a complaint is not victimised in any way.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide an appropriate timeline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Each complaint will be finalised within as short as short a period as possible.</li> </ul>

### What to do if you have a complaint

#### 1. Approach the person involved.

In many situations, the most appropriate thing to do first is to tell the person who is the cause of the complaint how you feel. If the complaint is about their behaviour, tell them that it is offensive/hurtful/not acceptable. If it is about a work decision, tell them why you think it is discriminatory or harassment. Telling the person will give them a chance to stop or change what they are doing.

#### 2. Go to the principal or deputy principal.

If you don't feel you can approach the person directly, then explain the problem to the Principal who will advise you about what your options are and what will happen if you decide to make a formal complaint. Nothing will be done in relation to the complaint without you agreeing.

### **What happens next?**

Once you have made the complaint to the Principal he/she will then consider whether there are any reasons why they should not proceed to deal with the complaint. For example, the person you complained about may be a personal friend. If there is such a reason, which indicates it is inappropriate for the Principal to deal with your complaint, it will, with your consent, be referred to another appropriate, mutually agreed upon person.

The principal will then interview you. During this interview a number of things will be explained to you, such as what will happen if the complaint is found to be supported by the evidence, or if it is found to be not supported by the evidence. You will also be told where you can go for assistance if you are not happy with the way the school is dealing with the complaint. The principal will then take a written record of the complaint.

The principal will then talk to the person about whom the complaint is made to hear that side of the story. Any witnesses will also be interviewed. These interviews will be conducted separately and impartially. The importance of confidentiality will be stressed to all parties and they will be warned of the consequences if there is a breach of confidentiality (e.g possible defamation action, initiation of a complaint for harassment).

The Principal will then tell you what the other people said and discuss what should be done to sort out the problem. You should tell the principal what action you would like taken, e.g. a written apology from the person, a written warning, etc. If necessary the principal may refer the matter to the parish priest.

### **Possible outcomes**

If the complaint is proved, the following are possible outcomes:

- A written apology;
- An official warning;
- Counselling;
- Disciplinary action; or
- Dismissal.

If the complaint is unproved (not enough evidence), possible outcomes are:

- Relevant training for all staff; and/or
- Monitoring of behaviour of employees.

If the complaint is proved not to have happened at all, the following are possible outcomes:

- Counselling for the person who made the complaint;
- A written apology;
- An official warning;
- Disciplinary action; or
- Dismissal.

The principal will make sure that whatever outcome is decided upon actually happens. He/she will also assess the effectiveness of the outcome from time to time.

### **Appeals**

If you feel that the complaints procedure has not been followed properly, or that the outcome is unacceptable you, you may appeal to the Educational Consultant designated to St Mary's School, by the Catholic Education Office of Sandhurst.

The Education Consultant will look at the way the complaint was handled and examine the outcome. If he/she believes it was handled properly and that the outcome was appropriate he/she will take no further action. If he/she thinks that the complaint was not handled properly, or that the outcome was inappropriate, he/she will organise for the complaint to be looked at again. The appeal will be dealt with by someone other than the person who first handled the complaint.

### **Go To An External Agency**

If you are not happy with the way your complaint has been dealt with by the school, you may wish to go to an external agency for further advice and assistance. You may take your complaint to the external agency at any stage in the procedure if you are unhappy with progress in dealing with your complaint.

### **RESOURCES:**

- CEO Professional if needed.
- School Wellbeing Officer.

### **DEVELOPMENT**

It is recommended that:

- This policy be reviewed every 2 years.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

St Mary's School Mooroopna  
Grievance Handling Policy – Record of Procedure Guidelines  
[Record kept by Principal following a complaint]

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Complaint Information

Introductory remarks from the Principal

- Status of information from the complainant
- Issues of confidentiality [confidentiality will not be maintained if there is a possibility of harm involved]

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Other parties involved: [names]

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Dates and times of events:

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What happened:

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Action already taken by complainant:

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What the complainant wants as a result of this meeting:

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Possible actions:

- Record a formal complaint form.
- All parties to meet with an internal or external facilitator.
- The complainant discusses some strategies with the principal.
- The complainant wants information about grievance procedures in the school and the school process for managing any complaints.

- The complainant would like to access outside support e.g. Centacare.

Action taken:

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Recommendation from the Principal:

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Follow up required / no further action at this stage:

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Signatures:

Principal \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_