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**Complaints Handling Procedure**

***The Catholic Education Commission Of Victoria Ltd (CECV) holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people are our central and fundamental responsibility of Catholic education. . This commitment is drawn from and inherent to the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel. (***[***CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety***](http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=8589940582)***).***

**Rationale**

At St. Damian’s Parish Primary School, we are committed to providing a pleasant work environment for all employees and students. We acknowledge, however, that employees can sometimes feel aggrieved about something that is happening. An employee 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 constitutes harassment.

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

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

**Key elements of our Complaints Handling Procedure**

The following are key elements of our Complaints Handling Procedure:

**Impartiality**

If you make a complaint, it will be investigated in a fair and impartial manner. No judgements or assumptions will be made and no actions will be taken until the investigation is complete. 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.

**Confidentiality**

You can feel secure that if you do make a complaint under this policy, it will remain confidential. The only people who will have access to this complaint will be the person making the complaint and ther person investigating.

**No Victimisation**

You can also rest assured that if you make a complaint you will not suffer in any way as a consequence. The School authorities will ensure that a person who makes a complaint is not victimised in any way.

**Timeliness**

Each complaint will be finalised within as short a period as possible. All complaints should be finalised within one month.

**What to do if you have a complaint**

**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 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.

Go to the Principal, Deputy Principal or Designated Anti-Discrimination Officer

The abovementioned have been trained to be the first point of contact for people with complaints. The Principal, Deputy Principal or Designated Anti-Discrimination Person 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. If you don’t feel as if you can approach these people directly, then go and explain the problem to your Parish Priest.

**What happens next?**

Once you have made the complaint (preferably in writing), it will then be considered. If there is any reason why it may be inappropriate for the Principal, Deputy Principal or Designated Anti-Discrimination Officer to deal with your complaint, it will, with your consent be referred to another appropriate person.

Any two of the following - the Principal, Deputy Principal or Designated Anti-Discrimination Officer or other appropriate person will then interview you. During this interview any number of things will be explained to you, such as what will happen if the complaint is found to be 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. A written record will be taken at the interview and signed by all those present.

The Principal, Deputy Principal or Designated Anti-Discrimination Officer (or other appropriate person), will then talk to the person about whom the complaint is made to hear their 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 the confidentiality (e.g. possible defamation action, initiation of a complaint for harassment).

The Principal, Deputy Principal or Designated Anti-Discrimination Officer (or other appropriate person), 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, Deputy Principal or Designated Anti-Discrimination Officer what action you would like taken, e.g. a written apology from the person, a written warning, etc.

**Review**

If the complaint remains unresolved it will be reviewed by the Parish Priest who will make a final decision as to the outcome of the complaint.

**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, 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, Deputy Principal or Designated Anti-Discrimination Officer 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**

Where an appeal is made, it should be taken to the Parish Priest or Principal. Other avenues of appeal are –

· In the Melbourne Archdiocese – the Co-ordinating Chairperson, Catholic Education Office Phone: 9758 4999

The Parish Priest or Principal 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 organise for the complaint to be looked at again.

The appeal may 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.

**Complaints Contacts Officer/s and Complaints Officer/s**

External agencies you may wish to contact are:

· The Director of Catholic Education – 9267 0228

· The Victorian E.E.O Commission – 9281 7111

The Anti-Discrimination Officer is: Jenny Rubira

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