



MARCELLIN COLLEGE RANDWICK

Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy

Marcellin College has both a desire and a responsibility to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained by staff and students at all times, and that complaints are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation. In doing so, the Headmaster aims to ensure that all are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

The College's policy for dealing with complaints and grievances includes processes for raising and responding to matters of concern of students, parents and staff. Individuals involved in these processes will be offered procedural fairness, with all parties involved being dealt with fairly and justly.

Students, parents or staff members have a responsibility to raise their concerns at the earliest possible time so that they do not become overwhelming for all parties involved. The greatest success in resolving concerns is when they are addressed as soon as they arise. Students, parents or staff members have a responsibility to maintain confidentiality in the best interests of those involved and to ensure a just outcome for any other person who may be involved.

The following principles are essential:

- Confidentiality, access, dignity and impartiality form the basis of the complaints resolution process.
- Stakeholders must work together with respect and openness to achieve fair and reasonable decisions. The input of all stakeholders is valued and respected.
- Complaints resolution is most effective at the school level.
- Each parent/caregiver has the right to be heard and to expect that ongoing relationships will continue respectfully.
- Restoration of right relationships is most often best achieved through restorative practice.
- The communal needs of the school community generally exceed the needs of any individual.
- Staff members have a right to be informed of formal complaints that are made relating to them.
- The availability of a review is an integral component of the complaints resolution process.

The processes for dealing with matters of concern include:

Raising the complaint or grievance

Students, parents or staff members should first raise the complaint or grievance with the person of concern. Where the concern involves the conduct of a staff member of the College, the matter should be directed to the Headmaster. Where the concern involves the conduct of the Headmaster, the matter should be directed to the Sydney Catholic Schools. Where possible, the complaint or grievances should be raised informally through a meeting or phone call, however complaint or grievances may be raised more formally through a letter addressed to the College.

A complainant may at any stage choose to take their complaint directly to an external agency such as the Sydney Catholic Schools, Equal Opportunity Commission, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission or the Ombudsman. However, in most cases, a complaint or grievance should not be brought to this step unless every effort has been made to resolve it with the Headmaster OR if the concern is about the conduct of the Headmaster.

If you need to contact the College please email secretary@syd.catholic.edu.au or phone 02 9398 6355

For the following concerns please contact:

Day-to-day matter – Homeroom teacher/ Year Coordinator

Subject matter – Subject Coordinator

Behavioural matter – Year Coordinator

Assessing the complaint or grievance

The complaint or grievance is initially assessed to ensure the most appropriate person addresses the complaint or grievance. More serious matters should be directed to the Headmaster or Deputy Head.

The person receiving the complaint or grievance will listen carefully and check understanding of all issues raised to ensure full understanding of the complaint or grievance.

All cases of serious misconduct – sexual offences, criminal charges, child protection matters, or other serious incidents – must be referred to the Headmaster who will inform the relevant external agencies.

The complaint or grievance will be investigated either informally or formally as requested. Formal complaints or grievances require formal interviews and written statements. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance to protect the rights of all parties involved.

Responding to complaint or grievance

The complaint or grievance is either dismissed or accepted based on the assessment procedures.

All complaints or grievances will be dealt with procedural fairness. The person who had an allegation made against them, has the right to:-

- now the allegations related to the complaint or grievance and any other information which will be taken into account in considering the matter
- know the process by which the matter will be considered
- respond to the allegations
- know how to seek a review of the decision made in response to the allegations

In keeping with the guidelines of procedural fairness, the person conducting the investigation will not be the person responsible for decision-making. All parties involved reserve the right to an unbiased decision.

Every endeavour will be made to address all concerned within reasonable timeframes and under mutual agreement. The resolution of concerns is most successful when prompt responses are obtained.

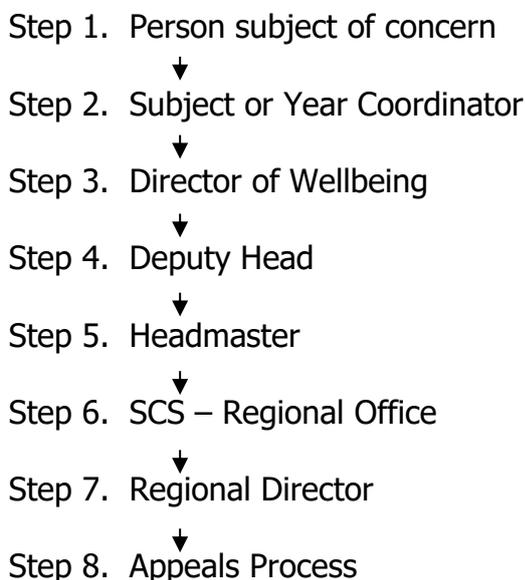
Any person responding to a concern may have a support person present during meetings or interviews. The support person would normally act as an observer but may take a more active role with the mutual agreement of all parties. Support person must maintain confidentiality and other principles as set out in this procedure. The Headmaster is to be advised of the attendance of a support person before any meeting or interview. Similarly the Headmaster will advise of any other person he/she may invite to attend.

Developing an appropriate solution or agreement

The outcome of a complaint resolution process will be communicated to the students, parents or staff member in writing and there may be an agreement to review its effectiveness within an agreed timeframe.

For a formal complaint or grievance, responses may include verbal or written warnings, conciliation or counselling, as well as the involvement of the SCS and other relevant officers. All parties involved will agree upon procedures to monitor the situation. Parties dissatisfied with the process can appeal to the relevant external agencies.

Where the concern remains unresolved the student, parents or staff member may follow the pathway for resolving complaints or grievances as listed below.



Where the student, parent or staff member considers that correct procedures have not been followed, or that an unreasonable outcome has eventuated, a written appeal outlining the relevant detail can be lodged with the Chair of the Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Board (SACS) addressed to the Head Office at Leichhardt. The Chair will appoint an independent person to undertake a review according to the *Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools*.

If ultimately the student, parent or staff member is not happy with the way they are dealt with by the College or Sydney Catholic Schools, they may wish to go to an external agency or legal advocate for advice and assistance.

Maintaining records/documentation

It is important that all complaints or grievances, investigations and outcomes are fully documented and filed in the appropriate locations. Accurate and appropriate notes will be kept with due regard to the confidentiality of the concerned parties. Access to relevant records may be given to parties directly involved in the process or to others by mutual consent whilst adhering to the conditions of the Commonwealth Privacy Act. All matters must be treated with the utmost confidentiality and professional respect at all times.

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