

## Related Policies and Regulations

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ACT School Registration manual s94  
RANGS Manual 3.6.3  
RSMNS Manual 5.6.3  
Complaints – Intake and Management Policy  
Privacy Policy  
Workplace Complaints policy  
Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Policy

## Purpose

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Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn (CECG) is committed to providing an harmonious and safe environment for all students, parents and staff. We understand that parent/caregivers can sometimes feel concerned about something that is taking place in the school.

It is important that these concerns are raised and responded to in a timely and respectful way. We value complaints and are committed to ensuring that every complaint is handled fairly, effectively and efficiently.

CECG believes that complaints and school issues are best held at the school level where possible.

This policy does not relate to:

- Enrolment
- Employment relations
- Workplace Bullying
- Harassment
- Critical incidents
- Emergency management
- Criminal offences
- Conduct of religious clergy or other religious persons

The Principal or CEO can advise on the specific procedures for making complaints of these types.

## Guiding Principles

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- 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.
- Personal information will be treated as confidential.
- The persons facing the complaint will be provided with detailed information about the substance of the complaint and will have the opportunity to respond.
- 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.
- Complaints will be resolved as quickly as possible.
- The input of all stakeholders is valued and respected.
- 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.
- If a satisfactory outcome cannot be achieved the CECG will provide the complainant with options for having the decision reviewed or mediated via an external authority.

## What is a Complaint?

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A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with an action taken, decision made or service provided, or the failure to provide a service, take action or make a decision at a school.

A complaint is considered to be **'resolved'** when the complainant and the school and/or CECG agree on an appropriate response or remedy.

A complaint is considered to be **'finalised'** when the Principal or relevant person in the CECG has made a final determination on the matter after exhausting the processes set out in this policy.

A complaint is considered to be **'unresolved'** when agreement cannot be reached on a course of action and/or a remedy, or if the remedy cannot be implemented.

## Expectations of People making a Complaint

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In making a complaint, we request and expect that 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 or complaint.
- Observe confidentiality and respect for sensitive issues.
- Act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties.
- Have realistic and reasonable expectations about possible outcomes/remedies.

If as a complainant you are a parent/caregiver, and your concern/complaint relates to your child's treatment by another student or students while at school, the school expects that you will refer your complaint directly to the school, via your child's class teacher, or year level coordinator. Under no circumstances should you approach another student while in the care of the school to discuss the issue or chastise him or her. Direct contact with parents to resolve the matter is also discouraged if the complaint pertains to issues or incidents that have arisen at the school.

## How to make a Complaint

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There are a number of ways you can raise any concerns you have about your child and their education. You can:

### **Contact the School**

- write a note to your child's teacher outlining your concerns
- make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with their class teacher, the year level coordinator or home-group teacher; ensuring that you inform the school about the issue you wish to discuss
- consider speaking with the school's student wellbeing coordinator or chaplain if you feel that this would be appropriate
- arrange any meeting times or phone calls through the school office (this is more convenient for both you and your child's teacher and does not interrupt teachers during the time they need to be with their students).

The class teacher or other relevant staff member, together with any others who may be involved, should be given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address your concerns. Remember, it may not always be possible to resolve an issue to your complete satisfaction.

### **Contact the Principal**

Most concerns are resolved by following the steps outlined above. However, if the issue remains unresolved after you have approached your child's teacher or other school staff or your complaint is very serious, you can then ask to see the principal. If you feel that you cannot approach the person directly, you can also request to see the principal.

To do this, you will need to request an appointment through the school office. Please note that:

- the principal may ask another senior staff member to speak with you on their behalf
- if a teacher is going to be present at the meeting it is more likely to occur outside of classroom hours.
- If your concern is related to issues of school policy, these should be raised formally (in writing) with the principal or the school advisory council or school board.

### **Contact the Catholic Education Office**

If your complaint is unresolved or a complaint against the Principal it will be referred to the CEO. You may contact the CEO directly to lodge your complaint.

## **The Complaints Process**

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All schools are required to develop and maintain a fair, effective and efficient complaint-handling process so that complaints about events or decisions at the school can be addressed.

The following steps can guide the process in making a complaint about issues arising at a school.

### **Clarify the issue:**

- Be clear about the topic or issue to be discussed.
- Be mindful of the need to ascertain all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue.
- Think about what would be an acceptable outcome.
- Check and observe the CECG Policy

### **Follow the school complaints procedures which may include:**

- Write an appropriate note or email to the relevant person (e.g. classroom teacher) outlining concerns
- Make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with the relevant person(s).
- Consider speaking with the school's student wellbeing leader if appropriate.
- Arrange meeting times or phone calls through the school office.
- Ensure the relevant person(s) is given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address the concerns.

### Contact the Principal or Assistant Principal

- If the issue remains unresolved after discussion with the relevant person(s) at the school, discuss the concern with the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- Request an appointment with the Principal or Assistant principal through the school office. The principal may ask another senior staff member to represent her/him. If the relevant staff member is going to be present at the meeting, the meeting time is more likely to occur outside classroom hours.

### Complaint escalation

If the matter cannot be resolved at the school level, or if the complaint is about the Principal of the school, complainants may contact

### Contact Us

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You can contact us about this Policy through contacting the CEO. The CEO's contact details are:

Catholic Education Office  
PO Box 3317  
Manuka ACT 2603  
Phone: (02) 6234 5455  
Email: [reception@cg.catholic.edu.au](mailto:reception@cg.catholic.edu.au)

Approved By:	Service Area Leadership Team	26 <sup>th</sup> November 2018
Policy Review Date:	July 2020	
TRIM Record Number:	R452676	