



Holy Trinity

Eltham North

94 Weidlich Road, Eltham North 3095
Tel: 9431 0888 Fax: 9431 0788
Email: principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au

Grievance & Complaints Handling Procedure Policy: Parents

Rationale

Holy Trinity Primary School is a Restorative school. We are committed to providing a pleasant work environment for all employees, students and parents. We acknowledge, however, that parents can sometimes feel aggrieved about something that is happening. A **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, parents) that he/ she feels is discriminatory, constitutes harassment or cause concern.

The purpose of this document is to provide a procedure by which **parents** 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 the key elements of our complaints handling procedure:

Impartiality

If you make a complaint, it will be investigated in a fair and impartial manner. No judgments or assumptions will be made and no action 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 information about the complaint will be the person making the complaint and the 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 finalized within as short a period as possible. All complaints should be finalized within one month.

Examples of complaint covered by this procedure include:

- Issues related to student discipline procedures
- Issues related to learning and teaching
- Damage/ loss of personal property
- Bullying and harassment

What to do if you have a complaint

Some complaints, because of the seriousness of their nature, should be referred immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal – eg. Complaints about behavior which places others at risk of serious harm

Parents are ill advised to approach the children of other families with a school related complaint. This is often a sensitive area and in order to protect all the parties it is advisable to work through the relevant or member of the school leadership.

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. Telling the person will give them a chance to stop or change what they are doing.

Go to the Principal, Deputy Principal

The above mentioned have been trained (update required on a regular basis) to be the first point of contact for people with complaints. The Principal, Deputy Principal 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 the Holy Trinity Parish Priest.

What happens next?

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

The Principal, Deputy Principal or another appropriate person 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. A written record will be taken at the interview and signed by all those present.

During an interview a **parent** may invite a **parent** advocate.

The Principal, Deputy Principal (or another 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 any breach of confidentiality (eg. Possible defamation action, initiation of a complaint for harassment).

The Principal, Deputy Principal (or another 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 another appropriate person) what action you would like taken, eg. a written apology from the person or 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 agreement between parties
- A verbal apology
- An official warning
- Counselling
- Disciplinary action
- Dismissal

If the complaint is unproved, possible outcomes are:

- Relevant training for all staff; and/or
- Monitoring of behavior 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
- Dismissal

The Principal, Deputy Principal or Anti-Discrimination Officer (or another appropriate person) 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 to be made, it should be taken to the Parish Priest or Principal.

Other avenues of appeal are –

- *In the Melbourne Archdiocese – the Coordinating 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 take no further action. If he/she thinks that the complaint was not handled properly, or that the outcome was inappropriate, he/she will organize 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.

Complaints Contact Officer/s and Complaints Officers

External agencies you may wish to contact are:

- The Director of Catholic Education – 9267 0228
- The Victorian E.E.O. Commission – 9281 7111

The following people are Contact Officers with whom you can speak about your complaints:

The Holy Trinity Anti-Discrimination Officer is Angela Tonkin

Holy Trinity Primary School Policy Review 2016

This policy is due for review in 2019



Holy Trinity

Eltham North

94 Weidlich Road, Eltham North 3095
Tel: 9431 0888 Fax: 9431 0788
Email:principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au

Complaints Handling Process

I.....

Of (Address)

.....
.....

Agree that I have been given, read and understood the Policy document of Holy Trinity Primary School, Eltham North, re Complaints Handling Procedure

Signed

Date