

## Lisieux Catholic Primary School

## Grievance Policy

Rationale

In a Catholic school, partnerships between students, parents and students are important to educational success. An atmosphere of trust and openness is essential. We need to be able to talk to one another when we have concerns, so that a solution can be worked out. It is important that every member of the community, including staff, parents and students, are contributors to the building of the school community.

At Lisieux Catholic Primary School we attempt to communicate and consult with parents in all matters. This happens through notes, meetings, weekly newsletter and the school website.
School community members have an obligation to read notices and newsletters, to attend briefings and to seek clarification when required.

Whilst the positive achievements in the school are strongly appreciated, there are times when misunderstandings or disagreements can hinder the wellbeing of individuals or groups within the school community. If an individual has a concern, criticism or complaint, they are expected to follow the guidelines below.

The approach of Lisieux Catholic Primary School to handling complaints is based on the school’s intention:

• To foster a sense of belonging and connection that will support wellbeing;

• To recognise that Catholic teaching and tradition values relationship and forgiveness.

• To provide a safe and supportive learning environment.

Expectations of People Making a Complaint

When raising a concern, individuals have a responsibility to:

• Provide complete and factual information in a timely manner;

• Deliver their complaint in a non-threatening manner;

•  Communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair and respectful;

•  Observe confidentiality and a 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 / carer 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, Deputy Principal or Principal. 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.

Guiding Principles

In receiving and responding to complaints, the following guiding principles will direct and shape the school’s actions:

•  We will work with the complainant with respect, courtesy and openness and with a genuine desire to achieve fair and reasonable decisions.

•  We will listen to and respect the views of each person.

•  Confidentiality, impartiality and the principles of natural justice will form the basis of the resolution process.

•  Any person(s) facing the complaint will be provided with detailed information about the substance of the complaint and will have the opportunity to respond.

Informal and Formal Resolution Processes

The following processes will be used to respond to grievances:

1. Where the matter involves a concern relating to everyday classroom operation, parents / carers should make an appointment with the relevant classroom teacher in the first instance. The issue may be resolved through open discussion of relevant information or clarification of issues. Effective management of a grievance requires face to face, personal dialogue. Electronic forms of communication are not acceptable to manage a grievance. In some cases, the parties may be assisted to resolve a more complex issue with the involvement of a support person such as the Principal or Deputy Principal.
2. If the grievance or concern is about broader school issues, school staff or issues that are difficult to discuss with classroom teachers, parents are invited to make an appointment to speak with the Principal. The Principal will try to establish the facts as clearly as possible, being wary of third hand information or gossip or of simple acceptance of the interpretations of a one -sided point of view. Follow up will include discussions between the Principal, teacher and parents, and a strategy for further action will be planned.
3. Once a grievance or matter of concern is raised, the following protocols are worked through until there is a resolution that is satisfactory:

•  In all cases, confidentiality is respected. Only the people that need to know about the issue will be involved. The people that need to be informed will be discussed at the meeting.

•  Community members may be accompanied by another person, in a support role, at appointments to resolve grievances.

•  All formal discussions and processes involving grievances will be documented.

•  Every attempt will be made to address an issue and where resolution is possible it will be reached in a timely manner.

•  If applicable, the person against whom the complaint has been made will be given the opportunity to respond, and to be accompanied to any meeting by another person of his/her choice as a support person.

1. All discussions should be conducted in a calm and reasonable manner with respect to the dignity of all concerned. Aggressive or threatening behaviour has no place in the process and will not be accepted. If a meeting degenerates to unacceptable hostility it will be terminated and may be rescheduled if the Principal believes that it would be productive to do so. Alternatively, a mediation process can be led by an external facilitator.
2. If issues cannot be resolved in the above ways, parents can speak with the Parish Priest, or with the Western Region Principal Consultant from the Catholic Education office at Werribee.
3. Any complaints that relate to matters of child protection are automatically directed to the processes outlined in Child Protection protocol.

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| **POLICY DATES**  |
| ***Implemented***  | July 2020 | ***Reviewed***  |  |
| ***Next Review Due***  | 2023 |
| **POLICY AUTHORISATION**  |
| ***Principal***  | Dr Susan Ryan  | ***Signature***  |   |