



## Grievance & Complaints Policy

### Introduction:

St Monica's is committed to providing a pleasant work environment for all employees, along with a positive community for all parents, students and visitors. We can however, acknowledge that there may be times where staff, parents or visitors can feel aggrieved about something that may be taking place at school which can appear to be discriminatory or may constitute harassment. This also extends to parents, visitors or members of the community wanting to lodge formal complaints.

An employee and/or member of the school community is entitled to make a complaint about any decision, behaviour, act or omission (whether by Principal, leadership team member or any other member of staff) that constitutes feelings of being unheard, of a discriminatory nature or may constitute bullying or harassment. The purpose of this document is to provide a procedure by which employees and members of the school community can have such grievances and complaints addressed.

Staff and other members of our school community who feel unheard, bullied, harassed or discriminated against can be confident that this process is available to handle any such matters.

### Our Commitment:

#### *St. Monica's Commitment*

- *We value every member of staff and our wider school community and will attempt to ensure that staff and members of the community are happy and feel that any issues surrounding conflict or grievance will be appropriately dealt with in a fair and reasonable manner to all concerned and in line with our school philosophy of Restorative Practice. We have put into place a process where all victims have an opportunity to feel that they are being heard in a respectful way.*

#### *Leadership Commitment*

- *Impartiality for all parties involved.- No judgements or assumptions will be made and no action will be taken until investigation is fully complete.*
- *Confidentiality- all complaints will remain confidential. Only those involved and crucial to decision making processes may be notified.*
- *No victimisation- no person or persons will be victimised in any way.*

### TIMELINESS:

- *Each complaint will be finalised within as short a period as possible. All complaints should be heard as quickly as possible in order to move to the resolution stage of the process.*

### WHAT TO DO IF I HAVE A COMPLAINT OR GRIEVANCE?

#### 1- Approach person involved:

**In every instance, the Principal is the first person to be alerted to the Complaint or Grievance. In the event that the principal is at the centre of the complaint or grievance, the deputy principal shall be alerted to the issue and work with the Catholic Education office.**

In many instances, the most appropriate thing to do is to speak directly to the person involved and tell them how you feel and what is causing you to feel like this.

You will need to explain to them if you are feeling offended, hurt or rejected (behaviour), if you are not happy with a decision (discriminatory or harassment). Telling the person will give them a chance to rectify their behaviour and change what they may be doing.

## **2- Go to designated leader:**

If you do not feel that the approach can be made directly, then go to senior leadership within the school. Principal, deputy principal or area leaders. These people have experience as the first point of contact for people with complaints.

No action will be taken in regards to the complaint without your agreement. This matter will remain confidential and only be discussed with involved parties.

You may prefer to speak with a colleague or another person on staff. They may act as your advocate and come to the leadership member with you to discuss your complaint.

## **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

Once a complaint or grievance is made, the principal will then consider if there are any reasons he/she should not be involved with the complaint (conflict of interest). If for any reason that person should not be involved, the complaint will be deferred to another member of staff with delegated leadership responsibilities.

The principal or designated leader will meet with you for a formal interview of events. A number of things will be explained to you in this interview, such as what will happen if a complaint is found to be supported by the evidence gathered, or not supported by the evidence gathered.

It will also be explained to you that you may go and receive assistance if you are not happy with how the school is dealing with the issue at hand. A written record of the complaint will then be taken.

Interviewing members of staff will talk to the person about whom the complaint is made to hear that side of the story and take a detailed account of all factual information.

These interviews will be conducted separately and impartially. The importance of confidentiality regarding all matters will be stressed and the implications of not adhering to the confidentiality requirement of the process also discussed.

If the Principal is involved, the Catholic Education Office will step in to facilitate the hearing of the complaint and will decide on the relevant outcomes.

## **POSSIBLE OUTCOMES:**

### **COMPLAINT PROVED**

- a written apology
- an official warning
- counselling
- disciplinary action
- dismissal

### **COMPLAINT UNPROVED:**

- Relevant training for all staff
- monitoring of staff behaviour

### **COMPLAINT PROVED TO HAVE NOT OCCURRED AT ALL:**

- counselling for person who made complaint
- written apology
- official warning
- disciplinary action
- dismissal

The principal will ensure the decided outcome is met and monitored over time. In the event of the principal being at the centre of the complaint or grievance, then the Catholic Education Office will support the decided outcomes being met.

### APPEALS:

If you feel complaints procedure has not been followed properly, you may appeal to the Principal.

In the event that the principal is at the centre of the complaint or grievance, then the Catholic Education Office will support the appeals process.

Principal will then look at how the complaint was handled and examine the outcome.

If action taken is deemed satisfactory, no further action is required.

If action taken is deemed inappropriate, the complaint will be reviewed.

- Appeal will be dealt with by someone other than the person who was initially involved.
- If you are still not happy, you may wish to engage an external agency for advice and assistance.
- May call the Catholic Education Office or union to seek advice.

## GRIEVANCE OPERATIONAL FLOWCHART

