



DISPUTES RESOLUTION POLICY

DATE: 4 DECEMBER 2007

INTRODUCTION

Catholic Schools are communities where members share in the responsibility of educating children within a context of justice and love. They provide an appropriate model of conflict resolution by which disputes and complaints about the provision of education are resolved.

A culture of listening and acknowledging differing opinions is achieved by clear processes that enhance communication, provide direction and are understood and supported by all community members.

Policy, programs and practice should reflect respect for one another. This is achieved by building positive relationships, respecting each others rights, and seeking to fulfil our responsibilities as teacher and parent.

PRINCIPLES

1. People are entitled to raise concerns and complaints.
2. All efforts are made to resolve the dispute at the school level.
3. Natural justice requires both / all parties to have the opportunity to put their case / be heard.
4. The processes will acknowledge and value different perspectives.
5. Individual cases are considered on their own merits and within the context of the pressures and demands placed on families and schools.
6. Appropriate confidentiality is respected by all parties.
7. The spirit of cooperative community is fostered in a commitment to the development of a positive, safe and caring Christian environment.
8. Processes should be guided by compassion in seeking reconciliation.
9. All disputes are carried out in a non threatening, respectful manner and in a safe environment.
10. The school will provide a supportive environment for staff which respects their professional status.

PROCEDURES

- Initially, and where appropriate, the parties shall attempt to resolve the issue between themselves.
- Should the matter remain unresolved, the parties will seek to resolve an issue by approaching the relevant school contact.
- The Principal of the school has the responsibility to attempt to resolve a dispute or complaint at the local level with the parties directly involved.
- Parties may take the concerns to the Chair of the St Paul's College Board following an appropriate process of investigation and mediation if the dispute remains unresolved.
- If any steps have been omitted in the resolution process, then the complaint is referred back to the appropriate step in the process as outlined in the procedure flowchart for the management of complaints.
- Where individuals are confronted by inappropriate behaviour, they are entitled to discontinue the conversation and remove themselves from the situation. (Inappropriate behaviour occurs when anyone feels threatened and intimidated, or when insulting or abusive language is used.)
- All individuals are entitled to appropriate support.
- A formal complaint is a grievance that is named (ie not anonymously made) and in writing (if necessary noted by the Principal and signed by both parties).

OTHER DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES THAT MAY BE RELEVANT

SACCS Policies

- Development of Personal Responsibility
- SACCS Child Protection Policy

SACCS Procedures

- Procedures for Dealing with Child Abuse

Useful Links

- Managing Complaints and Challenging Situations
(DECS Website: <http://www.schools.sa.gov.au/schlstaff/>)