

# COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES MANAGEMENT POLICY

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Heyfield (the School) *Complaints and Grievances Management Policy* (Policy) establishes the rights of all students for there to be a trusting and cooperative relationship between parents/guardians/carers and the School.

Complaints are an important way for the School community to provide information and feedback to the School. The School recognises the right of parents/guardians/carers or students to make a complaint and its responsibility to provide a framework within which efforts can be made to address matters raised in complaints. It is the School's and Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited's (DOSCEL) belief that complaints are best handled at the school level in an environment where individuals feel able to speak up about issues concerning the education of their children.

An effective complaint-handling system has a clear process for resolving complaints, treats people fairly, is timely, and provides those involved in a complaint with a fair opportunity to respond to issues and to present their views.

While DOSCEL is the governing body, all schools are empowered in the first instance to manage grievances and complaints at the school level. The DOSCEL Office can provide support services and legal advice (where required) to school communities in managing complaints.

## 2.0 PURPOSE

This Policy ensures that:

- Parents, guardians, carers and students understand how to make a complaint at their school.
- The School and the DOSCEL Office respond to complaints in a fair, effective and efficient manner.
- Complaints processes comply with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Minimum Standards, including procedural fairness requirements.

This Policy provides the foundation for the *Complaints and Grievances Management Procedure*.

## 3.0 CATHOLIC MISSION

The School brings to life the mission of the Catholic Church by engaging and aligning all efforts toward the achievement of DOSCEL's vision for education: *faith-inspired educational excellence for a hope filled future*.

## **4.0 COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY**

The School holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of Catholic education. This commitment is drawn from the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ.

## **5.0 SCOPE**

This Policy applies to the complaints made by students, parents/guardians/carers or community members in relation to the School.

This Policy does not apply to:

- responses to critical incidents emergencies.
- alleged criminal offences.
- conduct of religious clergy or other religious persons unless they are employees or Directors of DOSCEL.
- Complaints, concerns or reports relating to suspected or alleged child abuse will be managed in accordance with the School and DOSCEL Office Child Safety policies and procedures.

## **6.0 POLICY OUTCOMES**

- 6.1 Decisions are resolved at the most appropriate level.
  - Complaints are managed and resolved at the school level wherever possible, with DOSCEL Office support provided when required.
- 6.2 The complaints process is published on the School website.
  - Complainants can easily access information on how to make a complaint via the School website, and they can lodge complaints in person, by phone, or in writing. All actions and decisions are clearly documented with transparent reasoning.
- 6.3 Complaints are acknowledged and addressed promptly.
  - The School and the DOSCEL Office acknowledge receipt of complaints as soon as possible and keep all involved informed of progress until resolution.
- 6.4 Complaints are handled impartially and fairly.
  - Every complaint is managed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.
- 6.5 There is no cost to complainants for making a complaint.
  - Parents, guardians, carers and students can access the complaint-handling process at no cost at both the School and DOSCEL Office level.

- 6.6 Personal information is protected.
- All personal information is safeguarded and only disclosed when necessary for managing the complaint or when required or authorised by law, including under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS).
- 6.7 Students' wellbeing is prioritised in all decisions.
- The School and the DOSCEL Office actively seek feedback, including complaints, and resolves all issues with the educational wellbeing of students as the first priority.
- 6.8 The School is transparent and accountable for its decisions.
- The School and the DOSCEL Office provide clear explanations and reasons for their decisions and are accountable for complaint-handling processes both internally and externally.
- 6.9 Complaint processes drive improvement.
- Procedures are regularly reviewed, and complaint data are analysed to identify themes and inform improvements, where needed.
- 6.10 Record-keeping meets all legal requirements.
- All complaint-handling records comply with the requirements of CISS and FVISS and the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM).

## 7.0 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Policy the following terms are defined as follows:

**Parent, guardian or carer** includes:

- A person who has parental responsibility for 'major long-term issues' as defined in the *Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)*.
- A person appointed as 'guardian' pursuant to the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)*.
- An informal carer with whom the child normally or regularly resides and who has day-to-day care and control of the child.
- A mature minor student.
- An adult student.

**Complaint** means 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 the School.

**Directors** are individuals appointed by the Bishop of Sale to serve on the DOSCEL Board.

## 8.0 COMMUNICATION

This Policy is available on the School website and provided to parents upon request.

This Policy is available to staff through the staff portal and staff are annually upskilled on this policy.

## 9.0 POLICY INFORMATION

<b>Policy Owner</b>	People, Culture and Safety
<b>Approving Authority</b>	DOSCEL Board
<b>Assigned Board Committee</b>	Finance, Audit and Risk
<b>Board Approval</b>	20 February 2026
<b>Risk Rating</b>	Medium
<b>Implementation</b>	March 2026
<b>Review Date</b>	March 2028

### POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION

<b>Supporting Documents</b>	Complaints and Grievances Management Procedure
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