



**Catholic Education**  
Diocese of Rockhampton

# **Guidelines for Grievance Procedures**

## **FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

Version 3 • 2016

---

**Scope:** This procedure applies to all Catholic Schools and Colleges, Kindergartens, OSHC & Long Day Care centres conducted by Catholic Education - Diocese of Rockhampton (referred to as Catholic Education in the document).

---

## Background

**Schools will develop and document grievance procedures for parents and students detailing the following within the local school context:**

- The school community's definition of what constitutes a formal grievance under the procedures.
- The process for initiating the formal grievance procedure, which should normally involve the grievance being put to the Principal in writing and followed by face-to-face discussion.
- Appropriate channels/stages/time frame through which the grievance procedure should progress. Discussion between the person initiating the grievance procedure and the Principal (or delegate) should take place. A complaint against an individual should be put to that individual and the person concerned given an opportunity to provide a response. A formal response authorised by the Principal (or delegate) should be provided within seven (7) days unless it is agreed through discussion with the person initiating the grievance that this is not necessary.
- The personnel responsible for the various stages in the procedure.
- The responsibilities of the person(s) initiating the grievance procedure and those responding to them, including the pastoral care of those affected. The person initiating the procedure should be prepared to engage in face-to-face discussion with the Principal or delegate before a formal response is provided.
- The option of impartial mediation if appropriate.
- Issues relating to record keeping of grievances and the actions taken in relation to them.
- The requirement for a formal grievance against the Principal to be addressed to the relevant Assistant Director - Schools.

The school's grievance procedures cannot limit an individual's rights under Civil or Church Law. Procedural fairness must be extended to anyone who is the subject of a complaint. In other words, a person is entitled to know the details of an accusation against them and be entitled to provide an answer.

## General Principles

All staff and clients should have access to a formal mechanism for the resolution of grievances relating to their employment or service provision. The policy is based on the following general principles:

- Grievance resolution is a part of management's responsibility.
- Grievance resolution must occur in accordance with the published grievance procedures.
- All staff, clients and potential clients are provided with clear, up-to-date documentation regarding grievance procedures.
- Staff and clients must have a procedure which outlines who to approach with a grievance.
- Staff and clients will be free to raise and have resolved any grievances they may have regarding the service, without fear of retribution.
- All grievances must be treated seriously, and not pre-judged.
- All information concerning a grievance must be treated confidentially.

---

### **GUIDELINES FOR GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

- The rights of every person involved must be protected.
- Grievance may be raised either verbally or in writing.
- Resolution of the grievance can only be considered as satisfactory when the outcome is fair, having regard to all damage or suffering sustained: the prognosis for the future and an improvement of the immediate circumstances which give rise to the grievance.

## Responsibility for Resolution

Responsibility for resolving grievance matters rests with program management. If resolution is not achievable at this level, then the grievance must be referred to the Assistant Director: Schools responsible for the program and, if necessary, to the Diocesan Director of Catholic Education.

## Procedure

If a written or oral grievance is lodged, the following steps should be taken:

### 1. Identify the problem.

An initial interview will be held with the complainant to find out what has occurred; what are the grounds of complaint; who or what might be responsible; what steps, if any, has the complainant already taken to attempt resolution of the grievance; and what is the anticipated or desired outcome.

### 2. Identification of expected outcome.

It is important to establish what the complainant aims to achieve from the process of resolution. Clarify options available to the person and the actions and the likely consequences, that the person could take.

### 3. Investigation of the source of grievance.

Inform the person(s) complained about, of the grievance as soon as possible, without applying judgement about the nature of the complaint and inform them that an investigation is to be undertaken. This advice should be given in writing if requested. The name of the person raising the grievance should only be disclosed with the prior consent of that person. If this consent is not received, an executive decision must be made about future action, having regard to the seriousness and nature of the complaint.

### 4. Resolution and Follow up.

It is important to monitor the results of action taken to resolve a grievance. This will ensure that the outcome of measures adopted is what is intended.

### 5. Documentation.

Any written record regarding a grievance should be kept confidential during the process of resolution.

### 6. Further Action.

While the emphasis in the grievance handling is on resolution through mediation, those involved must be alert to the possibility that investigation of grievance may at any point identify conduct which warrants further action. Such matters should be referred immediately to the Assistant Director: Schools/ Diocesan Director for action as appropriate.