



Creation Date
20/09/2022

Revision Date
8/12/2023

Managing Complaints Policy

Rationale

The objectives of this document are to promote and maintain positive relationships and harmonious working environments and to prevent, where possible, minor complaints escalating to become more serious matters. To achieve this, complaints should be managed promptly, confidentially and impartially.

Guiding Principles

The Managing Complaints Policy seeks to:

- Actively foster respect amongst and between all members of the College community
- Promote tolerance, acceptance and mercy for all individuals
- Develop a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment
- Encourage positive behaviours/relationships towards all members of the community
- Honour the philosophy and implementation of restorative practices
- Resolve conflict in a respectful manner and support all parties involved
- Treat all complaints seriously, as soon as practicable and in a fair, impartial and professional manner.

Guidelines

This document applies to staff members, parents/guardians, students, visitors, volunteers, and community members of CSPD. Staff members includes paid employees, religious, volunteers, contractors, sub-contractors, consultants and students on work placements.

This document is not intended to be a set of rigid procedures that must be followed when a complaint is raised, as the process for dealing with a particular concern will vary depending on the nature, circumstances, and seriousness of the complaint. Consequently, the document provides for several avenues that can be used in attempting to resolve complaints.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is a statement raising a concern related to St Pauls Catholic College.

Complaints may be raised by parents/guardians, students, visitors, volunteers, community members and contractors expressing dissatisfaction with a service provided by St Pauls Catholic College, the behaviour and decisions of staff members or about college practices, policies and procedures.

Complaints may be raised by staff members about issues arising in the work place (workplace complaints), including interpersonal conflict, perceived breach of policy, the allocation of work or developmental opportunities or a perceived unfairness in the work place.

Managing a workplace complaint should not be confused with performance management. Workplace complaints are matters identified by individual staff members while performance management is underperformance being managed by the employer. A workplace complaint may result in performance management or

disciplinary action being undertaken by CSPD if underperformance or misconduct is identified as a result of the complaint.

Process

Receiving a complaint

Complaints should be put in writing. If a verbal complaint is received the person receiving the complaint should record the details in writing and confirm them with the complainant. Direct supervisors should attempt to resolve workplace complaints made by staff members where self-resolution has been unsuccessful or is not appropriate in the circumstances, or where an individual is unsure how to handle the problem themselves. This means that the complainant should seek the assistance of their direct supervisor (for workplace complaints), the school principal or other workplace manager (the manager).

If the complaint relates to the principal, the complaint should be referred to the relevant Director Strategic Delivery. Other complaints should be referred to the appropriate head, chief or lead. If the complaint relates to the head, chief or lead, the complaint should be referred to their supervisor. If the complaint relates to the Executive Director of Schools, the complaint should be referred to the Bishop.

Options for resolving complaints

Given complaints can encompass a wide variety of issues, each complaint should be considered on its own merits to determine the most appropriate way to resolve it. Outlined below are a range of options that may be used to resolve a complaint. While it is recommended that a complaint is sought to be resolved in the order set out below, it is also recognised that in some circumstances this may not be appropriate, and it may be necessary to commence with a later option.

Self-Resolution

There may be instances where individuals make decisions without realising the impact those decisions have on others around them, or behave in a manner they do not realise may cause offence, disturb or annoy others e.g. playing a radio at their workstation that may be distracting to those around them. Individuals are therefore encouraged to try to resolve the issue themselves directly with the other party in the first instance.

By having a conversation directly with the other party in a respectful manner, clearly articulating the behaviour and the effect of that behaviour, the complaint can often be resolved at this point. It also gives the other party an opportunity to respond to the concerns raised without the matter having to be referred to a third party.

Assisted Resolution

Where self resolution has been unsuccessful or is not appropriate in the circumstances, or where an individual is unsure how to handle the problem themselves, they should seek the assistance of their direct supervisor (for workplace complaints), the school principal or other workplace manager (the manager). The manager may seek to resolve the issue by speaking to the other party on behalf of the person making the complaint or by facilitating a dialogue between the two parties.

If no mutually agreeable resolution is reached, the manager may need to make a decision on the complaint and determine an appropriate resolution. In relation to workplace complaints, sometimes it may not be appropriate, or the staff member may

not feel comfortable approaching their direct supervisor to assist with a complaint e.g. if the complaint is about their supervisor. In these instances, the staff member should approach a more senior manager or People and Culture for assistance.

Mediation

Mediation may be initiated where the complaint has not been resolved through self-resolution or assisted resolution or where the circumstances suggest mediation may assist in resolving the complaint.

Mediation is where an independent person (either internal or external to the organisation) assists parties to resolve their differences or disputes. It is generally a more structured process than self-resolution or assisted resolution, however it is still conducted in an informal manner, as all parties are encouraged to speak openly about the issues to assist in obtaining a resolution. Mediation is confidential.

As with the above two approaches, mediation seeks to support the parties resolving their own problems to reach an outcome agreeable to all.

Investigation

If a complaint is unable to be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, CSPD may be utilized to commence a formal investigation undertaken by an independent person, either internal or external to the organisation.

An immediate investigation may be appropriate where the complaint is complex or serious e.g. allegations of bullying and harassment or serious policy breaches such as theft or fraud. The investigating officer should interview the person raising the complaint, any respondent/s and any other relevant witnesses.

After considering the evidence made available to them, the investigator should provide a report with findings. CSPD will review the report and make the final decision on what actions, if any, it will take. These may include initiating a new work process or system improvement, an apology, counselling, training or initiating disciplinary action. In the case of workplace complaints, this can also include action against the employee who raised the complaint if the complaint is found to be frivolous, malicious or vexatious.

Review

If an individual is not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint, they may request an internal review be conducted by CSPD.

The request for review must be made within 10 working days from the date the finding is made known to the complainant. Reasons outlining why the review is being requested are to be included in the request.

The Executive Director of Schools has responsibility for making the final decision on a complaint, including whether to conduct the review, based on the information provided to them.

If an individual remains dissatisfied with how their complaint was handled by CSPD they may be able to take their complaint to a relevant external agency.

Related Documents

CSPD Managing Complaints Policy

Version	Author	Release Date	Review date
1.0	Paul Finneran	September 2022	December 2023