



St Andrew's Parish

CORPUS CHRISTI PRIMARY SCHOOL

29 RUSSELL STREET, WERRIBEE VIC. 3030

Complaints and Grievances Policy

Rationale

Corpus Christi Primary School is committed to providing a safe and supportive working and learning environment for all members of the school community. In order to achieve this, our school fosters trusting and co-operative relationships where regular, open and constructive communication between all stakeholders is encouraged. The school acknowledges that misunderstandings and differences of opinion may occur from time to time and that these need to be resolved in a satisfactory manner for all parties.

The safety and welfare of children in the school is paramount. This policy outlines the framework for resolving parent, caregiver or student complaints and grievances in a fair, dignified and respectful manner.

Aims

The intention of this policy is to describe the procedures for the effective resolution of disputes, to:

- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment
- Build positive, respectful relationships between students, parents and staff
- Provide a safe work environment for staff
- Resolve complaints fairly, efficiently and promptly, in accordance with CEM and state guidelines.

Scope

The policy applies to any member of the school community who has concerns or feels dissatisfied with the treatment of their child, educational outcomes or pastoral care provided by Corpus Christi Primary School.

Implementation

Corpus Christi Primary School welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication and are committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. We understand that it is in the best interest of students for there to be a relationship of trust between families and our school.

At Corpus Christi we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school.

When raising and addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- Raise and discuss issues in a courteous and respectful manner
- Acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome that is in the affected student's best interests and acceptable to all parties
- Act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved
- Recognise that all parties, including the broader school community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced
- Recognise that schools and CEM may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

In addition to this:

- Any party to a dispute has the right to be accompanied by another person, in a support role, at any meetings convened to discuss a resolution of that dispute.
- Accurate records of all disputes and proceedings should be maintained and current copies held by all parties involved.

Making a Complaint

When a parent/ carer is dissatisfied with the action taken, decisions made or educational services provided, a complaint can be made to the school in person, via the phone, in writing or email. The following procedures are designed to assist with 'general concerns'.

- All personal matters, such as concerns regarding student, parent or staff relationships should be raised directly with the school.
- If the matter relates to an **individual student** and/or **an issue of everyday class operation**, the child's **teacher will be the first point of contact**.
- If the matter cannot easily be satisfactorily resolved, it should be referred to the Unit Leader and Deputy Principal.
- Where the issues relates to **school policy** or **matters beyond an individual classroom**, the **principal, deputy or acting principal** should be the first point of contact.
- Grievances should be kept **confidential**.
- Grievances expressed on Social Media or any other public forum against the school or staff member is not an acceptable nor beneficial form of expression of feelings or accounts, nor are they confidential (see above) and therefore not accepted as a means of positive resolution.

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- **Appointments** may be necessary, to have appropriate un-interrupted time to discuss matters.

Parent Expectations

Corpus Christi Primary School expects parents/ carers raising concerns or complaints to:

- Do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs or the concern has been realised
- Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint, preferably in writing or via email
- Maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- Act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner
- Show respect, consider differing points of view and value difference, rather than judging and blaming
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced by the school.

Parents are NOT to approach children from other families with a school related complaint. In the interests of safety and respect for all within the school community, parents must bring their concerns or complaints to the relevant Staff Member, the Deputy Principal or Principal to ensure that an appropriate resolution can be achieved.

School Expectations

Corpus Christi Primary School will make all reasonable efforts to promptly respond and resolve complaints made by any member of the school community.

The school will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the concern or complaint verbally or in writing
- Commit to providing a prompt response to the complainant
- Communicate the complaint to the Principal or relevant members of the leadership team and establish a timeline for investigating and responding to the complaint
- Make the Complaints and Grievance Policy publicly available on the school's website.

Complaints Process

Where an issue cannot be resolved by the homegroup teacher, a formal complaint can be made to the Deputy Principal. Depending on the nature of the complaint, our school will first

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seek to understand the issues and will then convene a meeting with the aim of resolving the issue together. The following process will apply:

1. **Complaint Received:** Parents/ carers can email or telephone to arrange a meeting with the homegroup teacher or member of the leadership team to raise the complaint. The complaint will be acknowledged and a plan put in place to address the issue.
2. **Information Gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the teacher, Deputy Principal, or nominee may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
3. **Response:** Where possible, a meeting will be arranged with the Deputy Principal, Principal and/ or other staff if required, to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. Members of the meeting will:
 - Listen to each party
 - Identify the facts
 - List the issues
 - Generate solution options
 - Act and evaluate a resolution plan.

If after the meeting parties are unable to resolve the complaint together, further meetings may be held, or advice sought from CEM.

4. **Timelines:** Corpus Christi Primary School will acknowledge receipt of complaints as soon as possible (usually within 48 hours) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, the school may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of the complaint. The school will endeavour to resolve matters promptly, and in situations where further time is required, parents will be informed of interim measures that will be put in place.

Resolution

Where appropriate, Corpus Christi Primary School may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- A review of (and potential change to) policy, procedure or practice
- An apology or expression of regret
- Offering student counselling or other student support
- Other actions that are consistent with the school values, intended to support the student, parent and school relationship and engagement in the school community.

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- In some circumstances, Corpus Christi Primary School may invite an independent third party, member of leadership or CEM, to assist the resolution of the dispute.

Escalation

If a parent/ carer or community member is not satisfied their complaint has been resolved by the school, or if their complaint is about the Principal, the complaint should be referred to Catholic Education Melbourne, Western Region Office on (03) 8412 2400.

Corpus Christi Primary School may also refer a complaint to CEM if we believe we have done all we can to address a complaint.

Complaints in regard to Staff Misconduct

All complaints of alleged misconduct or serious misconduct by a teacher or staff member should be reported to the Principal of the school. Complaints about teachers can also be reported to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) and Catholic Education Melbourne, which is the regulator in relation to the registration and investigation of serious misconduct, including conduct which is of a physical or emotional nature, of all teachers in the state of Victoria. In some cases, certain actions which involve physical or emotional misconduct, such as unlawful assault or threats to the person, may constitute a criminal offence. These types of offences should be reported to and investigated by the police. Initial consultation with the principal of the school may help to determine the appropriate course of action in these circumstances.

Complaints in regard to Child Abuse (including sexual offences)

There are legal obligations on all adults to report child abuse to police once a 'reasonable belief' is formed that a sexual offence has been committed against a child. Failure to disclose a sexual offence against a child is a criminal offence under Section 327 of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) and applies to all adults (18 years and over) in Victoria. The school also has a statutory duty to inform the Victorian Commission for Young People & Children of any alleged misconduct committed by a staff member or volunteer. Complaints involving communication with children under 16 years by teachers, staff, or any other person to prepare or 'groom' a child for future sexual activity is a criminal offence under Section 49B (2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) and must be reported to the police. The offence of grooming applies to any person aged 18 years or over and does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years of age. Members of the school community who develop a reasonable belief that any child is being abused, should report to the Police immediately.

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Complaints Against the School Principal

In the case of complaints involving the principal, the Parish Priest ('the employer') and the Western Region Manager of Catholic Education Melbourne should be informed.

Respectful Resolutions

All disputes are to be settled in a calm, respectful and reasonable manner. **Aggressive or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated.** If any conversation, email or meeting degenerates it will be aborted. If suitable, another meeting may be arranged for a time when parties affected have gathered their composure and continue to try to come to a resolution.

References

[Catholic Education Melbourne, 2.20 Complaints Policy](#)

[Catholic Education Melbourne, Complaints Flowchart](#)

Relevant School Policies

Child Safe Policy

Reportable Conduct Policy

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed in keeping with the school cyclical review process.

Policy authorised by: Ms Linda Roynic, Principal

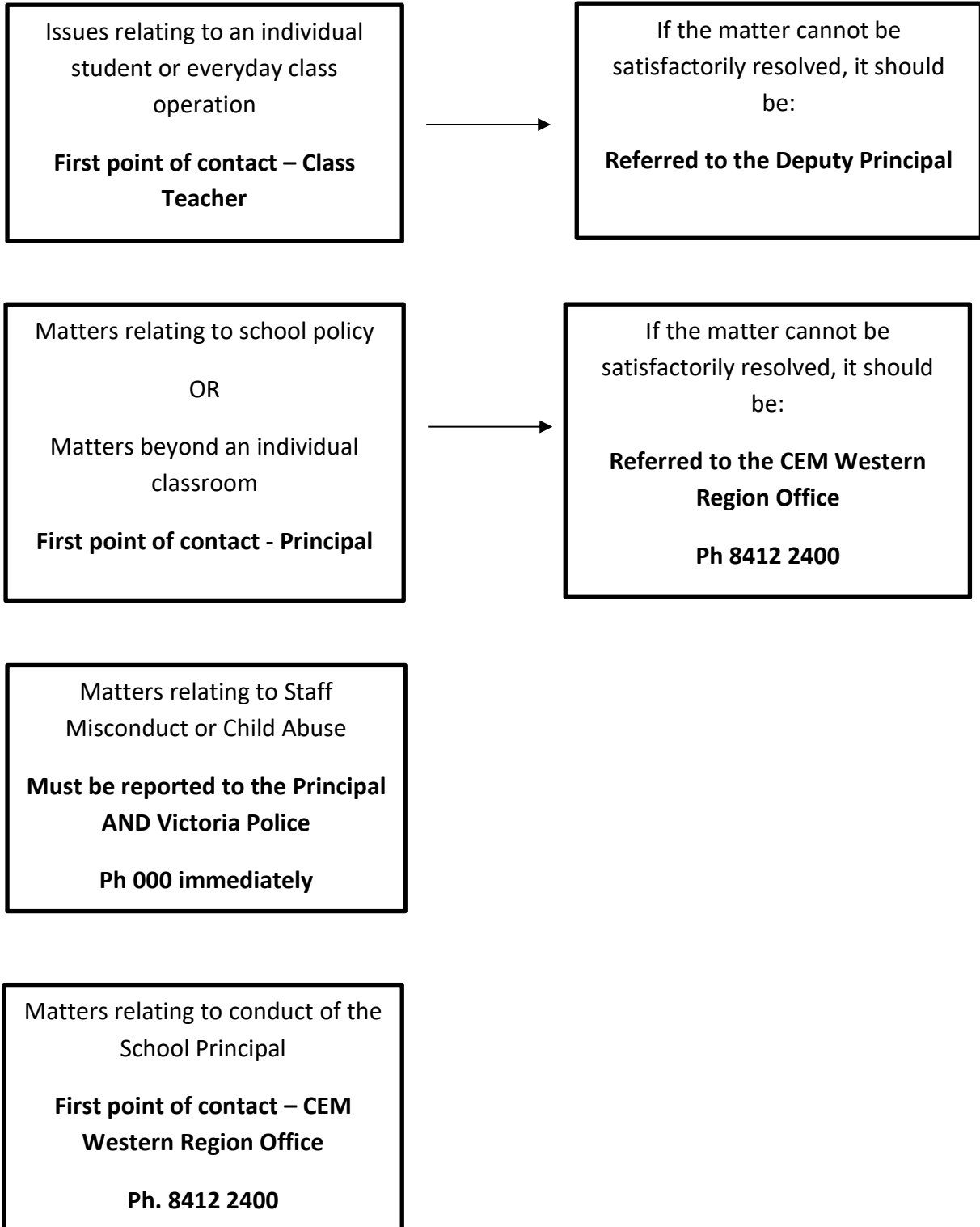
Date reviewed: 2020

Next review: 2024 or sooner if needed

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Appendix

School Grievance Points of Contact



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