

REPORTING AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

From time-to-time parents/carers will have concerns about issues that arise at school. It is important that concerns are dealt with in a fair and timely manner and have positive outcomes. It is also important to acknowledge that we are members of a Catholic community and therefore certain values and principles guide our behaviour and relationships. We are called to address the pastoral needs of our staff, families and community members. Our community also has lawful responsibilities to create safe learning environments. Therefore, addressing complaints is a very high priority.

Guiding principles

St Matthew's applies the following principles when managing complaints:

- students, parents, and guardians have a right to voice complaints
- complaints are resolved promptly and at the point of receipt, where possible
- complaints will be handled fairly, objectively, and confidentially
- students, parents, and guardians will not be adversely affected by making a complaint
- complaints help us to improve our services.

Process for making a complaint

The following is a guide for parents to follow in addressing and communicating a concern or complaint

1) about a teacher or student:

- In the first instance, the parent/guardian talks with a teacher and they work together to resolve the complaint. Records of meeting are taken. This stage may include a formal investigation process.
- If the matter cannot be resolved the parent/guardian works with a member of St Matthew's leadership team; in the first instance, Assistant Principal (APA or APRE) to resolve the complaint. Records of meeting are taken.
- If the matter cannot be resolved, parent or guardian talks with the Principal, and they work together to resolve the complaint. A written record will be kept.

2) about a school process or policy

- The complainant talks to Assistant Principal or other nominated school employee, and they work together to resolve the matter. Records of meeting are taken.
- If the matter cannot be resolved, the student, parent or guardian talks with the Principal, and they work together to resolve the complaint. A written record will be kept.

3) about a Principal

- In the first instance, parent/guardian talks with the Principal, and they work together to resolve the complaint. Records of meeting are taken. Support may be gained from Brisbane Catholic Education personnel to help bring the issue to resolution.
- If the matter cannot be resolved, the complainant submits written complaint to Head of School Progress & Performance GPO Box 1201, Brisbane QLD 4001 or emailed to SchoolEnquiry@bne.catholic.edu.au

Points to note

- **Response time frames:** The time required to resolve a complaint depends on its complexity, nature, and employee availability. Receipt of a complaint will be acknowledged as soon as possible. Additional time may be required if a complaint is submitted toward the end of a school term or outside of school terms.
- **Request for review:** If dissatisfied with the school's complaints processes, parent, or guardian may submit a written request for a review to the Principal. After following all the processes and it has not produced a satisfactory outcome, Brisbane Catholic Education representatives may become involved in the process. The previous stages are a requirement before any further actions can be taken.

- Brisbane Catholic Education representatives will form an action plan and solution in consultation with the family and school.
- **Complaints from students about other students or teachers:** In the event of a student making a complaint against another student the class teacher will facilitate a process and take appropriate actions. Parents/ guardians will be informed when necessary. A member of the leadership team will facilitate the process in the event of a student making a complaint about a teacher. Records are kept, parents are informed, and they may take part in the resolution process.



Roles and Responsibilities

Successful implementation of the formal procedure is enhanced by each party demonstrating an intention to act accordingly.

The *Principal* has delegated responsibility for the everyday operations of the school in accordance with Brisbane Catholic Education policies, procedures, and guidelines. Responsibilities of the Principal include:

- implement and maintain written processes about receiving, assessing, investigating, and otherwise dealing with complaints made by students, parents or guardians
- ensure information on how to make a complaint is accessible to students, parents and guardians
- maintain a register of complaints using the approved BCE complaints register template
- initiate a response and resolve complaints promptly and communicate outcome to the complainant
- when a complainant requests a review of a decision by a school employee, review to assess the merits of original complaint, processes used to resolve the complaint and outcome decided
- when a complainant requests in writing a review of a decision by the Principal, forward the written request to the Senior Leader – School Progress & Performance
- for complaints about the Principal, request that the complainant submit the complaint in writing to Head of School Progress & Performance, GPO Box 1201, Brisbane QLD 4001
- liaise with the Senior Leader – School Progress & Performance on complex complaints
- ensure written complaints are acknowledged in writing as soon as possible
- ensure the school manages complaints in accordance with BCE's Student, Parent and Guardian Complaints Management policy and this procedure.

Role of Parents/carers and/or students	Role of the School Personnel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work with school employees to resolve the complaint • provide the school with a clear description of the complaint and desired outcome • provide all relevant information and documentation to the school when the complaint is made • understand that resolving complaints may take some time • inform the school of changes affecting the complaint • cooperate in a respectful way with school employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage complaints in accordance with BCE's Student, Parent and Guardian Complaints Management policy and this procedure. • Listen to concerns with an open mind and seek to understand them. • Maintain confidentiality. • Investigate any relevant issues carefully. • Commit to resolving any problems in ways that respect individuals and attempt to meet the needs of all concerned as fairly as possible. • Communicate clearly, sensitively, and objectively. • Establish timelines for actions and review for any resolutions • Record communications in school records base (Engage: conversation/ incidents)

NOTE: if a complaint is related to alleged (a) Inappropriate behaviour (b) Sexual or physical abuse (c) Bullying (d) Criminal matters or (e) Serious injury (f) breach of Australian Privacy Principles there are similar procedures that the Principal needs to follow to address these sensitive topics. This follows Federal and State Legislation and BCE policy. Please contact the school principal. The [Brisbane Catholic Education Student Protection Processes and Complaints Procedures are available here](#).

POLICY: STUDENT, PARENT AND GUARDIAN COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) employees must follow when managing a complaint from a student, parent or guardian. Complaints are an important source of information for the organisation in identifying issues and risks and improving processes and systems.

2. RATIONALE

This policy will ensure that complaints from students, parents and guardians are managed consistently and in accordance with the Australian Standard on complaints management (AS/NZS ISO 10002:2014 – Guidelines for complaints in organisations) and relevant legislation.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

BCE is committed to effective complaints management by managing student, parent and guardian complaints in an accountable, transparent, timely and fair manner, while protecting the health and safety of BCE employees through proactive management of unreasonable complainant conduct.

4. PRINCIPLES

In managing a complaint from a student, parent or guardian, the following principles apply:

- people focus: build trusting relationships by respecting individuals and the community. Students, parents and guardians have a right to voice complaints
- accessibility: information on how and where to make a complaint is available and easy to access
- local resolution: resolve complaints promptly and at the point of receipt, where possible
- responsiveness: prioritise and resolve complaints in a fair and timely manner with complainants informed of progress in the complaints handling process
- objectivity and fairness: apply procedural fairness and withhold judgement
- no detriment: students, parents and guardians are not adversely affected because they have made a complaint
- learn, improve and grow: improve services by learning from complaints
- accountability: employees know, and exercise, their roles and responsibilities
- confidentiality: complaint information is confidential and managed in accordance with Australian Privacy Principles within the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

Complaints within the scope of this policy

Complaints by a student, parent or guardian expressing dissatisfaction about a service, decision or action of a BCE employee, and the student, parent or guardian is directly affected by the service, decision, or action.

Complaints outside the scope of this policy

The following complaints are outside of the scope of this policy and are responded to through other mechanisms:

- BCE employee complaints: BCE's Staff Complaints Management procedure
- complaints relating to non-compliance with BCE's student protection processes: Complaints Procedure for Non-compliance with Brisbane Catholic Education's Student Protection Processes
- complaints relating to student bullying or harassment: BCE's Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools policy
- complaints relating to conduct of religious clergy and other religious persons: Archdiocese of Brisbane Professional Standards
- complaints relating to animal use: QSAEC Animal Use Complaint Report
- reporting a work health and safety incident or near miss: BCE's Incident Reporting and Investigation

procedure.

5. REFERENCES AND DEFINITIONS

5.1 References

- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)
- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (QLD)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Privacy statement
- Code of Conduct
- Whistle-blower policy.

5.2 Definitions

Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction about a service, decision or action of a BCE employee.
Complainant	A student, parent or guardian directly affected by a service, decision or action of a BCE employee.
Internal review	A process used to assess the merits of the original complaint, the complaints processes used to resolve the complaint and the original outcome decided.
Resolution	A complaint is resolved when the complaint has been handled in accordance with BCE's Student, Parent and Guardian Complaints Management policy and procedure.
Unreasonable complainant conduct	Unreasonable complainant conduct involves actions or behaviours which raise significant health, safety, resources or equity issues for BCE. Unreasonable complainant conduct includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• unreasonable persistence e.g. making excessive and unnecessary phone calls or emails• unreasonable demands e.g. demanding a different process or more reviews than allowed for by the school's complaints procedure and/or BCE's Student, Parent and Guardian Complaints Management policy and procedure or demanding a different outcome without demonstrating the original decision of the school was incorrect or unfair