

St Michael's College *Merrimac*



ST MICHAEL'S
COLLEGE

...a friendly learning Catholic community

Complaints and Grievance Policy

Revised August 2017

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Introduction

St Michael's College is a Catholic College which encourages individuals to feel safe to express their points of view openly, honestly and constructively. From time to time concerns regarding educational, behavioural or school environment issues may arise. For this reason, St Michael's College has developed this policy to guide parents/carers on raising issues that they believe to be unfair or inappropriate. Guided by our pillars of Respect and Integrity, St Michael's College strives to resolve concerns and conflicts promptly, effectively and with sensitivity.

Definitions

- A grievance exists where a community member believes a complaint or concern has not been adequately met. If a parent / carer or student has a grievance, a resolution should be sought through **informal discussion** with the appropriate person about the issue in order to come to a mutually acceptable resolution. If this informal process is unsuccessful, the **formal grievance procedure** shall be followed.
- There exists in the College and/or Archdiocese specialised policies, guidelines and procedures to cover certain types of complaints that may occur in schools. For example sexual harassment, equal opportunity or anti discrimination. This policy is not intended to replace any such specialised policies guidelines or procedures, but is to provide direction in how to deal with parental/carers and/or student grievances that may arise.
- This policy is not intended to apply to complaints alleging criminal or unlawful behaviour, which shall be referred to the proper authorities.

Guidelines

- St Michael's College aims to resolve grievances quickly and informally through consultation, co-operation and discussion.
- St Michael's staff would aim to respond to grievances within two working days, allowing for extenuation circumstances.
- The grievance should be dealt with at the appropriate level before being escalated to a higher level.
- Should the informal process fail to adequately resolve the grievance then a formal grievance procedure will be applied.
- The St Michael's College Grievance Policy is a living document, able to be amended and updated according to changing legislation, needs and priorities. The policy will be communicated to all members of the College community and will be regularly reviewed.
- The College will keep a record of grievances and any processes implemented to seek resolution.
- Where complaints and grievances are proven to be vexatious and/or defamatory, appropriate measures will be taken to uphold the good name and reputation of the College and/or persons affected.
- Where complaints and grievances are communicated in a hostile or offensive manner the meeting will be stopped and reconvened at another time.
- The Principal is responsible for developing procedures to implement this policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

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

Role of Parents/carers and/or students with a grievance

- Report grievance to the staff member involved when appropriate to do so.
- Address the issue, rather than trying to ignore it.
- State clearly and objectively the grievances, giving specific instances where appropriate.
- Seek a solution that attempts to meet the needs of those concerned.
- Refer matters that are relevant.
- Contact the College to arrange a mutually convenient time for the matters to be discussed with key personnel.
- Be receptive to other points of view.
- Address the issues rather than the personalities involved.

The role of the College Personnel when responding to a grievance

- *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 time lines for actions and review for any resolutions.*

Process

Students with a grievance should:

1. Talk to the staff member about the problem, if appropriate to do so. Discuss the question or concern directly with the staff member involved, stating the problem clearly and objectively. Seek to resolve it in a way that respects the needs of those involved.
2. If you feel uncomfortable, speak to someone, 'whom you feel comfortable with'. Talk to a Home Class / Subject teacher, Pastoral / Curriculum Leader, School Counsellor and/or your parents/carers about the problem at an appropriate time.
3. Allow a reasonable timeframe (two working days) for the issue to be addressed.
4. If issue is unresolved, speak to your parent(s)/carer(s).
5. If the grievance is not addressed arrange a time for your parents / carers and you to speak with the Home Class / Subject Teacher, Pastoral / Curriculum Leader, Assistant Principal, Deputy Principal or Principal (as appropriate to the nature of the concern).

Parents / Carers with a grievance should:

For issues related to pastoral and/or learning concerns in the home room and/or class room.

1. Talk to the relevant Home Class / Subject teacher about the problem. Discuss the concern directly with the staff member involved, stating the problem clearly and objectively. Seek to resolve it in a way that respects the needs of those involved.
2. Allow a reasonable timeframe (two working days) for the issue to be addressed.
3. If the grievance is not addressed arrange a time to speak with the relevant Curriculum / Pastoral Leader.
4. If the matter is still unresolved after a suitable time has been allowed then arrange a time to speak with the Principal and/or Principal's representative (AP or Deputy).
5. If the matter is still not resolved to your satisfaction you may contact the Brisbane Catholic Education Area Supervisor.

For issues related to school policy:

1. Arrange a meeting time with the Principal and/or Principal's representative (AP or Deputy) to discuss your concern.
2. Allow a reasonable timeframe (two working days) for the issue to be addressed.
3. If the matter is still not resolved to your satisfaction you may contact the Brisbane Catholic Education Area Supervisor.