



# St Stephen's School Pittsworth

## Complaints management procedure

### Purpose

Schooling of children in the St Stephen's community is a partnership between the school, parents/carers and guardians, students and the community.

As with all partnerships, from time to time there will be misunderstandings and differences leading to various levels of concern.

This procedure describes how parents/carers and guardians, students, and community members can make a complaint and how this complaint will be managed, guided by the principles of fairness, dignity, respect, confidentiality and equity.

### To whom it applies

All parents/carers and guardians, community members and students of St Stephen's School are to follow this procedure. All employees of St Stephen's School are to manage complaints in accordance with this procedure.

**Please note:** This procedure is not to be used to deal with situations where allegations of abuse or sexual misconduct are made against employees. In these instances, the Student Protection processes and guidelines are to be applied.

This procedure is not to be used by employees to make a complaint. In these instances, one of the following procedures may be applied

- a. Employee grievance resolution procedure
- b. Workplace bullying and harassment procedure
- c. Anti-discrimination, equal employment and addressing sexual harassment procedure.

### Related legislation

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)

# Procedure

## Guiding principles

1. All people involved have a right to be heard, agree to act courteously, politely, honestly and expect that relationships will continue respectfully both during and after the management of the complaint.
2. All parties are to respect others' dignity, views, beliefs and circumstances.
3. Confidentiality is a key element of complaints management.

## Students

### Making a complaint

1. If the student feels comfortable to do so, they can raise their complaint with the person directly.
2. If this is not the case, the student can raise their complaint with a member of staff they feel they can talk to about the issue by
  - a. talking to them directly or
  - b. sending an email or
  - c. making an appointment to speak with them.

### Resolving a complaint

3. When a member of staff receives a complaint from a student they will make sure that
  - a. it is dealt with as quickly as possible
  - b. only people who need to know are involved
  - c. it is treated seriously
  - d. the student's voice is heard
  - e. the student is told what is happening
  - f. the student knows when all of the steps in managing the complaint have been completed.

**Please note:** If the complaint is about the inappropriate behaviour of a staff member or volunteer towards a student, then the TCS Student Protection processes and guidelines are to be followed.

## Parents/carers, guardians and community members

### Making a complaint

1. In the first instance, communication/notification of a complaint is to be with the relevant member of staff by one of the following
  - a. phone
  - b. email or
  - c. in written form.

**Please note:** Communication with teaching staff must be in accordance with the school's communication procedures eg teaching staff are not able to answer phone calls during class time.

**Please note:** If the complaint is about the inappropriate behaviour of a staff member or volunteer towards a student, then the TCS Student Protection processes and guidelines are to be followed.

### Resolving a complaint

2. Upon receipt of the communication/notification of a complaint, the staff member is to acknowledge receipt of the notification and notify their principal/manager/supervisor that a complaint has been made.
3. The staff member and their principal/manager/supervisor are to work together to determine the best way to address the complaint.

4. All relevant information gathering and investigation or inquiry is to be completed prior to an outcome being determined.
5. All complaints will be addressed in a timely manner.
6. If the mechanism for resolution of a complaint is agreed to be by meeting
  - a. such meetings will be held within school grounds at a time mutually convenient to the parties
  - b. the facts and context of the complaint are to be clearly stated at the beginning of the meeting
  - c. each party to a complaint is to use their best endeavours to reach a mutually agreeable outcome
  - d. the outcome is to be recorded and kept in the school's files, and provided to the people at this meeting on request
  - e. should a complaint not be resolved at a first meeting, the parties are able to enter into further agreed communication (ie further meeting) in an attempt to resolve the complaint
  - f. the principal or other relevant personnel may be invited to attend the follow up meeting
7. All complaints are to be resolved with a mutually agreeable outcome, recorded and kept in the school's files.
8. In the event that a complaint remains unresolved the matter can be addressed under the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Complaints management procedure.

## Complaints management procedure flowchart

