

COMPLAINTS POLICY - 2009

PURPOSE

Red Bend Catholic College of Forbes is committed to providing a pleasant, safe and effective working environment for the students in our schools. The duty of care should be paramount in all schools. To this end, policies such as Occupational Health and Safety, Child Protection, Pastoral Care, Staff Code of Conduct and Privacy have been developed.

With every good will, complaints may still arise and it is important that these complaints be dealt with swiftly and effectively to address the complaint, allay fears and prevent minor complaints developing into major complaints.

- Parents will be made aware of the policy through its publication on the RBCC website and in school enrolment folders.
- All staff will be made aware of the Complaints Policy through staff training.

It is expected that all complaints will be dealt with impartially, confidentially, fairly and speedily.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles should govern all complaint handling processes:

- *IMPARTIALITY* – Complaints should be investigated in an open and unbiased way with both parties seeking a fair hearing and clarification of the complaints. *No decisions or judgements should be made until all the facts are clear.*
- *CONFIDENTIALITY* – All parties involved in the complaint are asked to maintain confidentiality. The dignity and privacy of all concerned must be maintained.
- *A COMMITMENT TO FAIRNESS* – Repercussions should not be feared following the lodging of a complaint made in good faith. Repercussions will not be tolerated.
- *TIMELINESS* – It is important that all complaints be dealt with speedily to ensure a quick resolution of the complaint.

PROCESS

- At this school, contact should first be made with the Deputy Principal¹ for matters relating to the Day School and to the Coordinator of Boarding² for matters relating to the Boarding School.
- In general, parents / students would then be directed to first address the complaint with the staff member most closely related to the complaint, as soon as possible after the incident. This can often result in the complaint being dealt with easily and effectively.
- An appointment should be made with the relevant staff member at school to outline the complaint and seek a solution.
- Good will on both sides and clarification of the complaint should ensure a happy resolution for both parties.
- It is good practice for the school to summarise the complaint and resolution in writing and provide a copy to the complainant.

¹ If the complaint to be addressed concerns the Deputy Principal then initial contact should be with the Principal of the College.

² If the complaint to be addressed concerns the Coordinator of Boarding then initial contact should be with the Principal of the College.

- If however, an informal approach is not successful in resolving the complaint, a formal complaint may be lodged with the school through the Principal³. This should be submitted in writing (if possible) outlining the complaint and the concerns about the initial handling of the complaint. It is important that this is dealt with speedily and that a written response is made.
- Complaints may also be raised with Champagnat Education. Most complaints should however be dealt with at school level and Champagnat Education would encourage this approach. If there is a particular reason why this is not possible, Champagnat Education will appoint a consultant who will seek to resolve the complaint by liaising with the school and the person expressing the complaint. A written summary should again be provided.
- If the complaint is still not resolved, reference to the appropriate external agency e.g. Anti-discrimination Board, may be made.

NOTE:

Child Protection complaints will be dealt with outside this process using the investigative processes set out by the Ombudsman. All Child Protection complaints must be passed on to the Principal without delay.

TEN TIPS FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

- Encourage people to communicate their complaints and assist them with this.
- Allow people to fully explain before jumping to conclusions.
- Listen carefully and ask for clarification.
- Investigate carefully. Follow the policy and be open.
- Be tactful. Be open and supportive to everyone's dignity.
- Avoid snap judgements. Be objective.
- Communicate constantly with the complainant.
- Consider the consequences.
- Admit any mistakes. Don't bear grudges. Don't blame.
- Explain the decision.

³ *If the complaint to be addressed concerns the Principal then initial contact should be with Champagnat Education. To contact Champagnat Education ring 03 98461633*