

SMMC-Albury-Complaints and Grievance Policy

Rationale:

Saint Mary MacKillop College Albury is committed to the Christian values of charity and justice. We have the desire and the responsibility to ensure that the highest possible moral standards are maintained by the staff and students in their conduct within the school.

Related policies

Complaints about reportable conduct will be addressed in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy. This is published on the School Website (<http://smmc.nsw.edu.au/policies/>)

Complaints regarding bullying are generally addressed in accordance with the school's Bullying Statement.

Aims:

- To provide structures for a truly harmonious climate of cooperation and trust among the various parties involved in the process of educating young Catholics according to the principles laid down in our education philosophy.
- To resolve efficiently any complaints arising from a breakdown in this process.

Confidentiality

All complaints and grievances are to be handled with confidentiality.

What is a complaint?

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the school about an educational and/or operational matter relating to services provided by the school or the behaviour or decisions of a staff member, contractor or volunteer, including misconduct.

If a parent/carer or student has a concern about the conduct of a staff member, they should raise their concern with the school. **If a complaint that concerns the behaviour of a staff member may constitute reportable conduct, the matter will be addressed in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy. Please refer to the school's Child Protection Policy for information about reportable conduct.** Complainants are not required to assess whether their concern meets the threshold of reportable conduct before making a complaint. Any concern about a child's wellbeing may be reported under this policy.

Complaints may be made by a student or parent/carer.

The school will seek to resolve complaints informally where possible but acknowledges that in some cases a person may wish to make a formal complaint.

Raising a complaint

The complainant

Informal complaints may be raised by a complainant directly with the person involved. However, if the complainant does not feel comfortable doing so or the matter is one where it may not be appropriate to do so a complaint can be made to the Principal. Any complaint about the conduct of a staff member should be raised directly with the Principal in the first instance.

Should the matter not be resolved through informal processes, the complainant may raise the matter formally with the school. A formal complaint can be made in writing to the Principal, via email to: principal@smmc.nsw.edu.au

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning the Principal the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of the School Board .(admin@smmc.nsw.edu.au)

The school

The Principal/Delegate will generally acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing as soon as practicable.

Assessing a complaint

The Principal/Delegate generally will assess the complaint and determine:

- whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or if it is a staff grievance or reportable conduct matter which are dealt with by the relevant policies. Reportable Conduct is defined and dealt with under the Child Protection Policy.
- the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised; and
- whether the school may be required to report the matter to the Ombudsman, Police, Family and Community Services or other relevant authorities, should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

Managing a formal complaint

The Principal/Delegate generally will manage a formal complaint by:

- a) advising the complainant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the School in relation to the complaint;
- b) if appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the complaint at the relevant time and providing them with an opportunity to respond;
- c) collecting any additional information the School considers necessary to assess the complaint;
- d) making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved (“resolution decision”); and

- e) advising the complainant in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision of the Principal/Delegate and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

There may be circumstances where some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the school will determine, on a case by case basis the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.

Contact

If you have any queries about this procedure, you should contact the school office(secretary@smmc.nsw.edu.au)for advice.

Grievances and Complaints of a Less Serious Nature

Student, Parent and Staff Grievance Procedures:

The procedure for registering grievances is as follows:

For students:

- The student who has a grievance against a teacher should approach that teacher in all courtesy and make known his/her grievance.
- If this is not feasible or does not produce a resolution of the problem, the student should report the matter to his/her guardian who will act as follows:

For parents:

- If the parent has a grievance – either on behalf of the child or on their own behalf – the matter should be brought to the attention of the person/teacher concerned.
- If a parent has queries or concerns about subject areas, these should be brought to the attention of the subject teacher.
- If any grievance is not resolved by going to the person/teacher concerned, the matter should be reported to the Principal.

For teachers:

- Teachers who have a grievance in relation to a student or students should first refer the matter to the Principal, who may refer the matter to the parents.
- Teachers who have a grievance in relation to parents should refer the matter to the Principal.
- Teachers who have a grievance in relation to any aspect of the School programme should refer the matter to the Principal.

Additional Notes

A complainant and the relevant parties that the complaint is about may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the School about the complaint. However, the School maintains the right to determine whether the person's preferred support person is appropriate and may not approve the attendance of a support person where they are determined by the School to be inappropriate. In this cases the complainant may nominate a different support person.

In every instance, the person(s) against whom a grievance is directed is/are to be given early notification of the details. They are to have the right of reply and of defence before any discussion of the problem is carried out or any resolution attempted. Resolution of conflicts should be accomplished in a spirit of justice and procedural fairness. Furthermore, in line with other schools, businesses and organisations, which wish to function efficiently and justly, Saint Mary MacKillop College Albury will take no action in response to anonymous complaints.