



COMPLAINTS POLICY

St Patrick's is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment. This is characterised by fairness, mutual trust, respect and reconciliation. A safe and supportive environment is developed when all members of a school community promote open communication, tolerance and positive relationships and embrace respectful, just and transparent processes. When clear preventative policies are applied consistently and issues that can give rise to complaints are identified early, matters can be resolved before they escalate to the point where relationships are damaged. To promote positive and effective relationships all staff are encouraged to recognise the distinction between personal and professional conflict so that appropriate relationships can be maintained, even where there might be professional disagreement.

Policy Statement

Complaints and suggestions can be opportunities for growth and improvement. Complaints, as well as compliments and other constructive feedback, create opportunities for a school to improve its services and prevent future problems. A community that is open to complaints and suggestions is characterised by signs of impartiality and confidentiality, respect for the dignity of those involved, and is proactive in ensuring there is no fear of victimisation. The processes in the Complaints Handling Procedure are to ensure procedural fairness, with a fair hearing and a deliberate decision.

Dealing with complaints and suggestions and by following well developed procedures helps build a safe and supportive environment as it:

- Encourages early intervention in issues before they damage working relationships
- Ensures that behaviours destructive to positive relationships (such as bullying, harassment and discrimination) are identified as being unacceptable and are appropriately managed
- Ensures that complaints are dealt with consistently
- Enables a school community to identify patterns of unacceptable conduct and enables prevention strategies to be developed and implemented
- Encourages individuals, with support, to resolve issues directly without third party intervention, and reduce the likelihood that external agencies will need to be involved.

The Complaints and Suggestions Policy supported by the Complaints Handling Procedures forms an important element in the Diocese's commitment to ensuring safe and supportive environments for our school communities. School Executives are responsible for ensuring that it is explained to the School community, the processes for raising matters of concern are

well understood, and that the processes for responding to matters of concern are implemented.