



Catholic College Sale

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY

1.0 POLICY AUTHORITY

The Board of Catholic College Sale Limited (the Board) governs the College. Based on the principle of subsidiarity and in keeping with the Board's Delegations Schedule, the Board delegates a broad range of duties, functions, powers, and authority to the Principal of Catholic College Sale Ltd (the College). This includes the effective implementation of this *Complaints Management Policy* and the compliance obligations outlined herein.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The College is committed to ensuring that there is an effective process for how complaints are handled and resolved. We endeavour to address issues of concern in ways that are constructive, open, respectful and embedded in procedural fairness. We encourage students to raise concerns with a trusted adult and develop our complaint processes to be child-centred and empowering.

Every member of our College community has a right to have their concern or complaint addressed, and we will work positively and resolutely to achieve a satisfactory outcome for the people involved.

3.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This Policy outlines the College's principles and procedures for receiving and resolving complaints from parents, guardians, carers and the wider school community.

Complaints raised directly by students (e.g., about a teacher, another student(s), or an operational matter) are generally addressed through a student's Pastoral Teacher, Year Level Coordinator, or House Leader. In addition, procedures for raising and resolving bullying concerns are outlined in the College's *Anti Bullying and Bullying Prevention Policy*. If a student has not been able to resolve the issue through these mechanisms, then this Policy applies. It enables students, parents, guardians, or carers to raise a complaint on behalf of their child and have it resolved. The Policy also applies when parents, guardians or carers have a specific parent-school concern (e.g. fees, curriculum offerings).

Contacts for responsible persons in this Policy are set out in [Appendix A](#).

Complaints made by children and other persons that relate to a child's safety and well-being will be treated seriously and acted upon promptly. Where a matter evokes specific reporting obligations, the College must follow the processes as set out in the *Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Policy*. For example, complaints relating to alleged misconduct or serious misconduct by a College teacher or staff member may evoke child safety reporting obligations, including to professional bodies such as the Commission for Children and Young People and/or to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).

Complaints raised by College staff are generally addressed through issue-specific human resource policies, such as the *Workplace Equal Opportunity Policy*. Staff may also choose to have a grievance pertaining to employment conditions addressed through the Disputes Procedure outlined in the Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement (VCEMEA).

4.0 PRINCIPLES

In receiving and responding to complaints, the following guiding principles will direct and shape the College's actions:

- We will work with the complainant(s) with respect, courtesy and openness and with a genuine desire to achieve fair and reasonable decisions.
- The complaint will be resolved as quickly as possible.
- Confidentiality, impartiality and the principles of natural justice will form the basis of our complaint resolution process.
- The person(s) facing the complaint will be provided with detailed information about the substance of the complaint and will have the opportunity to respond.
- Students (and other persons involved in a complaint) will be advised that they can bring a support person to any interviews or meetings related to the complaint.
- Personal information disclosed will be treated as confidential, but may need to be disclosed in connection with an investigation and resolution process, subject to any legal requirements the College must observe, such as privacy and employment laws. Complainants will normally be told who will be involved in managing the complaint.
- Our resolution process will be grounded in sound and fair procedures for information sharing, conciliation, investigation and decision making. We will explain the process to complainants (in accordance with this Policy) and check that they understand the process and proposed actions.
- The safety and well-being of students will be at the forefront of complaint resolution decisions and processes. The College will consider and implement restorative practices wherever appropriate.
- Where the complaint relates to a vulnerable student (including a student with a disability), the College will provide further support and adjustments as required.
- If a satisfactory outcome cannot be achieved, the College will generally provide the complainant(s) with options for having the outcome mediated and/or reviewed by an external authority.

5.0 DEFINITIONS

Parent: inclusive of a guardian or carer where:

- a parent is the person who has parental responsibility for 'major long-term issues' as defined in the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth);
- a guardian is appointed pursuant to the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.);
- a carer is a person with whom the child normally or regularly resides and who has day-to-day care and control of the child.

Complaint: means an expression of dissatisfaction with an action taken, decision made or service provided, or the failure to provide a service, take action or make a decision at a school.

Complainant: means a person who makes a complaint under this Policy.

Resolved Complaint: a complaint is considered resolved when the complainant and/or the school agree on an appropriate response or remedy.

Unresolved Complaint: a complaint is considered to be unresolved when agreement cannot be reached on a course of action and/or a remedy, or if the remedy cannot be implemented.

Misconduct: in regard to a teacher means the conduct of a teacher occurring in connection with the practice of teaching that is of a lesser standard than a member of the public, or members of the teaching profession are entitled to expect from a reasonably proficient teacher.

In regard to other staff members or the Directors, misconduct means unacceptable or improper behaviour or mismanagement.

Serious Misconduct: in regard to a teacher generally involves a substantial departure from the accepted standards of the profession, including conduct that is found to be infamous, disgraceful, dishonourable or shameful.

In regard to all staff members and the Directors, serious misconduct includes unacceptable or improper behaviour that:

- breaches the policies or codes of conduct of the College, or
- causes a serious and imminent risk to the health and safety of another person or the reputation of the College, or
- involves theft, fraud, assault, sexual harassment, indecent touching, bullying or intoxication in the course of employment.

6.0 PROCEDURES

6.1 Shared Expectations

Complainants

In making a complaint, the College requests and expects that the complainant(s) will:

- raise the concern or complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen;
- observe the College's stated procedures for raising and resolving the complaint;
- follow specified protocols for communication with staff, including making appointments at a mutually convenient time and communicating concerns in a constructive, respectful manner;
- provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint, including what happened, who was there, what the complainant is most concerned about and what outcome the complainant is seeking;
- observe confidentiality and respect for sensitive issues;
- act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties;
- have realistic and reasonable expectations about possible outcomes/remedies.

Unacceptable and unreasonable complainant conduct

The College places high value and priority on maintaining a safe and respectful working environment for our school staff. We regard certain behaviours as harmful and unacceptable insofar as they compromise the safety and professional well-being of our school staff. These behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- shouting or swearing, either in person or on the telephone;
- physical or verbal intimidation;
- aggressive hand gestures;
- writing rude, defamatory, aggressive or abusive comments to/about a staff member (including via email or social media);
- use of language which would be considered racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory on religious or gender grounds;
- damage or violation of possession/property.

When a complainant behaves in such unacceptable ways, the principal or Leadership Team will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and/or mediation.

The College considers the behaviour of a complainant to be unreasonable when:

- it is clearly and significantly outside the expectations of cooperation, courtesy and respect;
- it calls for staff resources and time unjustified by the nature or significance of the complaint;
- an action or complaint is brought without merit, often to cause annoyance to another person;
- it is oriented towards conflict.

When a complainant behaves in such a way, this will be communicated to them in writing.

College staff

In responding to a complaint, the complainant can expect that staff will:

- observe confidentiality and respect for sensitive issues;
- allow your views and opinions to be heard and understood;
- communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair and respectful;
- provide a timely response to your complaint;
- strive to achieve resolutions and outcomes that are satisfactory to all parties.

6.2 Process for Making a Complaint

The process for making a complaint involves emailing or calling the College to register the complaint and request a phone conference or face-to-face meeting with the relevant staff member.

Complainants and staff are strongly discouraged from sending or discussing confidential, contentious and/or emotional information via email. These matters are best discussed face-to-face or over the phone.

In most cases, the Principal or another member of the Leadership Team will be the final decision maker for complaints that cannot be resolved locally.

See clause 6.8 for complaints about the Principal.

Complaints and Concerns Process for Students

The College acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. The College encourages students to raise issues or concerns as they arise.

Students with a concern or complaint can raise it with a trusted adult at school (for example, their classroom teacher, Pastoral Teacher, Year Level Coordinator, House Leader, a College Wellbeing Support Officer or Child Safeguarding Officer). This trusted adult will receive the complaint thoughtfully and take the concern seriously.

Students can ask to have another trusted adult present as a support person when discussing their concern, or, if they are reluctant to approach College staff, they can ask their parent, guardian, carer or another trusted adult to raise the complaint or concern on their behalf.

The College is committed to:

- letting students know that they can make a complaint about any kind of harm perpetrated at school, outside school, by an adult or other children, including bullying or cyberbullying and all forms of abuse;
- providing opportunities for students to report bullying via the electronic learning management system (SIMON) and for members of the Wellbeing Development Team to provide the necessary support to ensure the student feels safe;
- ensuring that the College's Child Safeguarding Officers are clearly identifiable by students through providing information displayed on the College E-noticeboards and via SIMON;
- encouraging students to talk to a member of the Student Leadership Team to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers;
- asking students about their experiences of making complaints, and acting on feedback from students in the complaints process;
- where necessary, making improvements following a complaint to address the source of the problem.

Complaints and Concerns Process for Parents, Guardians or Carers

The College encourages parents, guardians, carers or other members of the school community who may wish to submit a concern or complaint to:

- carefully consider the issues they would like to discuss;
- remember that they may not have all the facts relating to the issue;
- think about how the matter could be resolved;
- be informed by checking the relevant policies and procedures.

When raising concerns or complaints, parents, guardians and carers are expected to adhere to the Parent Code of Conduct and are reminded of the expectation to communicate and respond in a respectful way.

Parents, guardians or carers are also able to have a support person assist them in raising a complaint or concern with the College.

We expect that complaints from parents, guardians or carers relating to their child's alleged treatment by another student of the College community will:

- be referred locally, directly to the student's Pastoral Teacher, Year Level Coordinator or House Leader;
- not involve a direct approach to anyone allegedly involved in the complaint.

We expect that complaints from parents, guardians or carers relating to their child's alleged treatment by a staff member will:

- be referred directly to the staff member concerned when appropriate, the Deputy Principal, another member of the Leadership Team or the Principal for more serious matters;
- not involve a direct approach by the complainant to anyone allegedly involved in the complaint.

The College is committed to:

- considering all parent, guardian or carer complaints by:
 - raising the issue with the relevant staff or member of the community
 - consulting external agencies for advice where necessary
 - discussing the findings with the parent, guardian or carer in an attempt to reach an agreed resolution
 - considering the engagement of a mediator where a complaint has the potential to become intractable;

- publicising and making readily available the College's complaint-handling procedures;
- reviewing the College's complaint-handling procedures regularly;
- ensuring that complaints received are recorded and actions taken to resolve the complaint are well documented;
- seeking advice about the management of complaints, including complex or challenging complaints, and the use of mediation/conciliation services when required;
- considering whether a request for information sharing under the CISS or FVISS may be appropriate, having regard to any concerns relating to the well-being or safety of a child or a group of children or any risk of family violence, in line with the MARAM;
- ensuring all school personnel are aware of the College's complaint-handling procedures and providing opportunities for staff to attend training/professional development activities as required;
- actively assisting parents, guardians or carers with the complaint process, informing them that at any point in the complaint process, they are able to be supported by an advocate/support person.

6.3 Informal and Formal Resolution Processes

Informal Process

Where possible, complaints will be resolved informally; that is, the parties themselves may resolve concerns at the local level in open discussion where relevant information and views are exchanged and issues clarified. This option involves reflection and conversations that are respectful of each person's needs and perspectives. The parties may be assisted to resolve a possible misunderstanding, miscommunication or lack of clarity about the issue by support persons nominated by each of the parties. The use of informal options is recommended in the first instance, as it may prevent the escalation of a minor dispute to a more serious complaint.

Formal Process

If the complaint is not resolved informally, then the complainant may lodge a formal complaint through contact with the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team.

The College will normally respond to acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint, in writing to the complainant, within 2 business days of a complaint being raised.

In moving to a more formal process, the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team having the delegated authority for the matter will normally:

- organise to hold a face-to-face meeting (or an online/virtual meeting) with the relevant staff member, the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team (as appropriate) within 5 business days of receiving a formal complaint, to seek further information and any necessary clarification regarding the incident or complaint;
- investigate the matter within 10 business days (or advise an alternative time frame, where a more thorough investigation is required);
- endeavour to ensure that no one is victimised as a result of a complaint being made;
- invite the complainant(s) to bring an agreed support person to any meetings or interviews relating to the complaint;
- enable the person (including a student) against whom the complaint has been made to respond, and invite them to bring an agreed support person to any meetings or interviews relating to the complaint;
- provide support to students involved in a complaint, including by providing a translator (where necessary) or, for vulnerable students, considering further referrals to counsellors, support groups, external agencies or programs, or other student services;
- document the complaint, the investigation process, any actions taken to resolve it, outcomes of those actions and any determination made by a decision maker;
- consider and implement restorative practices;

- communicate in writing to the respective parties the details of the investigation and the reasons as to the outcome or determination, that is, why the complaint was unsubstantiated or action to be taken if it was substantiated.

The letter of outcome (including the findings of the investigation, statement of reasons for the findings and any proposed outcomes or actions) will normally be provided to the complainant within 5 business days of the conclusion of the investigation into the formal complaint.

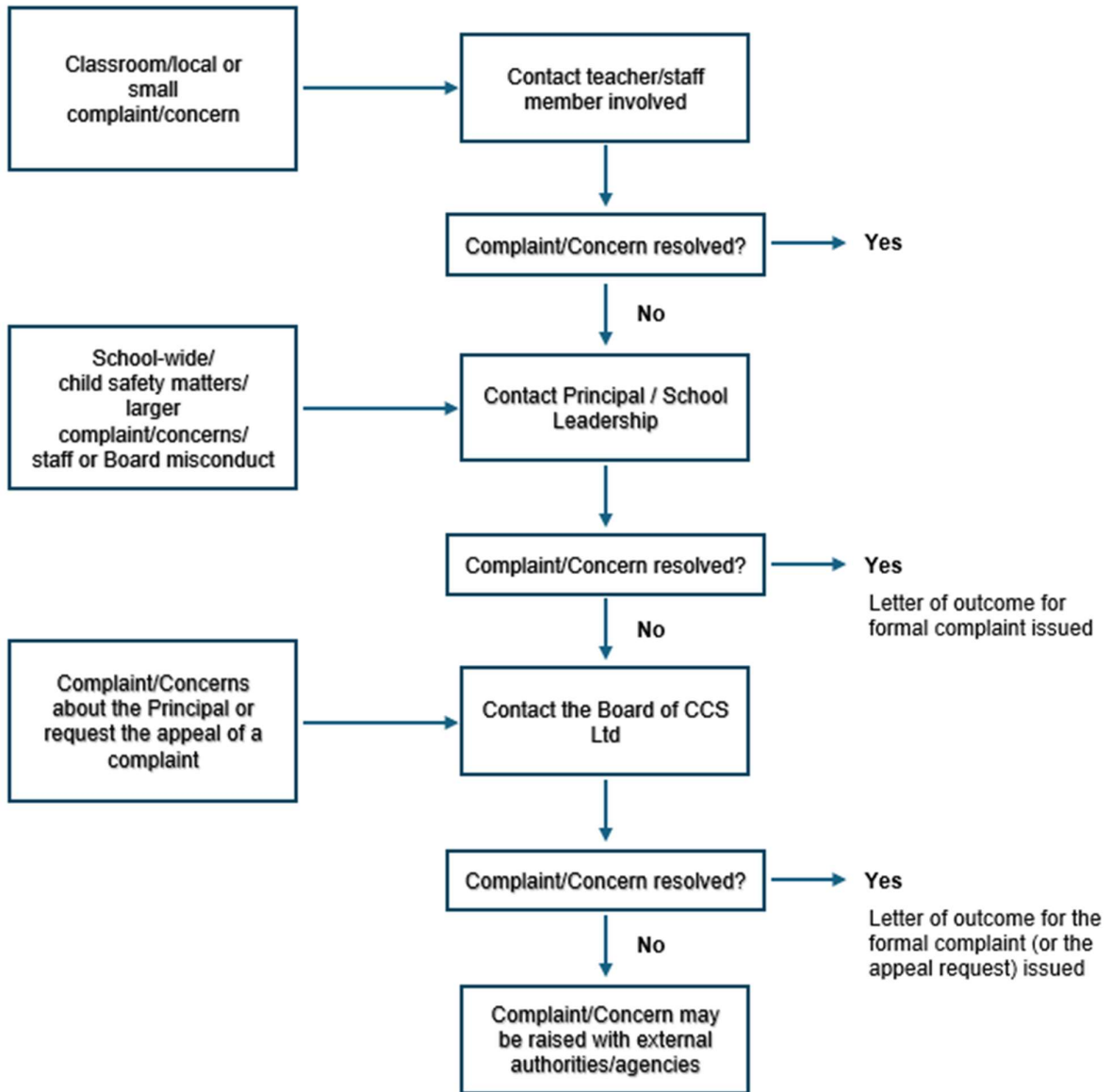
Resolution

Where appropriate, the College may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- an apology or expression of regret;
- a change of decision;
- a change of policy, procedure or practice;
- offering the opportunity for student counselling or other support;
- other action consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent, guardian or carer and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, the College may also ask those involved to attend a meeting with an independent third party or participate in mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute.

Complaint Management Flowchart



6.4 Complaint Escalation and Avenues of Appeal

Escalation

When the Principal considers it unlikely that a complaint will be resolved using the College's complaint-handling procedures, or when a parent, guardian or carer is not satisfied with the manner in which the College has treated their complaint under this Policy, the Principal may organise a process of investigation and mediation conducted by an external agency. The external investigation/mediation process will most likely entail:

- an open-minded and comprehensive data gathering phase – including review of any relevant file notes, records of actions taken, witness reports;
- a formal interview with the complainant(s) and respondent(s);
- an assessment of information gathered and whether the complaint is substantiated.

Appeal

Where a parent, guardian or carer is dissatisfied with the outcome of this escalated complaint process or with a decision to expel a student, they can request an appeal to the Board for the complaint to be reconsidered. The Board have delegated the day-to-day operation of the College to the Principal and considers that the Principal, and other members of the Leadership Team, will generally be best placed to handle complaints. The Board will generally consider appeals where there has been a failure to provide procedural fairness, which may include a breach of this Policy.

Where a student has been expelled, the parent, guardian or carer has a right to appeal to the Board as outlined in the College's *Student Behaviour Management Policy*. Allowing other appeals to the Board (including under this policy) is at the Board's discretion. A request for an appeal to the Board should be made in writing and must:

- identify the key persons involved;
- identify any breaches of this Policy and/or failure to provide procedural fairness;
- set out all relevant details in a succinct manner, including actions taken by the complainant and the College to resolve the complaint; and
- include all relevant correspondence and other documentation.

Where the Board considers it is appropriate for an appeal to proceed, the Board will endeavour to respond to the complaint within 6 weeks of receiving the appeal (or will otherwise advise the expected time frame for a response) and may elect to:

- remit the complaint back to the decision maker (the Principal or other member of the Leadership team) to be redetermined, with or without directions to:
 - reconsider some aspect of the complaint or any further information received;
 - reinvestigate some aspect of the complaint;
 - ignore some aspect of the complaint or the investigation that the Board considers does not assist the decision maker; and/or
 - provide reasons to the complainant for the redetermination;
 - dismiss the complaint;
 - uphold (or partly uphold) the complaint;
 - make recommendations regarding future complaints, or
 - take whatever action it considers necessary (including referring the complaint for external investigation) to resolve the complaint.

External Appeal

Where a parent, guardian or carer is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, or the appeal process, they may (depending on the nature of the complaint) have the right to appeal the decision to an external authority such as Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, the VIT, the Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission (VEOC), the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), or the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

6.5 Complaints of Misconduct or Serious Misconduct

All complaints of alleged misconduct or serious misconduct by a teacher or staff member should be reported directly to the Principal, who will be guided by Victoria's Reportable Conduct Scheme and the College's internal policy directives for such matters.

Complaints of alleged misconduct or serious misconduct by the Principal are dealt with in clause 6.8.

Complaints of alleged misconduct or serious misconduct by a member of the Board should be reported to the Principal and/or to the Chair of the Board (provided the Chair is not the subject of the complaint), who will escalate the complaint to the Company Members.

Complaints about registered teachers can also be reported to the VIT, which is the regulator in relation to the registration and investigation of serious misconduct of all registered teachers in the State of Victoria. We encourage complainants to first raise complaints about teachers in accordance with the process set out in this Policy and contact VIT if their complaint cannot be resolved.

If you are unsure if the complaint constitutes serious misconduct by a registered teacher, contact VIT on telephone 1300 888 067 or email vit@vit.vic.edu.au.

6.6 Child Safeguarding Complaints

Complaints, allegations or concerns about child abuse, grooming or other harmful behaviours towards current or former students are managed by the College in a different manner to other complaints. This is due to the additional legal and privacy requirements surrounding these matters.

A number of senior staff members serve as the College's Child Safeguarding Officers. They receive additional specialised training with respect to child safety and protection issues and are a point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the College. The Deputy Principal Learning and Wellbeing is the College's Senior Child Safeguarding Officer.

For further information about how the College manages child safety and protection matters, refer to the College's *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*.

Specifically, complaints, allegations or concerns about child abuse, grooming or other harmful behaviours towards current or former students that relate to a Board member should be reported to the Principal, who will escalate the complaint to the Company Members.

6.7 Complaints Concerning Students with a Disability or Vulnerable Students

Students with disabilities have rights under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth), the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth) and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic.) to access their education on the same basis as their peers, including the right to reasonable adjustments.

As with all complaints to which this Policy applies, parents, guardians or carers should, in the first instance, raise any concerns or complaints regarding the treatment of a student with a disability or other vulnerable students with the classroom teacher, or relevant member of the College Leadership Team, as well as the leader of any support group established for the

student. If this does not resolve the complaint, the complainant should follow the procedures set out in this Policy.

If the complaint is not resolved, parents, guardians or carers of students with a disability may also raise complaints with external forums (as set out in clause 6.4). In particular, external complaints regarding a student with a disability should be directed to:

- the Australian Human Rights Commission – for complaints regarding compliance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) or the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth);
- the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission – for complaints regarding compliance with the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic.).

6.8 Complaints Against the Principal or where the Principal is unable to perform the role

If the Principal is the subject of the complaint, or if the Principal is, for whatever reason, unable to perform or continue to perform their role in responding to a complaint/concern, the Chair of the Board (or other Board member who has been delegated authority to deal with the complaint by the Board) will assume responsibility for resolving the complaint.

For a complaint about the Principal's alleged misconduct, or a decision made by the Principal, please contact the Board. Where there is an allegation of serious misconduct or a child abuse/student safety concern involving the Principal, please contact the Board in writing as set out in Appendix A.

6.9 Anonymous Complaints

The College endeavours to address and respond to all complaints; however, in some situations, we may not be able to fully address complaints that are made anonymously or without sufficient detail being provided to enable an investigation or resolution of the matter.

To ensure procedural fairness, respondents have a right to know the particulars of the allegation(s) being made against them and be given an opportunity to respond to them.

6.10 Confidentiality, Privacy and Information Sharing

Confidentiality applies with respect to information relating to the complainant(s) and the person(s) against whom a complaint is made. The College is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process.

Some exceptions may apply where the complaint concerns child safeguarding allegations or incidents. In such instances, the disclosure and/or sharing of information may be required or authorised by law (for example, under child safety legislation or under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) or the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)).

Privacy complaints or complaints relating to the way in which the CISS or FVISS are being applied should be referred to the Principal. If the College cannot resolve a complaint about privacy or information sharing, it may be referred to the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner or the Health Complaints Commissioner (under Victorian law) or the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) (under Commonwealth law).

6.11 Record Keeping

To meet legal requirements, the College must keep written records of:

- all complaints received, both written and verbal, and the actions taken to resolve them;
- complaints relating to the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS), and Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) to meet regulatory requirements.

6.12 Monitoring Complaints

The College welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our families and are committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. We recognise that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

Our complaints handling approach includes the establishment of an online complaints management system which allows us to record, manage, analyse and report on complaints effectively. We review the information about complaints made over time to:

- identify common or recurring issues that may need addressing;
- assess the effectiveness of these and other procedures and whether they are being followed.

The implementation of rectification action, where deficiencies are identified, is key to the College's commitment.

7.0 RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- Student Behaviour Management Policy
- Student Behaviour Monitoring and Support Policy
- Anti Bullying and Bullying Prevention Policy
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents and Concerns Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct

8.0 MONITORING AND REPORTING

The Board is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this Policy and for providing reports as required to the members of the company, i.e., the Bishop of the Diocese of Sale and the Provincial of the Marist Brothers.

The Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with the obligations outlined in this Policy;
- Assigning authority, responsibility and accountability at appropriate levels within the College for policy implementation and compliance;
- Providing delegated staff with the direction, support and resources necessary to fulfil policy requirements;
- Ensuring cyclic reviews of the policy and recommending to the Board any revisions that may be required to accommodate changes in legislation and diocesan directives;
- Reporting and escalating concerns, issues and policy breaches to the Board and working collaboratively with the Board to resolve them.

9.0 APPROVAL

Approved by	CC Sale Ltd Board
Person(s) Responsible	Principal
Date(s) Reviewed or Updated	August 2025
Next Review Date	August 2027

Contacts for Principal, Leadership Team and Board

Name	Position	Contact No.	Email Address
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Anthony Robbins	Deputy Principal Learning and Wellbeing	(03) 5143 9700	arobbins@ccsale.catholic.edu.au
Kaitlyn Abrahall	Business Manager	(03) 5143 9700	kabrahall@ccsale.catholic.edu.au
Alison Edgar	Director of Senior Studies	(03) 5143 9700	asedgar@ccsale.catholic.edu.au
Tahnee Cashman	Director of Engagement Years 7 – 10	(03) 5143 9700	tcashman@ccsale.catholic.edu.au
Jason Goudie	Director of Student Growth	(03) 5143 9700	jgoudie@ccsale.catholic.edu.au
Leonie Keaney	College Board Representative	Via email	boardchair@ccsale.catholic.edu.au