



Complaint Management Policy

(for Parents, Carers and Community Members)

Document Number	4757727
Document Type	Policy
Approval Date	9 September 2026
Approved By	ELT
Replaces Document & No.	new
Owner Service Area	Legal, Governance & Risk
Review Date	September 2029
Audience	Public

1. Introduction and Purpose

Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD) is committed to managing complaints in a way that is fair, respectful and consistent with governance, legislative, and regulatory obligations. This Policy must be read together with the *Complaint Management Procedure for Parents, Carers and Community Members* and *CSPD Family & School Partnership Principles*.

This Policy outlines the principles Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD) will follow when managing complaints raised by CSPD Parents, Carers & members of the wider community. The objectives of this Policy are to promote and maintain positive and harmonious relationships and to prevent, where possible, minor complaints escalating to become more serious matters. To achieve this, CSPD endeavours to manage complaints promptly, impartially and confidentially.

CSPD seeks to resolve concerns collaboratively wherever possible and views concerns as an opportunity to strengthen family-school partnerships. CSPD may review complaint themes and trends to identify opportunities for improvement in communication, family engagement, and service delivery.

CSPD manages complaints in accordance with relevant legislation including the Education Act 1990 (NSW), Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW), Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW), Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW), and the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all systemic schools (The School) within Parramatta Diocese and their CSPD Parents, Carers and Community members and establishes the principles and processes to be used in the management of Parents, Carers & Community members' complaints.

This Policy applies to complaints raised by:

- Parents and carers;
- Visitors;
- Volunteers and;
- Community members.

The specific approach to managing a complaint may vary depending on the nature, circumstances, and seriousness of each complaint, ensuring that the response remains appropriate and proportionate to the issues raised.

Parents, Carers & Community members are requested to review the [Complaint Management Procedures](#) (for Parents, Carers & Community Members) and the [CSPD Family & School Partnership Principles](#) prior to raising a complaint.

This policy **does not** apply to complaints made in relation to:

- child protection matters, child safety complaints or safeguarding allegations against staff members (refer to [CSPD's Safeguarding Procedures](#)).

Importantly, CSPD does not intervene to enforce family court orders or resolve family law disputes. Parents must refer these to the Courts or NSW Police.

3. Definitions

CSPD means the Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese and includes CSPD Support Teams (office-based staff) and Schools.

CSPD School (The School) means any school operated by Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese.

Complaint refers to a verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction made by a parent/carers or community member about a decision, action, service, behaviour, or process, where a response or resolution is expected. A complaint requires an assessment of the matter and an appropriate and proportionate response.

Complainant refers to the person making a Complaint under this policy.

Complex matters refer to a complaint that presents multiple or interrelated issues, elevated risk, or the need for coordinated investigation, requiring a written response.

Concern refers to an issue raised informally that may not require a written response.

Confidentiality means that information about a Parent/Carer/Community Complaint is only provided to those people who need to know about it, in order for the complaint to be actioned properly.

Procedural Fairness is the principle of natural justice that requires that a person informed of a concern, complaint or allegation being made, is given the opportunity to respond and is informed of the complaints process which may be followed.

Subject Matter Expert (SME) refers to a Subject Matter Expert. For the purpose of this Policy, a SME refers to and means the individual who is appointed to make the final decision about an outcome. For complaint management, this may include a Principal Leader, CSPD Manager, CSPD Head, CSPD Executive General Manager and Chief Executive Officer.

Unreasonable conduct refers to behaviour that is excessive, persistent, or inappropriate.

4. Communication

It is the responsibility of every school to provide a safe environment for everyone. Entry onto the grounds of CSPD Schools (**The School**) is a privilege, not a right. Any behaviour which results in a member of the school community, including staff, feeling intimidated or unsafe is unacceptable.

Communication should always respect the dignity of every person. This is particularly important when dealing with complex matters. Listening to each other and having respectful conversations are important for partnerships to be effective. Parents and Carers are encouraged to share important information about their child's progress or wellbeing with the school.

School staff will not always be available to discuss the complainant's concerns immediately, however, the school will work with Parents and Carers to find a time that is mutually agreeable. Schools may ask parents and community members to direct their emails through

the school office so that the school can respond quickly and allocate the complaint to the staff member who is best able to help.

Social media is an important way to stay connected with the school community. All stakeholders have a responsibility to ensure that communication is respectful when online. Naming and bullying, harassment or defaming the school, individual staff, other parents or students on social media will not be tolerated.

4.1. What is not appropriate

Unreasonable conduct refers to:

- acting aggressively or in an intimidating way, including any use of violence or threatening behaviour;
- using intimidating language, including obscenities, yelling or making sexist, racist or other derogatory comments;
- disrespecting school community members due to their religion, ethnicity, gender or disability;
- bullying, harassing or defaming individual staff, other parents, carers or students, including on social media posts
- behaving in a way that gives rise to a serious risk to the physical and/or psychosocial safety of persons.

Unreasonable conduct may require CSPD to apply its Work Health and Safety obligations, ensuring appropriate measures are in place to protect staff and others from physical or psychosocial harm.

Please refer to the [CSPD Family & School Partnership Principles](#).

5. Core Principles

5.1. Our Commitment

- All complaints will be taken seriously.
- Verbal complaints raised at the school level will be reviewed at the source and individual school complaint management procedures apply (refer to the *Complaint Management Procedures for Parents, Carers & Community*).

- Written complaints will be acknowledged within 2 business days, during school terms. Complaints raised at the school level during school holiday periods or gazetted non-school days will be acknowledged within two business days of the resumption of school.
- Most complaints are resolved within 20 business days, however, complex complaints may take longer.
- Where the complaint requires further attention, an update will be provided within 30 business days.
- Handling of complaints will be impartial and professional.
- A person making a complaint will be protected from victimisation.
- Confidentiality principles will apply.
- Principles of procedural fairness (that is, the right to be heard and the right to an unbiased decision [\[NESA RANGS manual p61\]](#) will apply.

5.2. Support During the Process

- Complainants may have a support person present at meetings.
- Clear guidelines about the support person's role will be explained at the commencement of the meeting.
- A person making a complaint can request information about the progress of their complaint by contacting their school directly if lodged at the school level, or via parentscarerssupport@parra.catholic.edu.au if no follow-up has been received after 10 days from CSPD lodged complaints.
- CSPD will provide reasonable adjustments, interpreters, or alternative communication formats to ensure equitable access to the complaints process.

5.3. Confidentiality

CSPD maintains strict confidentiality in handling complaints, however, there are circumstances where information may need to be shared. This includes:

- when interviewing relevant parties to make inquiries about the complaint;

- when required to notify external authorities (e.g., NSW Police) about potential illegal activity or Child Protection concerns;
- when necessary to ensure procedural fairness.

Confidentiality is expected from all parties, with information shared during the complaint process handled discreetly, respectfully, and only by those authorised to manage the matter.

5.4. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be assessed to determine whether the information provided is sufficient to make inquiries or identify risks. If the information is incomplete or unverifiable, CSPD may close the matter without further action.

Anonymous complaints also limit procedural fairness, as individuals may be unable to respond fully to allegations without identifiable information. No written response will be provided to anonymous complaints.

6. Complaints Resolution Process

6.1. General Principles

- Issues are best resolved at the local school level where possible.
- Complaints will be assessed to determine their complexity, urgency, and risk. Matters involving student safety, legal issues, or multiple parties may be escalated to CSPD Support Teams or a Subject Matter Expert.
- All complaints and associated actions will be documented and retained in accordance with CSPD Records Retention and Disposal Schedule and NESA RANGS requirements.
- If a complaint is received via the Parent/Carer email or CSPD website and the complainant has not spoken with the school Principal about the matter, they will be encouraged to do so. However, complaints about the school Principal or complex matters may be escalated to relevant CSPD support teams via parentscarerssupport@parra.catholic.edu.au

- Complaints received by CSPD will typically be referred back to the school in the first instance. If the complaint is then escalated to another member of CSPD leadership e.g., a Head of Performance, or a subject matter expert, to assist in specific matters relating to the complaint, they will review the complaint and make inquiries with relevant stakeholders.
 - The school Principal is the delegated manager of the school and has the authority to make decisions about the management of students and the school, even if the complainant disagrees with those decisions.
 - The School reserves the right to cease responding to complaints that have been comprehensively reviewed and closed, where no new information has been provided. Schools will advise the complainant in writing that the complaint is now closed.
 - Repeated complaints regarding the same matter, without substantive new information, may be classified as unreasonable complainant conduct and managed in accordance with the School's Complaints Management Procedures. The School will continue to act fairly and transparently while ensuring that finite resources are directed towards the education, wellbeing and safety of students and staff.
 - Where behaviour is unreasonable, CSPD may implement strategies including communication boundaries, single points of contact, or cessation of engagement, consistent with *CSPD's Complaints Management Procedures*.
 - Parents/Carers & Community members are requested to review the Complaint Management Procedures (for Parents, Carers & Community Members) and the CSPD Family & School Partnership Principles prior to raising a complaint.
-

7. Appeal Process

If you believe that your complaint has not been managed in accordance with CSPD Policy & Procedures, you may request an independent review through the CSPD appeal process.

Only appeals presenting substantive new information will be considered. Simply disagreeing with the outcome does not give rise to an appeal.

8. Further information

Information in relation to CSPD policies and procedures can be found on the CSPD Website [via this link](#).

Further information in relation to this policy can be directed to parentscarerssupport@parra.catholic.edu.au
