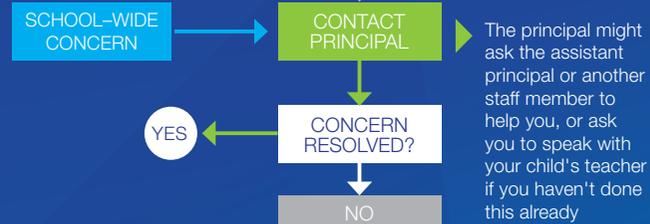
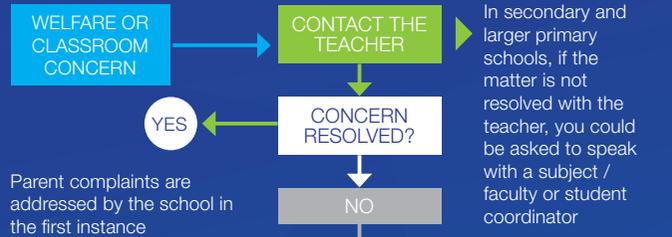
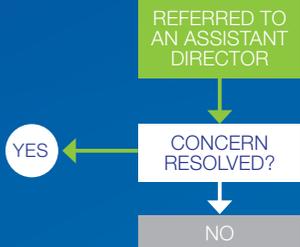
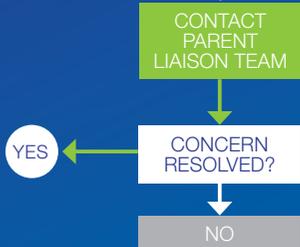


Complaints Resolution Pathway for Parents and Carers

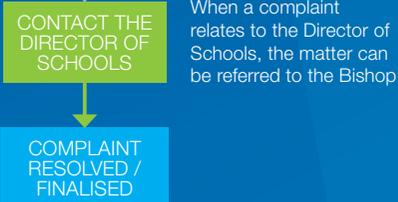
SCHOOL



CSO



DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS



Important Points to Remember

Before making a complaint

- ▶ Your child's school is your first point of contact.
- ▶ Concerns are best resolved at the school.
- ▶ A positive relationship between parent/carer and school is important.
- ▶ The issue you raise might be governed by CSO policies and guidelines.

Making a complaint about a school

- ▶ Provide complete and factual information as soon as you can.
- ▶ Make your complaint as calmly as possible.
- ▶ Avoid making frivolous complaints, or using deliberately false or misleading information.
- ▶ Speak directly to the principal if your complaint relates to general school matters or school policy.
- ▶ Speak to the Parent Liaison Team if your complaint is about a school principal.
- ▶ If you make a complaint about a staff member, they will generally be told and offered the right of reply.
- ▶ You can have a support person with you throughout the process.



Complaints Resolution for Parents and Carers

SCHOOL COMMUNITY INFORMATION BROCHURE

A consistent, fair, effective and efficient complaint-handling process for positively resolving concerns in our school community

Contact

Catholic Schools Office

841 Hunter Street, Newcastle West 2302
 PO Box 714 Newcastle NSW 2300
P 02 4979 1200 Fax 02 4979 1209
E info@mn.catholic.edu.au
 Visit us online <https://www.mn.catholic.edu.au/>

Parent Liaison Team

P 02 4979 1127
E parent.liaison@mn.catholic.edu.au

Office of Safeguarding

50 Crebert Street, Mayfield NSW 2304
P 02 4979 1390
E child.protection@mn.catholic.org.au



www.mn.catholic.edu.au

Introduction

The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) and schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle are committed to providing a positive, safe environment for all staff and students. There are occasions, however, when members of our schools and wider community are concerned about something that is happening at a school that appears to be unsatisfactory or unreasonable.

This brochure explains what to do when discussions about an issue or series of issues do not provide resolution. The information here reflects the Catholic Schools Office's Complaints Resolution Policy and associated procedures, which can be found at <https://www.mn.catholic.edu.au>.

Managing a complaint

A complaint is 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.

The school is responsible for responding to and addressing complaints raised by parents/carers from their school community. When a school receives a complaint from a parent/carer, the school must follow the agreed five-step process.

Resolving a complaint

A complaint is resolved when the complainant and school or CSO agree on an appropriate response or remedy. Where a complaint is found to be justified, schools are able to resolve complaints 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.

Complaint of abuse or neglect

If your complaint alleges a child or group of children were abused or neglected, by an adult or another child, the complaint should be reported to the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's Office of Safeguarding, Ph. 4979 1390 during office hours or email child.protection@mn.catholic.org.au

Guiding Principles

The complaints resolution process is based on the following principles:

Visibility: Information about how and where to make a complaint, as well as how a complaint will be handled, is readily available. Decisions made are documented.

Accessibility: Complaints can be made in person, by phone and in writing. Support will be given to parents with special needs, including enabling a parent to seek the services of an advocate.

Responsiveness: Complaints should be finalised promptly and all parties kept informed of progress and the reasons for any decisions and any resulting outcomes or actions.

Objectivity: Each complaint is treated in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

Cost: There is no cost to access the complaint-handling process.

Protection of privacy: Personally identifiable information concerning any complaint is actively protected from disclosure except where needed in relation to the complaint.

Student focused: The educational wellbeing of students is the first priority.

Accountability: The CSO and schools are accountable for decision making and complaint-handling performance and providing explanations and reasons for decisions.

Continual improvement: Complaint-handling procedures are regularly reviewed for improvement and complaint data and feedback is used effectively.

Complaints Resolution Process

This five-step process will help you and the school reach an outcome that is in the best interests of your child.

1. Discuss your complaint with the class teacher

Most complaints should be resolved at the local level. The teacher will make a record of your complaint and report your meeting and any outcomes to the school principal. Contact the school to make an appointment with your child's teacher.

2. Discuss your complaint with the principal or their delegate

If you can't resolve your concerns after speaking to your child's teacher, you can raise your complaint with the school principal. The principal or delegate may be able to help you and the teacher resolve the problem. Complaints to the principal can be submitted in person, by telephone, in writing or via email.

3. Contact the CSO Parent Liaison Team

If you have not reached a resolution through steps 1 and 2, you should contact the Parent Liaison Team. You can lodge your complaint in person, by telephone, in writing, or online.

Your complaint should outline the steps you have taken to resolve the issue and include your full name and address. You should also sign and date it, and it's a good idea to keep a copy of any correspondence for your own records.

Your name and the nature of your complaint will be sent to the principal of your school. A representative from the Parent Liaison Team will then work with you and your school to seek a resolution. Anonymous complaints will only be acted on if enough information has been provided to allow for follow-up with the relevant school principal.

4. Contact the Director of Schools

If your issue has not been resolved through the above process, or if you would like a review of the complaint outcome because you have information that the complaint outcome was incorrect and/or the complaint handling process was unfair, you can lodge your request with the Director of Schools.

Your request must be in writing addressed to the Director of Schools and must be made within 10 working days from the initial complaint decision. Your request should outline the steps you have taken to resolve the issue, the reasons for the request for review, and include your full name and address. You should also sign and date it, and it's a good idea keep a copy of any correspondence for your own records.

If your complaint relates to the Director of Schools, you may submit a request for review of the complaint outcome to the Bishop.

5. Independent review

If your issue has still not been resolved through the above process, or if you would like an external review, you may seek advice from an external agency. The Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People provides a useful guide: <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/info/making-a-complaint>.