COMPLAINTS POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

The College encourages an openness to complaints and members of the school community can be assured that their complaints will be heard and that they will be treated with respect. Complaints will be acknowledged promptly (formally or informally) and clear timelines for investigating and responding to complaints will be established. The principles of procedural fairness will apply.

POLICY SYNOPSIS

This policy seeks to establish a framework where parties feel comfortable lodging a complaint where they believe the College (including its employees) has done something wrong, failed to do something or acted unfairly or inappropriately. The term "Complaint" is defined in the Definitions section of this Policy. The handling of complaints will be underpinned by the employment of values and procedures that accompany this policy. As many issues can be resolved quickly and informally, procedures provide approaches suitable for differing circumstances.

Salesian College Chadstone is a religious institute school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned and governed by the Salesian Society (Vic) Inc, the legal entity of the Salesians of Don Bosco.

VERSION CONTROL

Prepared by	Principal
Version	2.1
Approved by	The Salesian College Board
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Next review	2028

ISSUE HISTORY

Date Modified	Modified by	Version	Details
Oct 2022	Principal	1.0	MO1359 updates and consolidation of internal and external complaints
May 2025	Principal	2.0	MACS supports deleted, role responsibilities section added

RATIONALE

Salesian College Chadstone is committed to building a school community that features positive and respectful relationships. Within our school, relationships are founded in the gospel values of justice, compassion, reconciliation and kindness and our school values of respect, belonging and integrity.

Such relationships support the learning and development of students and value the innate dignity of each person. It is important that each member of the community, including staff, parents and students, are contributors to the building of the school community. A timely and

professional response to complaints is an effective means of encouraging communication, building trust and resolving issues for the betterment of all concerned.

Salesian College Chadstone understands that from time-to-time complaints arise regarding aspects of our school's operation of programs and activities and that it is important that all members of the community have the opportunity to be heard. Salesian College Chadstone commits to ensuring procedural fairness is observed when dealing with complaints and grievances.

Positive, clear and effective procedures and processes for resolving grievances between the school and community members can assist in building strong relationships, dispelling anxiety and ultimately providing students with a settled and happy learning environment.

The Salesian College Chadstone Codes of Conduct for parents/guardians/carers and students outline the expectations of behaviour for members of our community. The following procedures relate to any concerns that members of the community may have – whether these are serious grievance issues, or relatively minor concerns.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the wider College community including the student, staff, Committee members, Board, staff, parents, contractors, suppliers, visitors and members of the public. Although this policy is accessible to students, complaints related to child protection will be addressed in accordance with child protection laws and reporting obligations (see PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to all Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools) at https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/identify.aspx

Although within the scope of this policy, bullying and harassment complaints will also be addressed by reference to the College's Policy on Bullying and Harassment and harassment complaints handling procedures. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) matters raised will be addressed by reference to the College's OHS Policy and regulatory requirements.

DEFINITIONS

Complaint
A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with an action taken, decision made, service provided or handling of an issue at Salesian College Chadstone.

Board
As a company limited by guarantee, overarching responsibility for the College's governance rests with its Board of Directors. The Board Chair will receive complaints on behalf of the Board.

Minimum standards
Minimum standards established by the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA) for registration of a school.

POLICY

In receiving and responding to complaints, the following guiding principles will inform and direct Salesian College Chadstone actions:

- Complaints of a school-based nature are best received and managed at the school level, with the parties involved expected to act in good faith and work together with respect and openness to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties. Complaints that are unable to be resolved at the local level will be escalated to the College Board or the Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA).

When a complaint is serious or the complaint is not resolved after the involvement of the College Board or VCEA, it may be referred to the Provincial of the Salesians of Don Bosco for review.

- Complaints are received and managed in a way that is culturally safe and sensitive to the diverse circumstances of students, as well as providing support to vulnerable students.
- Complainants can expect their concern or complaint to be taken seriously and to be responded to in a respectful, thorough and timely manner.
- Staff members and volunteers will be informed of formal complaints that are made about them.
- Complainants and the person/s against whom the complaint is made have the right to be heard and to expect that procedural fairness will be observed.
- Confidentiality, protection of privacy, respect, access, dignity and impartiality will form the basis of the complaints resolution process.
- The complaints resolution process will seek to achieve the restoration of good and respectful relationships.
- The best interests of the school community together with the interests of the individual will be taken into account.
- Recordkeeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations will be complied with when receiving and handling complaints.

Providing Feedback to Salesian College Chadstone

Salesian College Chadstone has procedures and processes in place by which staff, parents/guardians/carers and the broader school community can confidently raise concerns in the knowledge that they will be listened to, and their concerns will be professionally managed in a timely, confidential and appropriate manner.

Relationships with the school community are important to us. We take complaints raised by staff, parents/guardians/carers and the broader school community seriously. There are many avenues to provide feedback to school staff. These include:

- annual formal parent/guardian/carer survey
- formally scheduled parent/guardian/carer feedback forums
- meetings with the Principal or other staff members to express concerns
- Communication by parents/guardians/carers/members of the school community with their son's Oratory Teacher, Subject Teacher, Year Level Coordinator to provide feedback.

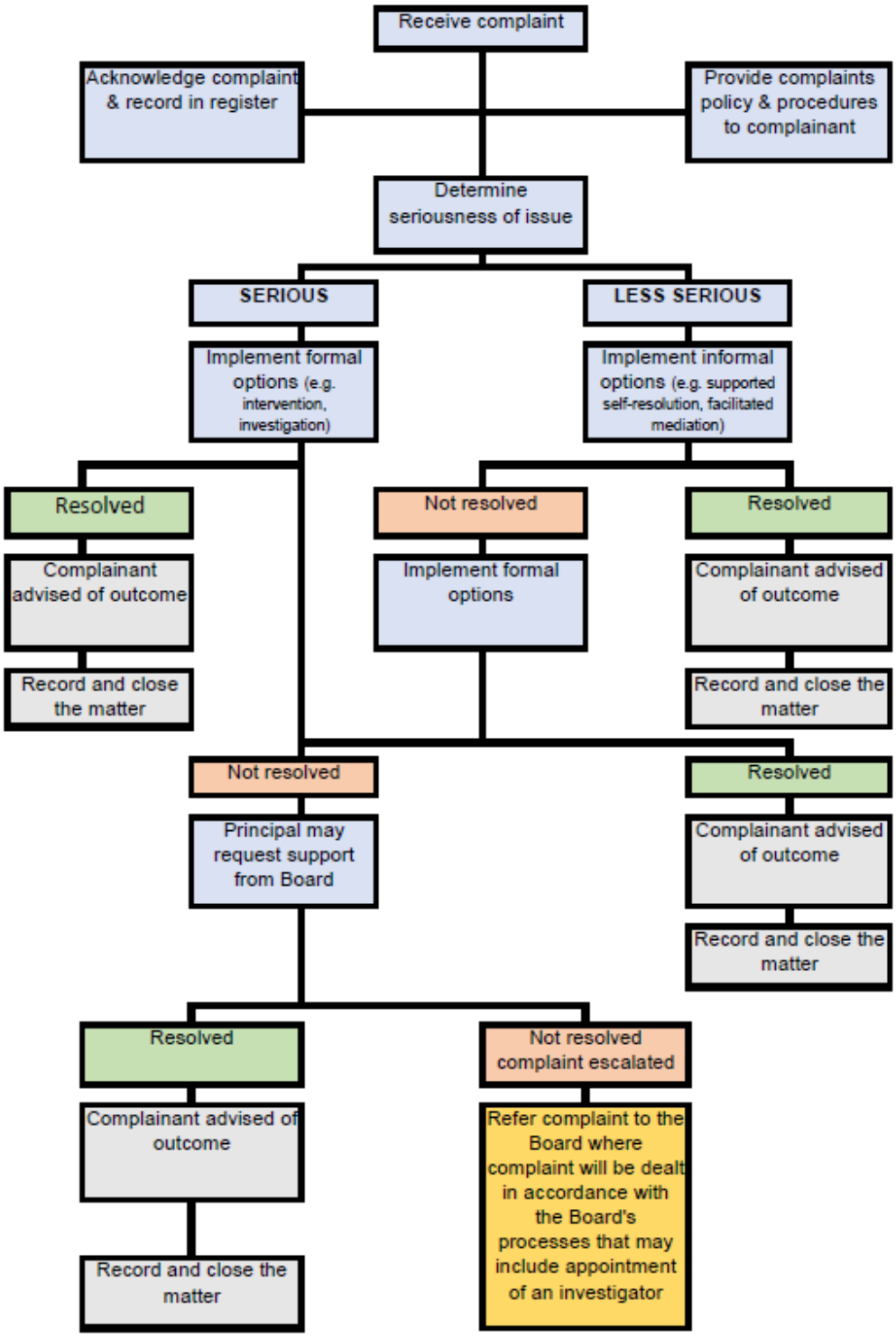
Who to Contact to Make a Compliant

The nature of the complaint will determine who is the most appropriate person or body to manage the concerns raised. Complaints should be directed to the Principal in the first instance.

1. Call the College reception on 98072644
2. Email the College complaints@salesian.vic.edu.au
3. The Salesian College Website online Complaint Form can be used to make a complaint.
4. The Complaint Form (see Appendix) can be completed and emailed or sent to the College at 10 Bosco Street Chadstone Vic 3148.

Note: If your complaint involves a member of the Leadership Team, please contact the College's Principal. If your complaint involves the College's Principal, it should be addressed to the College Board Chair at the above address.

Complaints Management Flowchart



Internal grievances

Every attempt should be made, in the first instance, to resolve an internal grievance at local level between parties involved.

Where there is an internal complaint from a member of staff against another member of staff the following steps are followed:

1. Where a member or members of staff have a grievance with either the Principal or a senior member of staff, the person or persons should, in the first instance, attempt to resolve the matter by direct approach with the Principal or senior staff member as appropriate.
2. Where a member or members of staff have a grievance with another member or members of staff, he/she/they should first endeavour to resolve the matter by direct approach to the staff member(s) involved.
3. Where a member of staff requests a personal interview with the Principal or a member of staff, a response to the request, including the scheduling of an interview, will be made within three working days of the request being made.
4. All parties involved in a meeting or personal interview may choose to have a support person with them. The role of the support person is to be a support rather than an advocate for the person they are supporting.
5. At all times during this process either party has the right to seek advice from the relevant Union, Employer body or the Principal (if appropriate).
6. It is vital that the issue or challenges are dealt with and that all act with respect and integrity, as per our College values, thus acting appropriately during this meeting.

When a grievance is not resolved between the parties involved:

1. Either party, in a further attempt to solve the matter, may call upon the Human Resources Manager, Principal or College Board to become more formally involved.
2. The Human Resources Manager or Principal, in consultation where appropriate with his/her representatives, should seek to settle the problem.
3. A scheduled meeting date for this purpose will be sent to parties involved within three working days and each party if they wish, is entitled to submit written documentation prior to the meeting occurring.
4. All parties to the dispute may be accompanied by a nominee or an official representative of their Union or Association. Either party may ask for any further relevant documentation.
5. As part of a willingness to facilitate the resolution of the dispute at a local level, the Principal, if approached, will meet with an officer or officers of the Union. If such a meeting is called, the Principal is entitled to have his/her representative present. This meeting will occur as soon as reasonably possible at a mutually convenient time.

If after following this process, there is no resolution to the problem, then either party may refer the dispute to the Industrial Commission of Victoria – Procedures for allegations of misconduct against lay employees.

For complaints of a serious nature made against and involving school staff, the following additional information is provided.

Misconduct or serious misconduct

Complaints of alleged misconduct or serious misconduct by a teacher, staff member or volunteers should be reported to the Principal of Salesian College Chadstone.

For complaints related to alleged bullying and harassment, WorkSafe can be consulted and/or provide support.

Complaints about teachers can also be reported to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) – the regulator in relation to the registration and investigation of serious misconduct (including conduct which is of a physical or emotional nature) of all teachers in the state of Victoria. If unsure whether the complaint constitutes serious misconduct by a teacher, contact the VIT on 1300 888 067 or vit@vit.vic.edu.au.

In some cases, certain actions which involve physical or emotional misconduct, such as unlawful assault or threats to the person, may constitute a criminal offence. These types of offences should be reported to and investigated by the police. Initial consultation with the Principal of Salesian College Chadstone may help to determine the appropriate course of action in these circumstances.

Child Abuse (including sexual offences)

Child abuse includes any instances of physical or sexual abuse (including grooming), emotional or psychological harm, serious or significant neglect and family violence involving a child.

Complaints of alleged child abuse (including sexual offences) of school students should be reported to the Principal of Salesian College Chadstone.

There are legal obligations on all adults to report child abuse to police once a reasonable belief is formed that a sexual offence may have been committed against a child.

Failure to disclose a sexual offence against a child is a criminal offence under section 327 of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) (Crimes Act) and applies to all adults (18 years of age and over) in Victoria.

Communication with children under 16 years of age by teachers, staff or any other person to prepare or groom a child for future sexual activity is a criminal offence under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act and must be reported to the police. The offence of grooming applies to any person aged 18 years or over and does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years of age.

Complaints against the Principal of Salesian College Chadstone

In the case of a complaint involving the Principal of Salesian College Chadstone the College Board Chair should be informed immediately.

Contact details are listed at the end of this policy.

Complaints against the clergy of other persons involved in religious ministry

If the complaint relates to the clergy or other persons involved in religious ministry with Salesian College Chadstone, the complainant should contact and seek advice from the Professional Standards unit of the Vicar General's Office in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, 486 Albert Street, East Melbourne. Visit www.melbournecatholic.org or contact 03 9926 5677. If the person is a member of a religious order, the complainant should also contact the Salesian of Don Bosco Provincial or professional standards office.

Anonymous complaints

Salesian College Chadstone endeavours to address and respond to all complaints. 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 inquiry or resolution of the matter. To ensure procedural fairness, respondents have a right to know the particulars of the allegations being made against them and be given an opportunity to respond to them. Where possible, complainants are encouraged to give their names and to be reassured that we will deal with complaints professionally and in accordance with procedural fairness and confidentiality. If the complainant wishes to remain anonymous, it is at the Principal's discretion what, if any, action

will be taken. Anonymous complaints will be recorded in the same manner that all other complaints are recorded.

Complaints in relation to Information Sharing Schemes

Salesian College Chadstone is a prescribed Information Sharing Entity (ISE) that may share information under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS).

The school, as an ISE, may receive complaints from individuals in relation to its conduct as an ISE under the CISS or FVISS. It may also receive a complaint from another ISE.

The following information is recorded where a complaint is received under the CISS or FVISS:

- the date the complaint was made and received
- the nature of the complaint
- the action taken to resolve the complaint
- the action taken to lessen or prevent the issue from recurring
- the time taken to resolve the complaint
- further action taken if the complaint was not resolved.

Complaints Relating to Reportable Conduct

Legal obligations are imposed on the College's Head of Entity to report to the Commission for Child and Young People (CCYP), and investigate allegations of reportable conduct, where those allegations are based on a person's reasonable belief that reportable conduct or misconduct involving reportable conduct has occurred. Reportable conduct includes the following:

- sexual offences against, with or in the presence of a child
- sexual misconduct against, with or in the presence of a child
- physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child
- behaviour that causes significant psychological or emotional harm
- significant neglect.

Complaints relating to a reportable conduct allegation which meets the requisite threshold, and which involves a MACS employee (which amongst others, can include a teacher, principal, volunteer or contractor) must be reported.

Complaints of reportable conduct in relation to an employee (other than a Principal) should be reported to the Principal of the school. Complaints of reportable conduct involving the Principal should be reported to the College Board Chair.

Further information can be found in the College's Reportable Conduct Policy https://www.salesian.vic.edu.au/about-us/child-safety/

Procedures for Complaints about Issues at Salesian College Chadstone

Salesian College Chadstone has developed and maintains a fair, effective and efficient complaints-handling procedure so that complaints about events or decisions at Salesian College Chadstone can be addressed. The following steps can guide the procedure in making a complaint about issues arising at Salesian College Chadstone.

Clarify the issue

- Be clear about the topic or issue to be discussed.
- Be mindful of the need to ascertain all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue.
- Think about what would be an acceptable outcome.
- Check and observe the Salesian College Chadstone complaints handling policy.

Making the complaint

- Write an appropriate note or email to the relevant person (e.g. classroom teacher) outlining your concerns.
- Make an appointment to speak via phone or in person with the relevant person/s.
- Consider speaking with the Assistant Principal – Students and Engagement, if appropriate.
- Arrange meeting times or phone calls through the office of the Principal.
- Ensure the relevant person/s is given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address the concerns.

Note: Staff can also record complaints of a serious nature by completing the Complaints Recording Form on Knowledge Base

Contact the Principal or Assistant Principal

- If the issue remains unresolved after discussion with the relevant person/s at the school, request an appointment, through the Salesian College Chadstone office, to discuss the concern with the Principal or appropriate Assistant Principal.
- The Principal may be represented by another senior staff member. If the relevant staff member is going to be present at the meeting, the meeting time is more likely to occur outside classroom hours.

Expectations of and information for Parents/Guardians/Carers

In making a complaint, Salesian College Chadstone requests and expects that the complainant will:

- raise the concern or complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen
- communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair and respectful
- provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
- observe confidentiality and a 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.

If your concern/complaint relates to your treatment or your child's treatment by another student, students or family member while at Salesian College Chadstone, we expect that you will refer your complaint directly to the school, via your child's class teacher, Year Level Coordinator, Dean of Students, Assistant Principal or Principal. Under no circumstances should you approach another student in the care of the school to discuss the issue or chastise them. Direct contact with parents to resolve the matter is also discouraged if the complaint pertains to issues or incidents that have arisen at the school.

Parents/guardians/carers making complaints are to be respectful, confidential and courteous. Parents/guardians/carers who are unreasonable, threatening or discourteous can expect their discussions with the Principal to be terminated until such time as an alternative discussion time is arranged by the school.

Process for Dealing with Complaints

The school will record the details of all complaints including the name and contact details of the persons making the complaint. The school will then refer the complaint to the most appropriate person to undertake an inquiry. There will be many occasions that this will be someone other than the Principal. The staff member conducting the inquiry may conduct a preliminary inquiry or communicate with the parent to discuss the matter further.

If the scope of the inquiry is beyond the capacity or jurisdiction of the school, the matter will be referred to the College Board or advice sought from the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) and the parent/guardian/carer will be informed of the referral.

Parents/guardians/carers discussing complaints with the Principal may be accompanied by a support person. The support person can be a family member, a friend or a professional with knowledge of the student. Any person acting in a professional capacity on behalf of the parents/guardians/carers must provide their occupational details and full name prior to the meeting being held. It is at the Principal's discretion if an external professional is a participating member of any school meeting. The support person may encourage and facilitate sharing of parent/guardian/carer knowledge, perception and issues. The support person should support a positive working relationship between all parties. The support person does not speak on behalf of parents/guardians/carers when discussing complaints with the Principal.

Any inquiry conducted by the school will be done so in a timely, efficient and confidential manner, ensuring the fair principles on natural justice are applied for all. Parents/guardians/carers will be provided with an anticipated timeframe for a resolution. The staff member conducting the inquiry will record the details of the inquiry.

Privacy laws may prohibit information being provided to the complainant of any specific action that has been taken in relation to individuals about whom the complaint has been raised.

The school will ensure that all records are maintained in accordance with its obligations under the Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards.

Outcomes of Complaints

Outcomes of complaints and grievances can include the following:

- an apology – either verbal or written
- mediation – with an internal or external mediator
- an official warning
- disciplinary action
- a behavioural contract (in the case of a student)
- pastoral or spiritual care
- an understanding that the behaviour will not be repeated
- a change in policy or procedure.

Complaint Escalation

If the matter cannot be resolved at the school level, or if the complaint is about the Principal of Salesian College Chadstone, complainants may contact the College Board or the eastern MACS Regional Office. Alternatively, parents/guardians/carers may lodge a complaint online at www.macs.vic.edu.au/Contact-Us/Complaints.aspx

When a complaint is serious or the complaint is not resolved after the involvement of the College Board or MACS, it may be referred to the Provincial of the Salesians of Don Bosco for review.

If the complaint is unable to be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, but the matter is however finalised, the complainant has the right to seek alternative independent or other advice, or contact other entities such as the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (WEOHRC), WorkSafe or the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). Complaints related to the minimum standards for school registration can be referred to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

Withdrawal of a Complaint

A complaint can be withdrawn at any stage during the complaint management procedures. A complaint should be retracted in writing by the complainant and addressed to the Principal of Salesian College Chadstone or the College Board Chair.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal:

Board Chair:

Human Resources Manager:

Staff:

Parents/Carers/Guardians:

CONTACT DETAILS

College Board Chair
Mr Stephen Moloney
board@salesian.vic.edu.au

Salesian of Don Bosco Provincial
Fr Peter Hoang
3 Middle St, Ascot Vale 3032
03 9377 6600

Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)
1300 018 228
https://www.vcat.vic.gov.au/contacts-and-locations

Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)
1300 292 153
enquiries@veohrc.vic.gov.au

Victorian Institute of Teaching
1300 888 067
vit@vit.vic.edu.au

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)
03 9637 2806
vrqa@education.vic.gov.au

WorkSafe Victoria
1800 136 089
https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/contact-worksafe

RELATED POLICIES

Reportable Conduct Policy

PROTECT: Identifying and Responding Abuse Policy

Student Pastoral Care and Management Policy

Occupational Health & Safety Policy

Human Resources Policy

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Whistle-blowers Policy

APPENDIX

COMPLAINT FORM

Complainant: *(Person making the complaint)*	☐ **Staff member** ☐ **Student** ☐ **Parent** ☐ **Community Member**		
Complainant Name:			
Person/subject of complaint:			
Complaint communicated/ reported to:	☐ **Oratory Teacher** ☐ **Head of Department** ☐ **Year Level Coordinator** ☐ **Dean** ☐ **Assistant Principal** ☐ **Executive Assistant or Principal** ☐ **Other**		
Incident Date:		**Time:**	**Location:**
Nature:			
Description:			
Additional Comments:			
Witness/es:			
Signed:			
Date:			

Office Use:

Received by:	
Signed:	
Date:	