



COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Marist-Sion College Warragul (**College**) is committed to building a school community that features positive and respectful relationships. Within Marist-Sion College, relationships are founded in the gospel values of justice, compassion, reconciliation and kindness. 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 College staff (including volunteers and contractors), parents, guardians, carers 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.

Marist-Sion College understands that from time-to-time complaints arise and that it is important that all members of the community have the opportunity to be heard. Marist-Sion College commits to ensuring procedural fairness is observed when dealing with complaints and grievances.

2.0 PURPOSE

All schools managed and operated by the Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (**DOSCEL**) are required to develop, maintain and publicise a fair, effective and efficient complaint-handling process, so that complaints about events or decisions at the College can be addressed.

The purpose of this procedure is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Marist-Sion College so that students, parents, guardians, carers and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our College
- ensure that all complaints and concerns regarding Marist-Sion College are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner and in accordance with the [College Complaints and Grievances Management Policy](#).

3.0 SCOPE

This procedure relates to complaints brought by students, parents, guardians, carers, or members of our College community and applies to all matters relating to our College.

Complaints, concerns or reports relating to suspected child abuse will be managed in accordance with the following DOSCEL policies and procedures:

- [Protection of Children – Reporting Obligations Procedure](#)
- [Protection of Children – Anti-Grooming Policy](#)
- [Protection of Children – Failure to Disclose Policy](#)
- [Protection of Children – Failure to Protect Policy](#)
- [Mandatory Reporting Policy](#)
- [Guide to Reporting Conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)
- [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes Policy](#)

4.0 PROCEDURES

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

We value and encourage open and positive relationships with our College community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our College.

When addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- be considerate of each other's views and respect each other's role
- be focused on resolution of the complaint, with the interests of the student involved at the centre
- act in good faith and cooperation
- behave with respect and courtesy
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- operate within and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with any applicable legislation and DOSCEL policy
- recognise that schools and DOSCEL may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

Complaints And Concerns Process For Students

Marist-Sion College acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. Marist-Sion College encourages our students to raise issues or concerns as they arise so that we can work together to resolve them.

Students with a concern or complaint can raise them with a trusted adult at school, for example, with their Tutor, Head of House, Deputy Principals, Wellbeing Team members, a Child Safety Champion, and/or the Principal.

This person will take the concern or complaint seriously and will explain what steps we can take to try to resolve the issue and provide support .

A trusted adult can also be present as a support person when discussing a student concern or a parent, guardian, carer or another trusted adult outside of the school, can be present to talk to us about the issue instead.

Other ways a concern or complaint may be raised with us include:

- talking to a Student Leader (College Captains or Vice Captains, Student Executive Leaders, House Captains and/or a Student Representative Council – SRC member) about the concern and any suggestions for resolving it

Further information and resources to support students to raise issues or concerns are available at:

- [Report Racism Hotline](#) (call 1800 722 476) – this hotline enables students to report concerns relating to racism or religious discrimination
- [Reach Out](#)
- [Headspace](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#) (call 1800 55 1800)
- [Victorian Aboriginal Education Association](#) (VAEAI).

Complaints and Concerns Process For Parents, Guardians, Carers and Community Members

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

- carefully consider the issues you would like to discuss
- remember they may not have all the facts relating to the issues that you want to raise
- think about how the matter could be resolved
- be informed by the policies and guidelines set by DOSCEL and Marist-Sion College available on their website.

When raising concerns or complaints, parents, guardians, carers and community members are expected to adhere to the College Parent, Guardian and Carer Code of Conduct and are reminded of the expectation to communicate and respond in a respectful way, including using respectful language.

Support person

A support person may assist in raising a complaint or concern with the College. Please advise us if you wish to have a support person to assist, and provide their name, contact details, and their relationship to the complainant.

Raising a concern

Marist-Sion College is always happy to discuss with parents, guardians, carers and community members any concerns that they may have.

Concerns in the first instance should be directed to the student's subject teacher or Tutor. Where possible, College staff will work to ensure that concerns are appropriately addressed.

If the concern cannot be resolved in that manner, it can be escalated (in order) to the following people:

For Learning Program concerns:

1. Contact the Director of Learning

For Learning Adjustment (NCCD, disability) concerns:

1. Contact the Director of Learning Adjustment (if not resolved)
2. Deputy Principal – Student Learning Culture and Growth

For Wellbeing concerns:

1. Head of House (of the relevant student) (if not resolved)
2. Director of Student Wellbeing (if not resolved)

For Religious Education or Catholic Identity concerns:

1. Religious Education Leader (if not resolved)
2. Director of Mission

For College Organisation concerns:

1. Director of College Organisation
2. Deputy Principal – Professional Culture and Growth

Where possible, College staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

Making a complaint

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents, guardians, carers or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the following people:

- Deputy Principal - Student Learning Culture and Growth (for matters related to the learning program)
- Deputy Principal - Professional Culture and Growth (for matters related to College Organisation).
- Deputy Principal – Wellbeing Partnerships and Safety (for matters relating to child safety and wellbeing)
- Business Manager (for matters relating to College Fees)

If you would like to make a formal complaint, in most cases and depending on the nature of the complaint raised, our College will first seek to understand the issues and will then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint together. The following process will apply:

1. **Complaint received:** Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting with the Deputy Principal – Student Learning Culture and Growth, Deputy Principal – Professional Culture and Growth or Principal, to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the

issues are. We can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether in writing, in person, via video conference or over the phone.

- 2. Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Principal or Deputy Principals may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
- 3. Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with a Deputy Principal or Principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory for all parties. If after the resolution meeting we are unable to resolve the complaint together, we will work with you to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event you would like to take further action. In some circumstances, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
- 4. Timelines:** Marist-Sion College will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within three school days) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Marist-Sion College may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. We will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting where appropriate within 10 school days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, Marist-Sion College will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Unacceptable and unreasonable complainant conduct

The College places high value and priority on maintaining a safe and respectful working environment for our College staff. We regard certain behaviours as harmful and unacceptable insofar as they compromise the safety and professional wellbeing of our College 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 possessions/property.

When a complainant behaves in such unacceptable ways, the principal or a senior member of staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and/or mediation.

The College considers 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.

Unreasonable complainant conduct (including vexatious complaints) will be managed in accordance with the Marist-Sion College Complaints and Grievances Management Policy

Resolution

Where appropriate, Marist-Sion 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 actions consistent with College values that are intended to support the student, parent, guardian, carer and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the College community.

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

Escalation

If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved by the College, or if your complaint is about the Principal and you do not want to raise it directly with them, then the complaint should be referred to the DOSCEL Secretariat.

Marist-Sion College may also refer a complaint to the DOSCEL Secretariat if we believe that it is unlikely that your complaint can be resolved via our complaint-handling process.

For more information about DOSCEL's complaints process, including the role of the DOSCEL Secretariat, please see the Marist-Sion College Complaints and Grievances Management Policy.

Record keeping and other requirements

To meet DOSCEL and legal requirements, Marist-Sion 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) and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) and Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM), to meet regulatory requirements. For further information, see: [*Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms: Guidance and Tools-guidance-and-tools*](#), [*Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines*](#), [*Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme*](#), and [*Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework*](#).

Our College also follows DOSCEL policy to ensure that record-keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints or concerns.

5.0 COMMUNICATION

These procedures will be communicated to our College community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our College's website
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Referenced in the Student Planner so that it is easily accessible to parents, guardians, carers and students
- Included in enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in the College newsletter
- Discussed at student forums including Student Leadership
- Made available in hard copy from College Reception upon request

6.0 PROCEDURE STATUS AND REVIEW

Status	Approved
Approved By	Principal
Last Amended	October 2025
Consultation	Executive Team
Next Review Date	October 2028
Owner	DOSCEL
Responsibility	Principal

7.0 REVISION HISTORY

Version	Details of Amendments	Approved by	Approval Date
V1	New	Principal	April 2018
V2	Formatting edits, updated hyperlinks, Added escalation process.	Principal	October 2025