



# Communication & Grievance Policy

*Central to the mission of Holy Spirit Parish School is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.*

At Holy Spirit Parish School all children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. As a school community we have a legal and moral responsibility to protect the children in our care.

## **Rationale:**

As a school community with a Catholic ethos, Holy Spirit school is committed to working together to promote a community, family environment that supports the learning and development of students. This occurs most effectively when staff, students and parents are working together towards the same ends.

Whilst the positive achievements in the school are strongly appreciated, there are times when, as in any community, misunderstandings or disagreements occur and these can hinder the wellbeing of individuals or groups within our school. Frequently such concerns are resolved informally, but there may be occasions when a member wishes to make a formal complaint.

Positive, clear and effective processes for resolving grievances between the school and community members can assist in building strong relationships, dispel anxiety, and ultimately provide students with a settled and happy learning environment. The following procedures relate to any concerns that members of our community may have – whether these are serious grievance issues, or relatively minor concerns.

## **Aims:**

At Holy Spirit, we aim to:

- provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment.
- listen to and respect the views of each person.
- provide clear, positive and fair process that will allow grievances to be aired and resolved in a timely and effective manner.
- achieve satisfactory resolution for all parties concerned.

## **Principles:**

- All communications will be confidential unless otherwise agreed.
- All formal complaints, the actions taken to resolve them and outcomes of those actions will be fully documented.
- A person who has made a formal complaint may withdraw it at any time. The withdrawal should also be in writing.

- If a formal complaint is made against a person, that person will be informed of the nature and content of the complaint and have the right to respond.
- We believe that it is best if formal complaints are resolved at a local level, but if this is not possible, then the complaint can be referred to other authorities.
- No one will be victimised as a result of making a formal complaint.
- A person who has made a formal complaint has the right to be represented and supported by another person e.g. his/her union, work colleague, friend or other person of his/her choice.

### Recommended procedure in order to assist with resolution of grievances:

- Try to identify the problem clearly before contacting the school. If there is more than one problem list them to ensure that the extent of the problem is clear to the school.
- Decide whether the problem is a concern, enquiry or formal complaint. This will help you to decide the correct approach.
- If the matter involves your child or an issue of everyday class operation, make an appointment to see the classroom teacher, detailing the reasons for the appointment. The teacher will attempt to resolve the issue, and will notify the principal of the matter.
- Try to stay calm when discussing your concern. Even if you don't feel it, being calm will help you get your concerns across more clearly than if you are upset or angry. It may help to take someone with you.
- If you feel that the matter has not been resolved after your initial meeting with the class teacher or other staff member, or if you have a complaint about the teacher or staff member, you are entitled to make arrangements to meet with the Principal.
- If the complaint/issue cannot be resolved in the above ways, you may speak with the Parish Priest, or with the Western Region Principal Consultant from the Catholic Education Office at Werribee.
- If matters still remain unresolved, as a last resort parties might seek conciliation and/or legal process.

**NB:** The VRQA and the Secretary of the Department of Education **do not** deal with complaints within the Catholic Education system.

Ratified: June 2018