

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Policy and Procedures

At St Michael's Primary School, Baulkham Hills, the dignity of each individual is valued and the rights and beliefs of all members of the community are respected. St Michael's follows the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta Complaint Handling Policy and Procedures which is available from the school office and on the school website.

However, from time to time concerns may arise between different groups within the school community. At St Michael's we aim to attempt resolution as soon as any concerns arise.

Procedural Fairness

We endeavour to ensure that our student behaviour procedures and strategies allow for procedural fairness. We believe that procedural fairness is a basic right of all when dealing with school authorities. We apply the "right to an unbiased decision" and the "hearing rule".

The "right to an unbiased decision" includes the right to:

- impartiality in an investigation and decision making
- an absence of bias by a decision-maker

The "hearing rule" includes the right of the student against whom an allegation has been made to:

- know the allegations related to a specific matter and any other information which will be taken into account in considering the matter
- know the process by which the matter will be considered
- respond to the allegations
- know how to repair relationships and to "make things right"
- know how to seek a review of the decision made in response to the allegations.

In order to ensure procedural fairness, school staff need to be allowed to investigate and respond to matters in an appropriate manner. Parents must always communicate directly with the staff of the school when they have concerns about student behaviour, rather than approach individual students or parents with their concerns

Parents

Complaints or grievances pertaining to classroom issues or that relate to other children are to be dealt with by school personnel. It is not appropriate for parents to approach other children or other parents while on school premises to resolve issues.

The recommended procedure to be followed by parents is:

- The first point of contact is the child's class teacher. An appointment with the teacher should be made via the school office or directly with the teacher.
- If parents are not satisfied with the solutions offered or believe they have not been given a fair hearing, they are encouraged to make an appointment with either the Principal or Assistant Principal, to discuss the issue further.

- Parents are reminded that there are always two sides to every story and while it is important to listen to their own child, it is also just as important not to draw conclusions or make accusations until all the facts are known.
- Parents may also contact Catholic Education, Diocese of Parramatta for further discussion.
- All parties should aim to work towards a mutually agreeable solution to the grievance.

Students

The recommended procedure for students who have complaints or grievances is:

- If and when issues arise in the classroom, students are encouraged to speak to the class teacher in order to seek assistance in finding a resolution.
- Students encountering problems on the playground are asked to talk to the staff member on duty, who will then if necessary refer it to the class teacher or one of the school's Leadership team.
- Students may also speak to any other staff member regarding any issues.

Employees

The recommended procedure to follow is the procedure set out in the Diocesan "Complaint Handling Policy and Procedures."

Appeal

A person who is not satisfied the matter has been resolved appropriately may choose to appeal to the Principal of the school if the Principal has not been involved in investigating or examining the complaint, or is not the person named as the source of the grievance / complaint.

Alternatively an appeal may be made to the Director of Performance for the school who may be contacted at the CEDP.

For CEDP matters an appeal may be made to the Executive Director of Schools.

Further information can be found on the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta website:

<https://www.parra.catholic.edu.au/-/media/project/cedp/shared/policies/managing-complaints-policy.pdf>