



# MARIST CATHOLIC SCHOOL

## PROCEDURE: **Formal Complaints**

If your concerns have not been resolved, or for more serious matters, you can make a formal complaint.

Formal complaints may be about an employee of the school, a parent or caregiver, a student, or any matter within the school's responsibility.

In the interests of fairness, any formal complaint or serious allegation must be made in writing and resolved as quickly as possible given the details and the steps that need to be considered.

All parties should respect confidentiality, including avoiding the use of social media to promote a point of view.

### **To make a complaint:**

Put your specific complaint(s) in writing with as many facts and details as possible, including the names of people involved and dates of events, together with any steps you have taken to resolve the matter and your preferred contact details.

The letter or email should be marked "confidential" and sent to:

- the principal, if the complaint is about a staff member, student, parent or caregiver, or other member of the school community
- the board chair, if it is about the principal
- the deputy chair, if it is about the chair.

Contact details for the principal, board chair, and deputy chair are available at the school office.

### **When your complaint is received:**

The principal, board chair, or deputy chair will check that your complaint has come to the correct person and then send you an acknowledgement of receipt, usually within a week. You may be asked for further details about your complaint, to assist in determining the appropriate investigation process.

**The principal** (if the complaint is about a staff member, student, parent or caregiver, or other member of the school community) will:

- inform the board chair of any complaints about staff members, students, parents or caregivers, or other members of the school community
- take steps to resolve the complaint in accordance with their delegated authority and the relevant school policies, including undertaking a preliminary assessment of the complaint:
  - More general complaints or those which are unlikely to lead to disciplinary action against a staff member will be resolved informally.

- Potentially sensitive matters or more serious complaints which could lead to disciplinary action against a staff member may be referred to the board for consideration in-committee, with a view to determining the required level of board or chair involvement.
- follow the general guidelines for [Investigate a Formal Complaint or Serious Allegation](#)
- take appropriate advice from advisors such as NZSTA
- report to the board in accordance with school policy.

**The board chair** (if the complaint is about the principal) will:

- undertake a preliminary assessment of any complaints about the principal
  - More general complaints or those which are unlikely to lead to the board taking action against the principal will be promptly discussed with the principal at an informal meeting, usually held within a week of receipt of the complaint, where the potential resolution can be considered.
  - The process for managing complaints which appear more serious and could lead to the board taking action against the principal will be determined by the board at an in-committee meeting usually held within a week of receipt of the complaint. The complaint will then be promptly disclosed to the principal together with an indication of the proposed process for managing the complaint.
- follow the general guidelines for [Investigate a Formal Complaint or Serious Allegation](#)
- take appropriate advice from advisors such as NZSTA.

**The deputy chair** (if the complaint is about the chair) will:

- call an in-committee board meeting to discuss any complaints about the chair and determine an appropriate process for resolution
- take appropriate advice from advisors such as NZSTA.

Subject to the privacy of the person or people concerned, we will keep you informed about the process and the expected timeframe for any investigation, and will provide you with written confirmation when the matter is concluded.

Relevant collective employment agreement provisions for dealing with complaints about staff members must be observed, including protecting the staff member's dignity and mana, advising them of their right to seek support and representation before responding to complaints, and giving them a reasonable opportunity to take that advice.

### **Investigation process**

Not all complaints will require a formal investigation. In determining whether a formal investigation may be required, the principal, board chair, and/or board may consider any preliminary response from the person the complaint is about, and any action the school has taken previously, including meetings and correspondence. There may be other processes which can more constructively address general concerns, opinions, and views about the school.