



St Patrick's College

Gympie

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

St Patrick's College Parent Partnership

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Rationale

This ***St Patrick's College and Parent Partnership statement*** defines the responsibilities that **all** parents are asked to uphold, and it recognises the significance of the College and the household working together. It reinforces that collaborative and respectful relationships between the College and Parents are a key contributor to student success.

The College strives for excellence in education – an education that reflects quality in teaching and quality in learning – and will make every effort to ensure the communication between Home and College is clear, caring, compassionate and understanding for all involved. Parents are asked to understand that the educational environment is complex and continually changing, characterised by multiple layers of student safety, educational, system, and legislative compliance and best practice processes. The College staff do their best to balance all these requirements and deliver the personal, faith-informed growth opportunities that are part of our Catholic Education tradition.

Parents play a key role in the education of their children and should act in the best interest of students, their families, staff and the College community. Parents are students' most significant role models. Accordingly, the College expects a high standard of role modelling from parents, when they are on College grounds, attending events or communicating with staff or other students.

The College values its diverse community and respects the rights, beliefs and practices of individuals and their families. Parents are encouraged to take part in focus groups for feedback and input – recognising that this is one part of the information gathering process each year.

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Responsibilities

To work in partnership with the College, Parents are asked to:

- Show an active interest in their child's schooling and progress and recognise that the Parent is the first influence on each child.
- Co-operate with the College to achieve the best outcomes for their child.
- Support College staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.
- Initiate, respond to, and maintain constructive communication and relationships with College staff regarding their child's learning, well-being and behaviour.
- Contribute positively to behaviour support plans that concern their child. The College will look at ways to improve student engagement and appropriate behaviours, Parents are asked to work with the College in the same way.
- Make every effort for their child to be at College every day and on time. When their child is not going to be present, parents will notify the College, and recognise that prolonged absences such as family holidays during school Term times have an impact on learning and assessment. This is covered in the College Assessment Policy.
- Ensure that their child is prepared for College each day with sustaining food, adequate sleep and clean presentation.
- Appreciate that teachers will make every effort to respond to requests, but a 24 – 48-hour time frame to respond is reasonable. Most queries, concerns, and complaints will be attended to promptly, but recognise that some issues need significant time to investigate and respond appropriately during the busy school week. Please refer to the College's Complaints Resolution Policy for details.
- Keep updated on regular events via the Parent Portal, Emails and Newsletter.
- Engage, with and attend where possible, College events to develop and strengthen our community.
- Notify the College of any change in contact details (phone numbers / addresses etc.), family circumstances, or medical conditions particularly those requiring medication.
- Meet the financial obligations associated with enrolment and seek support from the College where necessary.
- Show reverence and respect for the prayer life of the College.
- Assist the College by ensuring their children follow to College rules and regulations regarding grooming, College uniform and the behaviour support procedures.

Communications

Communications and interactions with staff, other parents and students.

Parents are expected to interact civilly with staff, students and other parents at all times. Written and spoken communication should be courteous and respectful. Abusive language, raised voice, insulting or violent behaviour to anyone on College grounds or at any College-related event, is not appropriate. Please refer to the Complaints Management Procedure that is part of this document.

What parents can expect from a staff member if communication becomes inappropriate

In cases where a parent does not interact civilly with staff, either in person in or outside of the College grounds, during a phone call, or via email, the staff member may take the following actions:

- Request that the parent cease their inappropriate communication in order to allow the communication to proceed.
- Inform the parent that unless the inappropriate communication ceases, the staff member may put an end to the phone call, meeting or discussion.
- Request another staff member be present for the remainder of the meeting, if deemed necessary to proceed with such.
- Lodge a complaint with the Principal who will then assess the situation as relating to the Complaints Resolution Policy.

What parents can expect from the College

The College takes seriously any issues that are brought to its attention. The Mission of the College is to aspire to be a community of learners based on Gospel Values in the Catholic tradition. If parents express their concerns to the College, they can expect to be treated with courtesy and respect in order to try and resolve the matter.

As a general guide, minor issues may be raised with your child's teacher or appropriate Middle Leader or specialist provider (eg, Guidance Counsellor). Cases of more serious inappropriate conduct or concern ought to be directed to the College Leadership Team. Each situation will be considered as it arises and based on the issues presented.

Leadership and Support Staff Roles:

- Learning Support: Inclusive Education
- Guidance Counsellor
- Middle Leader for Junior Curriculum/Middle Leader for Senior Curriculum
- Middle Leader for Pedagogy
- Middle Leader of Pathways
- Middle Leader for House or Middle Leader for Differentiation
- College Leadership (Principal, Deputy, Assistant Principal, Assistant Principal Religious Education)

The College will act in accordance with its Complaints Resolution Policy when dealing with complaints.

Social Media

Use of social media

Social media can be defined as how we use technology to communicate and connect with others. Despite the range of positive uses for social media, there are also several ethical and legal issues associated with its use. Parents should be aware that there are several potential legal consequences that may arise of ill-advised use of social media.

Parents must ensure they abide by legislation and the College's expectations of its parents, by complying with the following guidelines:

- The College, its staff and members of its community should not be mentioned or discussed in a way that denigrates or insults.
- Photographs of students in College uniform represent the College and its students and should not be posted if they have the potential to bring negative connotations towards the College or its staff and students, now or in the future.
- Photographs containing other students should not be posted without the express consent of the other child/children's parents.
- Email addresses of parents, staff and students should not be given to other people without their express consent.
- Parents are not permitted to contact other students via any form of social media without the express consent of the student's parents.

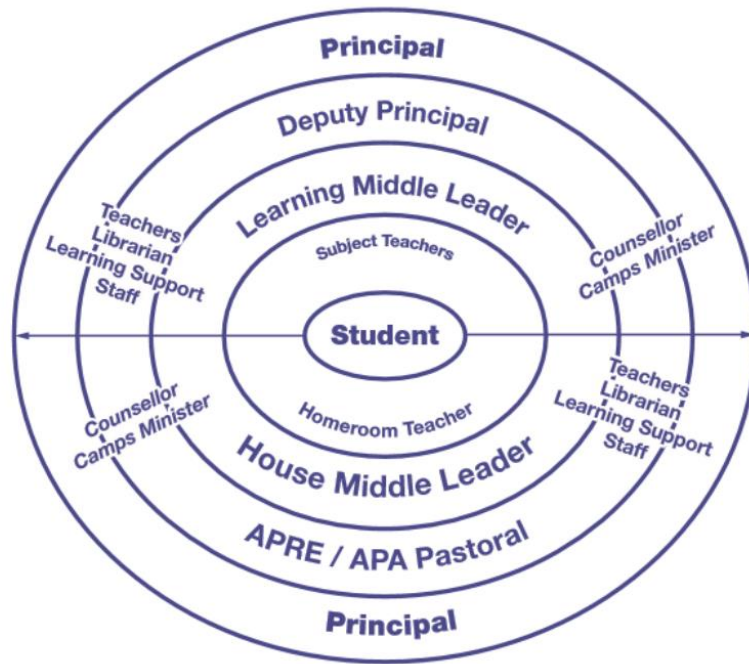
Complaints Resolution Procedure

St Patrick's College encourages and works within a partnership model of education. Parents are the first educator, and the students also grow in their own capacity to influence their education. The College guides and facilitates a collective approach and a willingness for all partners to engage positively is essential.

With every human partnership, there will be misunderstandings, and sometimes mistakes and errors. This is unavoidable, but by following a positive, positive mindset process, we can often clarify and return into easy partnership.

When something does not feel or seem right, there is a process to follow that helps all involved keep the dignity of themselves and others in sight, as well as find an appropriate resolution considering the broad school environment we are operating within.

St Patrick's College operates within the [Brisbane Catholic Education Complaints Management framework](#). Please refer to the [Student, Parent and Guardian Complaints Management policy \(bne.catholic.edu.au\)](#) on the College Website.



The Enquiry and Complaints Procedure works within the Policy and adds local context to the BCE Complaints Procedure.



Complainant (Parent/Student) Responsibilities

- work with the school to resolve the complaint
- provide the school with a clear description of the problem and desired outcome
- provide all relevant information and documentation to the school when the complaint is made
- understand that resolving complaints may take some time
- inform the school of changes affecting the complaint
- cooperate in a respectful way with the school and understand that unreasonable conduct may lead to the complaint not being processed
- if dissatisfied with the school's complaints processes, submit a written request for a review to the Principal
- if complaining about the Principal, submit a written complaint to Head of School Progress & Performance, GPO Box 1201, Brisbane QLD 4001.

Stages

Preliminary – before commencement

1. Determine the context and nature of the issue.

Query – a simple question to keep the enquirer informed

- i. Do you need to clarify a small issue?
 - how quickly is a response needed?
 - is this something that is likely to have been included in other communications?
 - is it something that is important to clarify right now or over time?
 - is it something that can be worked around without checking?
- ii. How and who best to ask to get the simple reply needed (interacting with those most centrally involved with the event/circumstance is essential)
 - Determine where in the policy framework the Query should be made.
 - Inform and request towards partnership.

Example:

Parent desires to engage more specifically with their child around topics being covered at school, but due to absences, this has been a little hit and miss recently.

- Best sourced first from class TEAMS, then from the teacher.
- Specify the class/topic information – prioritise questions to get a specific reply.
- Email/call selected class teacher/s.

Concern - This is something more than a simple question to help keep the partnership running smoothly. It could be something specific or more broadly contextual, or be providing information the other learning partners don't have yet that could help provide an even better set of opportunities for learning.

It is not a request to change established school processes or demand exemptions etc.

- iii. A concern that there **may** be some students bullying others
- iv. A concern that your child may have witnessed vaping
- v. A concern that an Individual Student Support Plan could work better and looking forward to **an** interim or scheduled review
- vi. A concern about student safety at the pedestrian crossing and a suggested way forward (please note that whilst OHS items will be considered, there are often multiple factors involved before any if any suggestions can be implemented)
- vii. A concern that there has been no homework set for a subject when it was mentioned in a teacher's term update email (though this may be more a 'query' to begin with)

A phone call is preferable, though a **brief but specific email raising the College or Teacher awareness to the issue**, is also appropriate. Highlight the information that may not be immediately apparent and express an offer of assistance in a way forward, acknowledging the good work and partnership that currently exists.

Complaint – this is where something quite amiss has suddenly occurred that is below reasonable expectations of service, and is within the capacity of the school to rectify or resolve. It may be due to Queries or Concerns have not been addressed or the return communication did not respond adequately.

FACT SHEET: Student, Parent and Guardian Complaints Management



The purpose of this fact sheet is to outline Brisbane Catholic Education's processes for managing complaints from students, parents, and guardians.

Guiding principles

Brisbane Catholic Education applies the following principles when managing complaints:

- students, parents, and guardians have a right to voice complaints
- complaints are resolved promptly and at the point of receipt, where possible
- complaints will be handled fairly, objectively, and confidentially
- students, parents, and guardians will not be adversely affected by making a complaint
- complaints help us to improve our services.

Responsibilities

The Principal has delegated responsibility for the everyday operations of the school in accordance with Brisbane Catholic Education policies, procedures, and guidelines.

Student, parent, and guardian responsibilities are as follows:

- work with school employees to resolve the complaint
- provide the school with a clear description of the complaint and desired outcome
- provide all relevant information and documentation to the school when the complaint is made
- understand that resolving complaints may take some time
- inform the school of changes affecting the complaint
- cooperate in a respectful way with school employees and understand that unreasonable conduct may lead to the complaint not being processed.

How to make a complaint

1. In the first instance, the student, parent, or guardian talks with a teacher or other school employee and they work together to resolve the complaint.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved, the student, parent or guardian talks with a senior school employee e.g., Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal or other nominated school employee and they work together to resolve the complaint.
3. If the matter cannot be resolved, the student, parent or guardian talks with the Principal and they work together to resolve the complaint.

Request for review

If dissatisfied with the school's complaints processes, a student, parent, or guardian may submit a written request for a review to the Principal.

Complaints about the Principal must be submitted in writing to:

Head, School Progress & Performance
Brisbane Catholic Education
GPO Box 1201
Brisbane Qld 4001
SchoolEnquiry@bne.catholic.edu.au

Response timeframes

The time required to resolve a complaint depends on its complexity, nature, and employee availability.

Receipt of a complaint will be acknowledged as soon as possible.

Additional time may be required if a complaint is submitted toward the end of a school term or outside of school terms.

More information

Contact the school office and visit the [BCE website](#).

Receive and Record

The College will:

Determine if the complaint is a complaint or something else e.g., a concern or an enquiry and redirect it to that point in the process.

It is not a complaint when a student, parent or guardian:

- requests information e.g., about the school service or policy
- requests a change in a service or requests a new service from the school
- makes suggestions for improving a service from the school
- expresses a concern about a situation in the school
- provides feedback on the performance of the school when requested or after significant event.

Upon determining a Complaint, the College will:

Record the complaint in the school's complaints register using the BCE approved complaints register – this is stored and accessed by the College Leadership Team and one Administration Officer.

Student, Parent and Guardian COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT FLOWCHART

This flowchart outlines Brisbane Catholic Education's (BCE) approach to managing and resolving complaints from students, parents and guardians.

Scenario 1: Making a complaint about a teacher or student

The student, parent or guardian talks with teacher and they work together to resolve the matter

If the matter cannot be resolved, the student, parent or guardian talks with a senior school employee
e.g. Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal or other nominated school employee and they work together to resolve the matter

If the matter cannot be resolved, the student, parent or guardian talks with principal and they work together to resolve the matter

Scenario 2: Making a complaint about a school's complaints processes

The student, parent or guardian talks with senior school employee
e.g. Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal or other nominated school employee and they work together to resolve the matter

If the matter cannot be resolved, the student, parent or guardian talks with principal and they work together to resolve the matter

If the matter cannot be resolved, the student, parent or guardian submits written request for review to principal

Scenario 3: Making a complaint about a principal

The student, parent or guardian escalates complaint to **Head, School Progress and Performance** via **BCE online complaint form** OR **SchoolEnquiry@bne.catholic.edu.au**



The Complaint Record

- is secure to ensure protection of privacy.
- Relevant details of the complainant, the complaint and desired outcome, must be recorded.
- Information recorded must be objective and factual.
- Complaints about Principals, complex complaints and requests for internal review must be forwarded to the relevant Senior Leader – School Progress & Performance.

- Complaints redirected from external agencies must be forwarded to the School Progress and Performance team for triaging and possible assigning to the School Operations and Programs Lead or other BCEO team, as required.

To help process a complaint, specific information is needed:

- ***Student Information and if applicable, relationship of the complainant to the student.***
- ***Short summary of the Complaint***
- ***Outcome sought***

Assess

Assessing a complaint can involve:

- clarifying the problem – this could involve more communication with the complainant.
- identifying causes and impacts
- gathering information
- talking to relevant employees.

Resolve

Determine solution/s. Solutions include:

- providing explanations and reasons
- referring the complainant to a different process
- implementing specific actions
- suggesting a compromise
- making improvements.

Communicate

Communicate to the complainant the process used, progress made, outcomes decided and the reasons for the decision.

Close or Forward

If resolved, close the complaint record in the complaints register. Record the outcome, including action to be taken and communications with the complainant. Then close the record.

Wherever possible, complaints must be resolved immediately at the point where the complaint is received. When resolved, the complaint is updated in the register and closed.

If there is no resolution or the complainant would like to review or pursue further complaint, the next level of the Complaints Policy is typically engaged.

Eg, the complaint goes to the teacher involved/directed, if the complaint is not resolved or meets a reasonable conclusion, the appropriate Middle Leader or College Leadership will review and undertake a new complaint management round.

If two level of review have been undertaken with appropriate process, the complaint is then concluded. An Internal Review Process can be initiated by the Complainant.

Review & Timeframe

Internal Reviews

Internal reviews are only undertaken when a complainant submits a written request for a review to the Principal. An internal review assesses the merits of the:

- original complaint and
- process used by the school to resolve the complaint and
- outcome decided.

The result of the internal review will either:

- support the original outcome decided or
- propose a modified, or new, outcome.

The Principal reviews the complaint resolution of a school employee. When a complainant submits to the Principal a written request for a review of a school employee's resolution or process used, the Principal must perform the internal review and communicate the result to the complainant. The Senior Leader – School Progress & Performance coordinates review of the complaint resolution of a Principal. When a complainant submits to the Principal a written request for a review of a Principal's resolution or process used, the Senior Leader – School Progress & Performance must coordinate the internal review in consultation with the Head of School Progress & Performance. A nominated BCE employee communicates the result to the complainant.

Complex Complaints

A complaint is complex when it:

- raises several distinct matters or significant system-wide issues
- requires legal advice or advice from an external third party
- involves an issue that is notifiable under legislation
- requires the involvement of a BCEO business area.

Principals must liaise with the Senior Leader – School Progress & Performance on complex complaints. If required, the Senior Leader – School Progress & Performance liaises with the Head of School Progress & Performance to determine capacity and appropriate action. Complaints about a Senior Leader must be forwarded to the Head of School Progress & Performance.

Response Times

While the attempt will always be made to promptly initiate a response and resolve complaints, the time required to resolve a complaint will depend on the nature and complexity of the complaint, as well as employee availability. As a guide:

- simple complaints and reviews may take up to 20 working days
- complaints requiring some assessment may take up to 45 working days
- complex complaints may take up to 90 working days or longer.

Receipt of Complaint should occur with 2 working days. Please contact the College again if necessary.

These guiding timeframes apply during school terms. Additional time may be required if a complaint from a student, parent or guardian is submitted toward the end of a school term or outside of school terms.

The Principal must ensure these timeframes are communicated to students, parents and guardians to ensure understanding of the time required by the school to resolve complaints.

Complaints that identify a potential or actual breach of legislation may be subject to other specific timeframes.

Unreasonable Complaint/Complainant Conduct

Unreasonable complainant conduct involves actions or behaviours which raise significant health, safety, resources, or equity issues for BCE.

Unreasonable complainant conduct involves actions or behaviours which raise significant health, safety, resources or equity issues for BCE. Unreasonable complainant conduct includes:

- unreasonable persistence e.g., making excessive and unnecessary phone calls or emails.
- unreasonable demands e.g., demanding a different process or more reviews than allowed for by the school's complaints procedure and/or BCE's Student, Parent and Guardian Complaints Management policy and this procedure or demanding a different outcome without demonstrating the original decision of the school was incorrect or unfair
- lack of cooperation e.g., refusing to identify the problem or providing disorganised information
- unreasonable arguments e.g., making irrational or illogical claims
- unreasonable behaviours e.g., aggression or violence to BCE employees or threatening to harm BCE employees, self or others

Responses to unreasonable complainant conduct include:

- not processing the complaint
- closing the complaint
- referring the matter to police or legal services