

OUR CHARISM  
As Marists, we think, judge, feel and act in the way of Mary

<b>Marist Catholic School Board of Trustees</b>	<b>DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS POLICY November 2012</b>	
<b>Attachments:</b>	<b>Management File Ref:</b>	<b>NAG Reference: 3</b>

### Rationale

The Board of Trustees of Marist Catholic School Herne Bay is committed to promoting and maintaining an excellent teaching and learning environment and a safe and orderly school. Parents/caregivers and teachers have the right and responsibility to express their complaints or concerns about children's progress, wellbeing and development, and inappropriate behaviour. The Board of Trustees values its partnership with parents and the school community and will endeavour to deal with complaints in an open, honest and just manner and according to principles of natural justice.

All complaints will be dealt with at the lowest possible level.

### Purposes

1. To ensure there is a professional procedure for dealing with all complaints.
2. To ensure the provisions of all current Collective Agreements or Individual Employment Contracts are abided by.
3. To ensure that parents/caregivers and staff know the appropriate procedures for lodging and dealing with a complaint.
4. To document all complaints and keep the details and outcomes on the appropriate file.
5. To involve all parties directly, wherever possible, through meeting, mediation or by telephone or letter so that communication and feedback is possible.
6. To ensure that the dignity and rights of people are respected at all times.

### Guidelines

1. Parents/caregivers (hereinafter referred to as caregivers) are encouraged to discuss any minor concerns they may have with the class teacher concerned after making an appointment for a mutually acceptable time outside of normal class hours.
2. All written complaints received by the school will be acknowledged, investigated by the appropriate authority and the findings reported back to those concerned.
3. All complaints will be treated seriously, sensitively and confidentially and every endeavour will be made by the school personnel to find a satisfactory resolution.
4. Complaints must be addressed through appropriate channels. Under no circumstances shall a caregiver approach or confront children (other than their own) about any matter relating to a complaint or an alleged complaint.
5. The school will involve each party in any hearing of a complaint so that it may be discussed openly and honestly
6. Notes and details of complaints will be kept in a confidential file at the school. These will be accessible only to the parties directly involved.
7. The Principal shall report to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees on the number and nature of any complaints received.

8. Complaints against teachers and matters of teacher discipline, suspension and competence will be addressed legally and fairly as detailed in the current Primary Teachers Collective Agreement and the New Zealand Teachers Council Guidelines.
9. Complaints against the Principal and matters of discipline, suspension and competency will be addressed legally and fairly as detailed in the current Primary Principals Collective Agreement.
10. When dealing with complaints of a serious nature, the Board of Trustees will seek advice from NZSTA Help Desk or from the NZSTA Industrial Adviser and will inform the Insurance Company of any potential risks.

### **Process for dealing with Complaints**

Complaints will be addressed in the following manner:

1. Complainant discusses the complaint with the appropriate person who will:
  - address the complaint and work to resolve the issue
  - maintain ongoing communication as agreed in the timeframe until the matter is resolved
2. If the complaint is not resolved, the complainant may take the complaint to the Principal who will:
  - document the complaint
  - inform the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
  - acknowledge the receipt of the complaint in writing
  - work to resolve the issue
  - inform the complainant of the action taken
  - maintain ongoing communication as agreed in the timeframe until the matter is resolved.
3. If the complaint is still not resolved, the complainant may put the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. The Board will:
  - acknowledge the complaint in writing
  - undertake to investigate the complaint using an appropriate forum and process
  - seek advice, where necessary, and follow appropriate and correct procedures
  - inform all named parties, in writing of the outcome of its inquiry

### **Conclusion**

The Board of Trustees with the Principal and staff will foster openness and honesty and seek to resolve any complaints fairly and justly while respecting the dignity of each person involved.

### **Effectiveness Self-Review**

- This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Board's triennial programme of self-review.

**29 November version adopted.**

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Chairperson

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Principal

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Date