

CATHOLIC SPECIAL SCHOOLS INC.



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PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

There are times when things go wrong in a school. Often matters can be dealt with informally by talking to the person directly involved.

If however, a more substantial issue emerges, the following is a guide to enable you to resolve the matter:

1. Keep an open mind. It is important to seek clarification in the first instance.
2. In the normal course of events direct your concerns to the person directly involved.

Area of responsibility

Relevant personnel

Individual students:

Teacher/s
Allied Health staff

Office:

Receptionist/s

Finance:

Bursar

OHSW:

OHSW Coordinator

School Policy/Procedure:

Principal/Assistant principal
Board Chairperson (via parent representative)

3. Make an appointment and inform the staff member what the issue is about. It is important to think carefully about the best time for a meeting to occur. Interrupting a class, attempting to discuss an issue with a staff member while he or she is busy supervising students or catching a couple of minutes before or after school, for example, rarely if ever lead to resolution.
4. The following is a guide to school responsibilities and provides a first "port-of-call" for issues if and when they emerge.

Staff member

Appointment Process

Teachers:

via student diary, phone call or personally speak with the staff member after school

Allied Health:

via phone call or speak with the staff member before or after school

Office and Finance:

via phone call or speak during office hours (8.45-4.00pm).
If the Receptionist or Finance officer can deal with the issue at that time they will.

Principal/Assistant Principal: via phone call to Reception. Ask to be put through. If Principal/Assistant Principal not available, ask for a return call or make an appointment through Reception.

5. Approach the staff member with the attitude that there is a misunderstanding that needs to be cleared up or a problem to be solved together. The challenge is for two people, with shared hopes for your child, to solve a problem in a way that benefits everyone and in particular your child.

6. If, after discussion with the relevant staff member, you feel the matter has not been resolved make an appointment to see the Principal/Assistant Principal.
7. If, after discussion with the Principal/Assistant Principal, the issue is still not resolved, contact the Catholic Education Office (ph. 83016600) to speak with the Principal Consultant for Special Schools. If s/he is not available at the time, leave a message requesting a return call.

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St Patrick's Special School

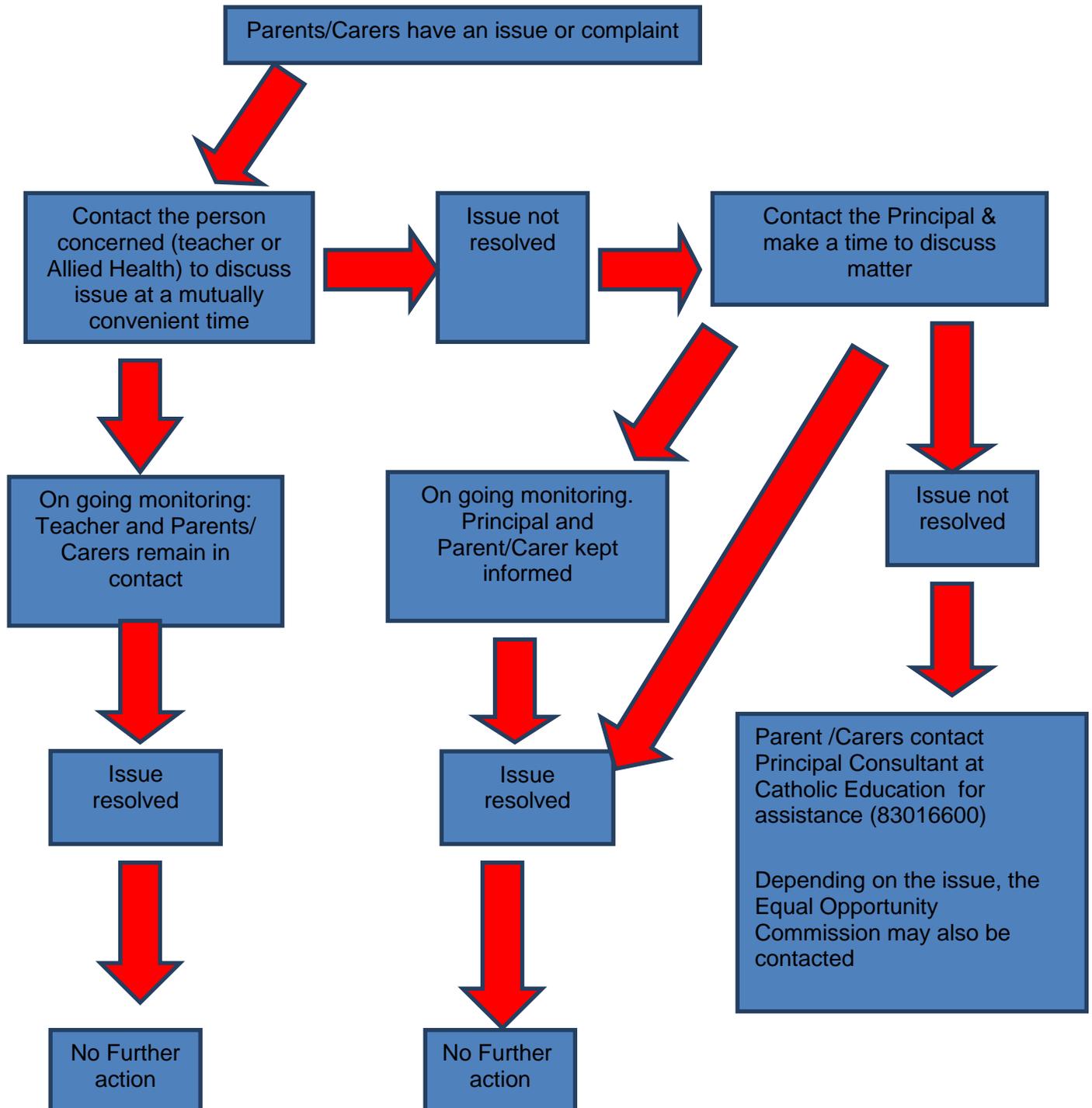
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GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS



For Parents: When You Have a Complaint.

There are times when things can go wrong in any school. Teachers are human beings and suffer the same frustrations, inadequacies and weaknesses as other members of our species. A parent may be aware of what seems to be an act of significant insensitivity or even injustice, an inappropriate punishment or inadequate learning opportunities – and feel that he or she must do something about it. Here are some ideas that may be worth considering when about to approach the school with a problem of some kind.

1. Keep an open mind. You may not have all the facts. The first task is to seek clarification.
2. Don't begin your search for a solution by sending an angry letter to the teacher or principal, as the normal human response to this is to be defensive.
3. Make an appointment, or at least think carefully about the best time to make contact. For example, it would be most inappropriate to interrupt a class or to catch the teacher while he or she is busy supervising students.
4. Approach the teacher or principal in a friendly manner. Adopt the attitude that there is a misunderstanding we need to clear up or a problem we should solve together.
5. Begin by expressing an overall appreciation of the work being done, or at least, an understanding of the difficulties.
6. Remember the challenge is for 2 people, with shared hopes for this particular child, to solve a problem in a way that benefits everyone and in particular the child.
7. Try to avoid 'going over a person's head' with a complaint. Once you have done this it is very hard to re-establish a trusting relationship.
8. If, after a little time, it appears that everything has been sorted out, you might write a note of appreciation to the teacher or principal and offer continuing support. This strengthens the partnership between home and school.