



# COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK SCHOOL MANUAL

27<sup>th</sup> MAY 2021

**Contents**

Complaints Management Framework..... 2

Appendix 1: CES Limited Procedures for Responding to Complaints..... 10

Appendix 2: Complaints Management Policy – School Level ..... 14

Appendix 3: Procedures for Making a Complaint – School Level..... 18

Appendix 4: Flowchart for Complaint – School Level..... 21



# SCHOOL MANUAL

## Complaints Management

May 2021

### 1. Vision

The vision for Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (**CES Limited**) is to provide, in partnership with our families, stimulating, enriching, liberating and nurturing learning environments in each of the Catholic school communities within the Diocese. At the heart of this vision is our commitment to the ongoing duty of care that we have for the safety, wellbeing, and inclusion of all children and young people.

We believe:

- that the values of the Gospel are central to who we are, what we do, and how we act
- in leadership encompassing vision, innovation and empowerment.

### 2. Introduction

Sandhurst Catholic Schools offer a broad, comprehensive curriculum imbued with an authentic Catholic understanding of Christ and his teaching, as well as a lived appreciation of membership of the Catholic Church.

CES Limited is committed to ensuring that Sandhurst Catholic Schools are communities of faith, hope and love where communication takes place in an environment of transparency, respect, compassion, tolerance and inclusion in the interests of all students.

The CES Limited Complaints Framework provides the key documents and elements of our approach to managing complaints that arise about the operation of Sandhurst Catholic Schools. All Sandhurst Catholic schools must ensure the Complaints Policies and Procedures implemented at school level are consistent with this CES Limited Complaints Management Framework.

### 3. Definitions

<b>CES Limited</b>	Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited
<b>CES Board</b>	Board of Directors of CES Limited
<b>Complaint</b>	A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived issue at the school where a response or resolution is expected
<b>Complainant</b>	The person making the complaint.
<b>ETR</b>	<i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006</i> , the Education Training and Reform Regulations 2017
<b>Executive Director</b>	The person holding the position of Executive Director of Catholic Education in CES Limited
<b>Guidelines</b>	Recommendations and guidance to support the implementation of this Board approved Framework and related Policies, which may be developed and approved by the Principal of a Sandhurst Catholic school for operation in a particular School in accordance with this Framework
<b>Policy</b>	A high level principles-based directive by the CES Board that must be complied with, by each Sandhurst Catholic school as detailed in this Framework
<b>Procedure</b>	A step by step instruction for the implementation of a CES Framework and related Policies, which may be developed and approved by the Principal of a Sandhurst Catholic school for operation in a particular School in accordance with this Framework
<b>Sandhurst Catholic School</b>	A School which operates with the consent of the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst and is owned, operated and governed by CES Limited, where formation and education are based on the principles of Catholic doctrine, and where the teachers are outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life

### 4. Purpose

The purpose of this CES Board approved Complaints Management Manual is to:

- outline the framework and the guiding principles for managing complaints of Sandhurst Catholic schools
- ensure that Sandhurst Catholic schools and CES Limited meet their obligations to respond to parent/guardian complaints in a fair, effective and efficient manner
- inform parents/guardians about how to lodge a complaint at their child's school
- outline the procedures to be adopted, including the escalation process in complaints management
- outline the procedures to be followed by CES Limited when a matter has been referred to the office from a Sandhurst Catholic School

## 5. Principles

Addressing complaints or concerns with dignity and respect can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of our contemporary world and provides a valuable opportunity for reflection and learning.

In receiving and responding to complaints, the following guiding principles will apply:

- complainants can expect their concern or complaint to be responded to in a respectful and timely manner
- schools will be informed of formal complaints that are made about them
- complainants and the person(s) against whom the complaint is made have the right to be heard and to expect that the principle of procedural fairness will be observed
- confidentiality, protection of privacy, respect, access, dignity and impartiality will form the basis of the complaints resolution process
- the complaints resolution process will seek to achieve the restoration of good and respectful relationships

## 6. Scope

This Framework and incorporated Policies and Procedures apply to all Sandhurst Catholic Schools. It does not apply to schools in the Diocese of Sandhurst that are governed and operated under Religious Institutes, however members of the community may use this policy as a guide if they wish to make a complaint to CES Limited about any school in the Diocese of Sandhurst.

This Framework applies to:

- complaints processes in Sandhurst Catholic Schools to be used by parents/guardians and students who wish to raise a concern

- complaints that are unable to be resolved at the school level and referred to CES Limited Office by members of the school community or external authorities (the Complainant). Procedures for making a complaint are presented in this Framework.

The Policy and Procedures relate to concerns and complaints about (but are not limited to):

- general issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school Student Behaviour Policy including incidents of bullying or harassment
- learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- communication with parents/guardians
- school enrolment, fees and payments
- general administrative issues
- any other school related matter, including conduct of staff other than allegations of child abuse.

This framework **does not** relate to critical incidents, matters included in the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme, emergency management, staff grievances or criminal offences.

If the matter relates to allegations of child abuse, Sandhurst Catholic Schools and CES Limited will follow their procedures for responding to allegations of child abuse under various reporting obligations as outlined in [Child Safety Framework – Responding and reporting child abuse](#).

Any such actions will be in accordance with any legal and reporting obligations.

## 7. Policy Statement

Complaints received by the CES Office from the school community are responded to in a timely manner consistent with the expectations and obligations of the CES Board.

CES Limited endeavours to address and respond to all complaints, however in most circumstances CES Limited will refer complaints from the parents/guardians and students back to the school:

- if they have not been addressed at the school first
- if the school is still working to address the complaint
- if issues raised are the responsibility of the school (e.g. school uniform, tuck shop duty, school parking)
- if the issues raised should be able to be resolved at the school level.

CES Limited Office will respond to complaints from the parents/guardians and students when:

- a complainant is not satisfied that a matter has been addressed in accordance with the school's complaint-handling processes
- a complainant is not satisfied that an acceptable resolution has been reached

- a school requests assistance to resolve a complaint
- the complaint is an allegation of serious or criminal misconduct in accordance with CES Limited's Policies and Procedures relating to our legal obligations to respond and report.

Procedural fairness will apply to the handling of complaints.

Confidentiality will be maintained as far as reasonable.

All complaints will be acknowledged within **2-5 business days** and complainants will receive an indication of when they can expect to be notified of an outcome for their complaint. It would be generally expected that investigations are completed **within four weeks**.

Complainants must be kept informed if there is any change to the time frame for dealing with their complaint.

All complaints are recorded and securely stored with relevant levels of authorised access.

In some situations, CES Limited may not be able to fully address complaints that are made anonymously or without sufficient detail being provided to enable an investigation or resolution of the matter. To ensure procedural fairness, respondents have a right to know the particulars of the allegations being made against them, and be given an opportunity to respond to them. Anonymous complaints are recorded in the same manner as other complaints.

Complainants will be notified of the outcome of formal complaints in writing.

Each Sandhurst Catholic School must establish procedures for responding to complaints appropriate to their local context, and the expectation is that most complaints are managed initially by the school. The CES Board requires the procedures developed by each school to reflect the information contained within this Complaints Management Framework to guide the development of these documents.

Sandhurst Catholic schools must publish their complaints Policy and Procedures on their websites.

### 7.1 Complaints not covered in this policy

This information is provided to assist members of the school community to identify the best avenue for raising their complaint. The following types of complaints are not covered by this policy:

- **Misconduct or serious misconduct other than allegations of child abuse**

All complaints of alleged misconduct or serious misconduct by a staff member should be reported to the Principal of the school. Complaints about teachers can also be reported to the *Victorian Institute of Teaching* (VIT- [www.vit.vic.edu.au](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au)), which is the regulator in relation to the registration and investigation of serious misconduct of all teachers in the state of Victoria. The VIT can be contacted by telephone 1300 888 067 or email [vit@vit.vic.edu.au](mailto:vit@vit.vic.edu.au).

In some cases, certain actions which involve a sexual offence, physical or

emotional misconduct, such as unlawful assault or threats to the person, may constitute a criminal offence. These types of offences should be reported to and investigated by the police. Initial consultation with the Principal of the school may help to determine the appropriate course of action in these circumstances.

- **Complaints against Principal of a school other than allegations of child abuse**

Complaints involving the Principal of a Sandhurst Catholic school should be made to the CES Limited Office and directed to the relevant Principal Consultant.

- **Complaints against clergy or other religious persons other than allegations of child abuse**

If a complaint relates to the clergy or other religious person at a school, the complainant should contact and seek advice from the CES Limited Professional Standards representative [CES Assistant to the Executive Director: Pastoral Wellbeing]

If the priest or religious person is a member of a religious order, the complainant should also contact the Provincial Head or Professional Standards representative of that congregation or religious order. CES Limited will also notify the relevant school governing body of the Religious Institute to ensure that the complaint has been referred and investigated.

## 8. Framework

### 8.1 Legislative requirements

This Framework and incorporated Policies and Procedures reflect the mandatory requirements imposed on Sandhurst Catholic Schools under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, the Education Training and Reform Regulations 2017 and the Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration (the Guidelines).

Schools must have Policies and Procedures for managing complaints which ensure procedural fairness, are accessible to the school community and consistent with its enrolment agreement.

### 8.2 School specific Procedures and Guidelines

Each Sandhurst Catholic School will develop Procedures and Guidelines in compliance with this Framework and related Policies.

Any Procedure or Guideline developed and approved by the Principal of a Sandhurst Catholic School must be consistent with this Framework and support the application of this Framework and related Policies in a particular Sandhurst Catholic School.

### 8.3 Application of Framework

All Principals of Sandhurst Catholic Schools are to ensure application of this Framework



and related Policies, Procedures and Guidelines are compliant and within the parameters of this Framework.

## **9. Roles, delegations and authorities**

### **9.1 Approval Authority**

The CES Limited Board:

- ensures complaints escalation and reporting mechanisms are aligned with risk appetite and obligations of the CES Board
- determines the role of the CES Board in the complaints process
- approves the Complaints Management Framework

### **9.2 Responsible Officers**

The Executive Director

Principal Consultants

Principals of Sandhurst Catholic Schools

### **9.3 Transparency and Fairness**

An up-to-date version of all prescribed Policies and Procedures forming part of this Framework must be maintained on the website of each Sandhurst Catholic School at all times.

A Principal of a Sandhurst Catholic School must ensure transparent, fair and supportive processes in compliance with this Framework.

### **9.4 Record Keeping**

All Records obtained under this Framework are to be kept in a secure manner as per legislative requirements.

A Principal of a Sandhurst Catholic School must ensure that the School complies with this Framework and related Policies in:

- methods for recording the outcome of complaints
- systems for recording complaints;
- data collection and analysis; and
- customising any Policies and Procedures forming part of this Framework in the manner prescribed in this Framework, including with the branding of the School logo.

## 9.4 Review

The CES Limited Board will review this Framework every three years or more frequently if needed. In the first instance, the Board requires a review within 18 months.

The CES Limited Board must communicate any changes made to this Framework to the Principals of Sandhurst Catholic Schools as soon as possible.

	Description of Revision(s)
<b>Responsibility for Manual</b>	Executive Director
<b>Approval Authority</b>	CES Limited Board
<b>Approval date</b>	May 2021
<b>Date of next review</b>	September 2022

## 10. Complaints Management Framework Documents

- [Appendix 1: CES Limited: Procedures for Responding to Complaints](#)
- [Appendix 2: Complaints Management Policy - School Level](#)
- [Appendix 3: Procedures for Making a Complaint – School Level](#)
- [Appendix 4: Flowchart for Complaints – School Level](#)

## APPENDIX 1: Insert School Name CES Limited Procedures for Responding to Complaints

Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (CES Limited) is responsible for the overall management of the complaints process in Sandhurst Catholic Schools. This Procedure forms part of the Complaints Management Framework which is available at [Insert website](#).

CES Limited office endeavours to address and respond to all complaints received from the parents/guardians and students; however CES Limited will refer complaints back to the school:

- if they have not been addressed at the school first
- If the school is still working to address the complaint
- If the issues raised are the responsibility of the school (e.g. school uniform, tuck shop duty, school parking)
- the issues raised should be able to be resolved at the school level.

CES Limited Office will respond to complaints from parents/guardians and students when:

- a complainant is not satisfied that a matter has been addressed in accordance with the school's complaint-handling processes
- a complainant is not satisfied that an acceptable resolution has been reached
- a school requests assistance to resolve a complaint
- the complaint is an allegation of serious or criminal misconduct.

### 1. Lodging a Complaint with CES Limited Office

Clarify the issue:

- be clear about the topic or issue to be discussed, and to whom the complaint relates
- be mindful of the need to ascertain all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue
- consider what would be an acceptable outcome
- read the CES Limited Complaints Management Policy.

Complaints can be lodged with the CES Limited Office by:

- email [complaints@ceosand.catholic.edu.au](mailto:complaints@ceosand.catholic.edu.au)
- post PO Box 477, Bendigo 3552
- Telephone 03 5443 2377

Complaints will be acknowledged within 2-5 business days of being received. CES Limited Office may need to contact the complainant for more information to help assess the issues or allegations.

The relevant Principal Consultant (or the relevant member of the Executive Leadership Team) will determine the appropriate process to be followed either informal or formal. If appropriate, the complaint will be referred to another agency such as the *Commission for Children and Young People, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Department of Health, or Victoria Police*.

## 2. Actions to be taken by CES Limited Office following receipt of a complaint

Following receipt of a complaint, CES Limited Office will:

- acknowledge receipt of a complaint as soon as possible, ensuring the complainant is aware of the CES Limited Procedures for responding to complaints
- document the complaint in the agreed data management system to ensure the complaint can be tracked
- advise the complainant that a record of their complaint is being maintained
- contact the complainant for more information to help assess the issues or allegations
- inform the Principal of the receipt of the complaint and provide an opportunity for the Principal to respond to the issues raised
- assess the complaint, which may result in undertaking one or more of the following processes to help resolve it:
  - allow more time for resolution at the school
  - provide assistance to reach a resolution through support from the CES Limited Office
  - arrange for an independent investigation
- where necessary, seek advice from other CES Limited Office staff and/or external agencies to determine how a complaint may be reviewed and whether other avenues of appeal/redress already exist
- advise and/or seek permission from the complainant if any sensitive or medical information provided will need to be shared with others in CES Limited Office staff in order to resolve the matter

- advise the complainant of any delays that may occur in the ability to respond within a set timeframe
- where it is considered appropriate, provide the complainant with an opportunity to respond to the principal's response to the matters raised prior to making a decision about the complaint
- where necessary, actively support the complainant with special needs through the complaints process
- provide the complainant and the principal of the school with the outcome of the CES Limited Office's assessment of the complaint
- notify the complainant of the outcome of the complaint enquiry
- record the outcome of the complaint in the agreed system database.

### 3. Formal investigation

If a formal investigation is required, details will be recorded and an investigation will be conducted. The person conducting the investigation is known as the investigator. The person appointed to this role may vary depending on the nature of the complaint and the identity of the person against whom the complaint has been made. Where appropriate, the investigator will be external to CES Limited. The investigator will deal with the complaint on the facts presented and will contact the complainant if additional information is required.

If an investigation is conducted, it will determine the substance of the complaint and whether consequential action is necessary. The investigation may involve interviewing relevant witnesses and examining relevant documents. The person against whom the complaint has been made will be provided with details of the complaint and will have the opportunity to respond to any allegations which have been raised against them.

Based on the available information the investigator may:

- request a face-to-face meeting with the relevant parties and attempt to achieve resolution through discussion.
- suggest alternative method of dispute resolution such as conciliation and/or mediation
- reject the complaint and provide reasons for this rejection, or
- accept the grievance and may suggest an appropriate remedy
- refer the complainant to appropriate external agencies to explore the matter further if the applicant is still dissatisfied with the outcome of the findings of the complaint investigation.

The findings of the investigation will be communicated back to the person who made the complaint as well as the person against whom the complaint was made. Details of any

consequential actions may not be communicated with the person who made the complaint, particularly where it may be a breach of rights to privacy or contractual responsibilities.

CES Limited will use the following timeline as a guide to ensure complaints are responded to within an appropriate timeframe:

- letter of acknowledgement of complaint to complainant within **2-5 business days**
- if appropriate, referral to relevant agencies within **2-5 days** of receiving complaint
- investigation to be commenced within **two weeks**
- investigation finalised within **four weeks**
- reasons for the findings provided to complainant within one week of finalisation of the investigation

## 4. Appeal

If the complaint is unable to be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant has the right to seek alternative independent or other advice, or contact other entities such as the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) or the courts.

## APPENDIX 2

### Insert School Name

## Complaints Management Policy - School Level

*This Policy has been approved by the CES Limited Board for application in each Sandhurst Catholic School and must be customised for use in each particular School in accordance with the instructions outlined in this Framework. Schools can remove this statement if required.*

The school offers a broad, comprehensive curriculum imbued with an authentic Catholic understanding of Christ and his teaching, as well as a lived appreciation of membership of the Catholic Church.

The school is committed to ensuring this is a community of faith, hope and love where communication takes place in an environment of transparency, respect, compassion, tolerance and inclusion in the interests of all students.

The Catholic Education Sandhurst (CES) Limited Complaints Framework provides the key documents and elements of our approach to managing complaints that arise about the operation of Sandhurst Catholic schools. All schools must ensure the Complaints policies and procedures implemented at school level are consistent with this CES Limited Complaints Framework Policy.

### 1. Purpose

The school strives to be a community of faith, hope and love where communication takes place in an environment of transparency, respect, compassion, tolerance and inclusion in the interests of all students.

The purpose of this Complaints Management Policy is to:

- outline the process and guiding principles for managing complaints at our school
- ensure that our school meets its obligations to respond to complaints in a fair, equitable and efficient manner
- inform parents/guardians and students of how to lodge a complaint about the school
- outline the school's procedures and escalation process in complaints management
- outline the procedures to be followed by CES Limited Office when a matter has been referred from a Sandhurst Catholic school for investigation

The school has established procedures for responding to complaints which reflect the expectations of the CES Board as described in the CES Limited Complaints Management

Framework and used to guide their development. The school's Complaints Management Policy and procedures are available on the school's website or by requesting a copy from the school.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints that should be able to be resolved at the school level that relate to:

- general issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school student behaviour Policy including incidents of bullying or harassment
- learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- communication with parents/guardians
- school enrolment, fees and payments
- general administrative issues

Any such actions will be in accordance with any legal and reporting obligations.

This policy also applies to the procedures to be followed when:

- complaints cannot be resolved at the school level and referred to CES Limited Office from the school community
- the school seeks assistance from CES Limited Office to resolve a complaint from a parent/guardian or student
- a complaint to referred from an external authority

Procedures for making a complaint are presented in Appendix 1 of this Policy.

This policy does not apply to complaints about critical incidents, matters included in the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme, emergency management, criminal offences or staff grievances.

If the matter relates to allegations of child abuse, Sandhurst Catholic schools and CES Limited will follow their procedures for responding to allegations of child abuse under various reporting obligations as outlined in the Child Safety Framework.

## 3. Principles

Addressing complaints or concerns within a framework of dignity and respect can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of our contemporary world and provides a valuable opportunity for reflection and learning.

In receiving and responding to complaints, the following guiding principles will apply:

- complainants can expect their concern or complaint to be responded to in a respectful and timely manner



- schools will be informed of formal complaints that are made about them
- complainants and the person(s) against whom the complaint is made have the right to be heard and to expect that the principles of procedural fairness will be observed
- confidentiality, protection of privacy, respect, access, dignity and impartiality will form the basis of the complaints resolution process
- the complaints resolution process will seek to achieve the restoration of good and respectful relationships

## 4. Policy Statement

The nature of the complaint will determine who is the most appropriate person or body to manage a complainant's concerns. The school staff will consider the matter raised and determine the most appropriate action that is likely to achieve prompt resolution.

Procedural fairness will apply to the handling of complaints.

Confidentiality will be maintained as far as reasonable.

Complaints received from parents/guardians and students are responded to in a timely manner

All complaints will be acknowledged within 2-5 business days and complainants will receive an indication of when they can expect to be notified of an outcome for their complaint, this would generally be within four weeks.

Complainants must be kept informed if there is any change to the time frame for dealing with their complaint.

The school endeavours to address and respond to all complaints. The school may not be able to fully address complaints that are made anonymously or without sufficient detail being provided to enable an investigation or resolution of the matter. To ensure procedural fairness, respondents have a right to know the particulars of the allegations being made against them, and be given an opportunity to respond to them. Anonymous complaints are recorded in the same manner as other complaints.

All complaints are recorded and securely stored with relevant levels of authorised access.

Complainants will be notified of the outcome of a formal complaint in writing.

The school has established procedures for responding to complaints appropriate to their local context, and the expectation is that most complaints are managed initially by the school.

The Complaints Policy and Procedures for the school is published on our website.

## 5. Complaints not covered in this Policy

This information is provided to assist parents/guardians and students to identify the best avenue for raising their complaint. The following types of complaints are not covered by this policy:

- **Misconduct or serious misconduct other than allegations of child abuse**

All complaints of alleged misconduct or serious misconduct by a staff member should be reported to the Principal of the school. Complaints about teachers can also be reported to the *Victorian Institute of Teaching* (VIT- [www.vit.vic.edu.au](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au)), which is the regulator in relation to the registration and investigation of serious misconduct of all teachers in the state of Victoria. The VIT can be contacted by telephone 1300 888 067 or email [vit@vit.vic.edu.au](mailto:vit@vit.vic.edu.au).

In some cases, certain actions which involve a sexual offence, physical or emotional misconduct, such as unlawful assault or threats to the person, may constitute a criminal offence. These types of offences should be reported to and investigated by the police. Initial consultation with the Principal of the school may help to determine the appropriate course of action in these circumstances.

- **Complaints against Principal of a school other than allegations of child abuse**

Complaints involving the Principal of a Sandhurst Catholic school should be made to the CES Limited Office and directed to the relevant Principal Consultant.

- **Complaints against clergy or other religious persons other than allegations of child abuse**

If a complaint relates to the clergy or other religious person at a school, the complainant should contact and seek advice from CES Limited Professional Standards representative (CES Assistant to the Executive Director: Pastoral Wellbeing).

If the priest or religious person is a member of a religious order, the complainant should also contact the Provincial Head or Professional Standards representative of that congregation or religious order. CES Limited will also notify the relevant school governing body of the Religious Institute to ensure that the complaint has been referred and investigated.

## APPENDIX 3

Insert School Name

### Procedures for Making a Complaint - School Level

The school maintains a fair, equitable and efficient complaint handling process so that complaints about events or decisions at the school can be addressed at the local level in the first instance.

The following can assist parents/guardians and students when lodging a complaint about issues arising at a school:

#### 1. Clarify the issue:

- Be clear about the topic or issue to be discussed, and to whom the complaint relates
- Be mindful of the need to ascertain all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue
- Consider what would be an acceptable outcome
- Read the school's Complaints Policy or Procedure.

#### 2. With whom should the complaint be raised?

- In most cases, the first step is to raise the concern at the school with the staff member most closely associated with the complaint in the first instance. This may be a classroom teacher or a member of the school's leadership team. They may be able to resolve the complaint immediately through discussion on the telephone, by email or in person.
- Sometimes a teacher may refer to another member of staff or a member of the leadership team to assist in dealing with the complaint.
- Email is the preferred method to contact teachers. The complaint will be acknowledged within 2-5 business days.
- In some instances, however, if the complaint is deemed to be alleging serious misconduct or is not covered by the school's Complaints Policy, the complaint may be referred to the CES Limited Office.
- If the complaint relates to the Principal the complainant can contact the CES Limited Office via:

- email [complaints@ceosand.catholic.edu.au](mailto:complaints@ceosand.catholic.edu.au)
- post PO Box 477, Bendigo 3552
- telephone 03 5443 2377

### 3. Process for dealing with complaints

- The principles of procedural fairness apply to the handling of complaints and includes:
  - respecting the right of all parties to be heard and treated fairly
  - responding to complaints promptly and thoroughly
  - if the complaint is about a person, providing that person the opportunity to respond to any allegations
  - ensuring the Complaints Policy and Procedure is clear to all parties
  - maintaining impartiality, substantiating the facts, appropriate communication including reasons for decisions or actions
  - complying with legal and privacy obligations
  - recording complaints on a secure database with appropriate access controls
- If requested, the complainant will be provided with a copy of this Policy and Procedures in order to clearly establish expectations at an early stage of the complaints handling process.
- The complaint will be acknowledged within 2-5 business days by email or telephone.
- If the complaint requires further investigation or to be referred to another member of staff, the complainant will be given a timeframe for when they can expect an outcome for the complaint. This would generally be four weeks from the date of acknowledgement. If it is necessary to extend this time frame, the complainant will be notified by a member of staff.
- To resolve the complaint, it will determine the substance of the complaint and whether consequential action is necessary. The investigation may involve interviewing relevant witnesses and examining relevant documents. The person against who the complaint has been made will be provided with details of the complaint and will have the opportunity to respond to any allegations which have been raised against them.
- Face to face meetings with the relevant parties may be held to achieve a resolution through discussion.

### 4. Complaints resolution

- Determine the best option to achieve resolution of the complaint.

- Less serious complaints should be resolved promptly through facilitated communication
- Serious complaints should be resolved as soon as possible using formal options such as intervention or investigation as determined appropriate to the situation.
- Move to a formal option when an informal option has not led to resolution. This option will be initiated by the Principal, Deputy Principal or school leader or the complainant.
- The outcome of the complaint will be communicated to the complainant and, if applicable, to the person about whom the complaint was made. Details of any consequential actions may not be communicated with the complainant, particularly where it may breach the rights of privacy or contractual responsibilities.

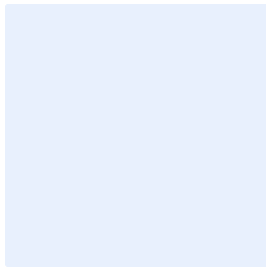
## 5. Should the matter not be resolved

If the matter cannot be resolved at the school level, or if the complaint is about the Principal of the school, the CES Limited Office should be contacted via:

- email [complaints@ceosand.catholic.edu.au](mailto:complaints@ceosand.catholic.edu.au)
- post PO Box 477, Bendigo 3552
- telephone 03 5443 2377

## 6. Appeal

If the complaint is unable to be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant has the right to seek alternative independent or other advice, or contact other entities such as the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) or the courts.



# APPENDIX 4

Insert School Name

## Flowchart for Complaint - School Level

