

### Preamble

*The John Paul College Mission Statement speaks of the commitment of all members of the community to recognising the essential dignity of the person and of the need for all to experience, insofar as is possible, the 'fullness of life' promised in Jn 10.10.*

### Policy statement

John Paul College is committed to providing a healthy, safe and pleasant work environment for all staff and students. We acknowledge, however, that staff, parents and students can sometimes feel aggrieved about something that is happening at the school which appears to be discriminatory or to contravene the College Mission Statement. Such contraventions include:

- excluding someone from activities
- giving someone the majority of unpleasant tasks
- verbal abuse
- humiliating someone through sarcasm or insults
- intimidation

All members of the John Paul College community expect to treat each other with dignity and respect. All members of the College Community who are concerned about behaviours directed at them are encouraged to report it. Complaints from students about fellow students should be handled within the school's Safe School Policy. Complaints in relation to VCE/VCAL rules are provided for within the VCAA rules and the school's VCE/VCAL administrative handbook.

When a report is made, it will be viewed as a serious matter and will be investigated in a timely manner. The reporting, investigation and appeals procedures are set out below. A staff member, parent or student can make a complaint about any decision, behaviour, act or omission. Underlying all such behaviour is the concept of the 'misuse of power.'

The following values inform our Resolution of Grievances procedures:

#### **Impartiality**

If you make a complaint, it will be investigated in a fair and impartial manner. No judgments or assumptions will be made, and no action will be taken until the investigation is complete. If a complaint is made against you, your rights will be protected and you will be given an opportunity to tell your side of the story.

#### **Confidentiality**

You can feel secure that if you do make a complaint under this policy, it will remain confidential. The only people who will have access to information about the complaint will be the person making the complaint and the person investigating. The only exception to this will be where, in the course of the investigation, another senior member of staff may need to be aware that a complaint has been received and is being investigated. In such circumstances the information revealed would be limited only to what is necessary for the proper resolution of the matter.

#### **No victimisation**

You can also rest assured that if you make a complaint you will not suffer in any way as a consequence. The school will ensure that a person who makes a complaint is not victimised in any way.

#### **Timeliness**

Each complaint will be finalised within as short a period as possible while allowing for thorough and fair processing of the matter. All complaints should be finalised within four working weeks.

## Procedures – Resolution of Grievances

The purpose of these procedures is to assist you to take steps to resolve grievances that may occur within the College community.

### **Taking direct personal action**

You may feel that you can speak with the person(s) involved regarding the impact the situation is having on yourself. Prior to this you may wish to speak with a trusted person, eg in the case of a student – teacher, parent or Counsellor, in the case of a parent – partner or House Coordinator, in the case of a staff member – Deputy Principal, Faith Development Coordinator or colleague.

### **Formalising the grievance**

You may believe that personal action is not sufficient or has not worked. The grievance can be formalised by speaking with one of the Deputy Principals. When considering this course of action you are able to bring a parent, Counsellor or teacher (in the case of student) or a support person (in the case of a parent or staff member) to meetings.

Once the grievance is formalised, the Deputy Principal will meet with you and may ask you to provide supporting evidence. You will be asked what outcome you would like. Further action will be agreed upon between you and the Deputy Principal.

This will always include the Deputy Principal talking to the person about whom the complaint is made (the respondent).

The Deputy Principal will then talk to the respondent. A similar right to have a support person present is assumed. The respondent has a right to know exactly what grievance has been raised and who has raised it.

Witnesses may also be interviewed. All interviews will be conducted separately and impartially. The importance of confidentiality will be discussed and the possibility of consequences if confidentiality is breached.

The Deputy Principal will seek to find a resolution that is appropriate and amenable to all parties.

### **Outcomes**

Outcomes to resolve a grievance can include the following:

- Apology – either written or verbal
- Mediation – with an internal or external mediator
- Official warning
- Counselling
- Dismissal
- Disciplinary action
- Behaviour Contract (in the case of students)
- Pastoral/spiritual care

### **Appeals**

If you believe that the above procedure has not been followed or that the outcome is not acceptable, then you may appeal to the Principal. If the Principal is involved in the grievance then the appeal ought to be forwarded to

The Coordinating Person,  
Pastoral Care Unit  
Catholic Education Office Melbourne

The Principal will examine all documentation related to the grievance and may seek further interviews. Advice may be sought from the President of the Association of Canonical Administrators. The outcome of an appeal is to either uphold the original investigation or to reopen the investigation appointing a new investigator.

**External agency**

If you are not happy with the way a grievance has been dealt with you may wish to go to an external agency for further advice and assistance. External agencies you may consider are:

The Coordinating Person  
Pastoral Care Unit  
Catholic Education Office Melbourne  
PO Box 3  
East Melbourne VIC 3002  
9267 0228

The Equal Opportunity Commission of Victoria  
Level 3, 380 Lonsdale Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000  
9281 7111 or 1800 134 142

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