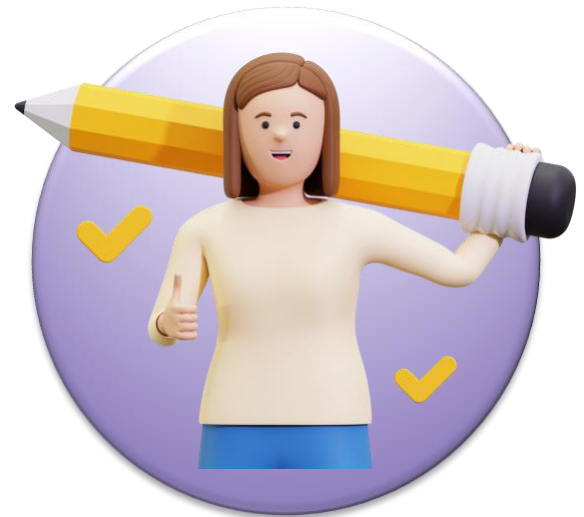




**Catholic
Education**
Diocese of Cairns

Learning with Faith and Vision



Complaints and Grievance Resolution Process

Our Commitment

Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns (CEDC) is committed to fostering educational and workplace communities built on dignity, mutual respect, trust, and fairness. We strive to provide safe, supportive, and inclusive environments where students, parents, carers, employees, volunteers, and community members feel heard, respected, and valued.

We recognise that concerns, complaints, and grievances may arise from time to time regarding decisions, behaviours, actions, omissions, services, or interactions. We encourage concerns to be raised as early as possible so they can be addressed promptly, respectfully, and at the most appropriate level.

Our Complaints and Grievance Resolution Process is guided by the principles of procedural fairness, confidentiality (where possible), impartiality, transparency, and the pursuit of constructive outcomes.

Understanding the Difference: Complaints and Reportable Conduct

Most concerns raised within Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns are managed through the standard complaints and grievance resolution process. These matters typically relate to issues such as communication, service delivery, interpersonal interactions, school or workplace decisions, policy implementation, or other concerns that affect members of the school or workplace community.

A **standard complaint** generally concerns:

- Communication or relationship issues
- Service delivery concerns
- School or workplace decisions
- Behaviour that does not involve child abuse or reportable conduct
- Policy, procedure, or administrative matters.

Standard complaint procedure

Step 1: Raise the Concern Locally

Where appropriate, concerns should first be discussed directly with the person most closely connected to the matter. This may include:

- Your child's teacher
- A school staff member
- A supervisor or manager
- Another relevant contact person

Many concerns can be resolved quickly and effectively through open, respectful, and constructive communication. We encourage all parties to approach discussions in good faith and seek to understand each other's perspectives.

Step 2: Escalate Through School or Workplace Leadership

If the concern is not resolved, or it is not appropriate to raise the matter directly with the person involved, it may be escalated to the relevant leader, including:

- Curriculum Leader, Pastoral Leader or Coordinator
- Assistant Principal
- Principal
- Manager or Senior Leader.

Leaders will work with those involved to understand the issues raised, explore options for resolution, and seek an appropriate outcome.

If additional assistance is required, individuals may also seek guidance from the Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office (PSSO).

Step 3: Lodge a Formal Complaint or Grievance

Where a matter cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint or grievance may be lodged with the school, workplace, or directly with the Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office (PSSO).



Complaints should be addressed to:

Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office (PSSO)
(07) 4050 9765 professionalstandards@cns.catholic.edu.au

Complaints can also be submitted using the CEDC Online Complaint Form:
<https://cedc.snapforms.com.au/form/cedc-online-complaint-form>

In some circumstances, particularly where matters are serious, sensitive, involve significant risk, or relate to child safety concerns, the informal resolution steps may be bypassed and a formal complaint lodged immediately.

In some circumstances, particularly where matters are **serious, sensitive, or involve significant risk**, the informal resolution steps may be bypassed and a formal complaint lodged immediately.

Providing Your Complaint

To assist with effective assessment and resolution, complaints should preferably be submitted in writing and include:

- Your name and contact details
- A clear description of the concern or allegations
- Who was involved
- When and where the events occurred
- Any relevant background or contextual information
- The names of any witnesses or persons you have spoken with
- The outcome or resolution you are seeking.

Information is often most helpful when presented in chronological order or numbered paragraphs.

Where preferred, complaints may also be made in person or by telephone.

Step 4: Assessment and Review

Upon receipt, the complaint will be assessed and managed by an appropriately authorised person who is impartial and free from any actual or perceived conflict of interest. Depending on the nature of the complaint, this may be:

- A senior CEDC officer
- The Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office
- An independent external investigator or reviewer.

The review process may include:

- Assessing the nature and scope of the complaint
- Reviewing relevant documents and evidence
- Gathering additional information as required
- Speaking with relevant parties
- Applying relevant legislation, policies, and procedures
- Considering whether findings are supported by available evidence
- Determining appropriate outcomes or actions.

Throughout the process, parties will be kept informed of progress where appropriate.

All matters will be managed in a manner that is:

- Procedurally fair
- Respectful
- Confidential, where possible
- Timely
- Proportionate to the issues raised.

Step 5: Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns Review

If you believe that your complaint has not been adequately addressed at the school or local level, you may request a review by Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns.

CEDC will consider:

- Whether the matter has been managed in accordance with relevant policies and procedures
- Whether further review or investigation is warranted
- Whether additional guidance, support, or intervention is required.

Step 6: Appeal

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of a formal complaint or grievance process, you may lodge an appeal within 30 days of the decision.

Appeals should be submitted to the Executive Director, Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns, through the Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office. The appeal review will consider whether the process was conducted fairly and in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.



Reportable Conduct and Child Safety Matters

Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns is committed to the safety, wellbeing, and dignity of all children and young people. Any allegation, suspicion, concern, or information suggesting that a child may have experienced abuse, harm, or reportable conduct must be reported **immediately**.

Matters involving alleged reportable conduct by an employee, volunteer, contractor, clergy member, or religious personnel towards a child are managed under the **Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)** and CEDC safeguarding policies and procedures.

Reportable conduct matters are assessed separately from the standard complaints process and may require mandatory notifications to relevant authorities, including:

- Queensland Family and Child Commission
- Queensland Police Service
- Department of Child Safety
- Other statutory or regulatory agencies as required.

Concerns involving the alleged conduct of an employee, volunteer, contractor, clergy member, or religious personnel towards a child may constitute **reportable conduct** and are managed under separate legislative and safeguarding requirements.

A reportable conduct matter involves allegations that a staff member, volunteer, contractor, clergy member, or religious personnel may have engaged in conduct towards a child that includes:

- Sexual offences.
- Sexual misconduct.
- Physical violence.
- Significant neglect.
- Ill-treatment.
- Conduct causing significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

Where a matter may constitute reportable conduct, it will not ordinarily be managed through the standard complaints process. Instead, it will be assessed and managed through CEDC's safeguarding and reportable conduct procedures in accordance with relevant legislation. Where appropriate, CEDC will undertake a reportable conduct assessment, investigation, and risk management process in accordance with legislative requirements.

Individuals who wish to report a concern involving child safety or reportable conduct may contact the Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office directly or submit a report using the CEDC Reportable Conduct Notification Form here: <https://cedc.snapforms.com.au/form/rcs-cedc-public>.

Serious Concerns

Some matters require immediate reporting and are managed under specific legislative and policy frameworks rather than through the standard complaints process.

- These include concerns relating to:
- Child safety and wellbeing
- Reportable conduct
- Allegations of abuse or neglect
- Criminal or unlawful behaviour
- Sexual harassment
- Bullying
- Discrimination
- Serious misconduct.

Where a matter may involve the commission of a criminal offence, it should be reported directly to Queensland Police.

Where concerns relate to child abuse, harm, or reportable conduct, CEDC's Student Protection, Safeguarding, and Reportable Conduct procedures apply.

Important Information

- All parties are expected to participate respectfully and in good faith.
- All parties have the right to procedural fairness and natural justice.
- Confidentiality will be maintained where possible and appropriate.
- Making a complaint or reporting a concern in good faith will not result in victimisation or disadvantage.
- This process does not replace, alter, or limit any person's right to seek independent legal advice or access external complaint, regulatory, safeguarding, or law enforcement agencies.
- Where a matter may involve the commission of a criminal offence, it should be reported directly to Queensland Police.

Working Together

Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns encourages all members of our community to engage respectfully throughout the complaint and grievance process, with a shared commitment to achieving fair, transparent, child-safe, and constructive outcomes for everyone involved.