

Complaints Management Policy

School Context

Doxa School Bendigo is a Child Safe community committed to providing an environment that is true to the values of our schoolwide expectations: being **Safe, Kind** and **Curious**. We promote care for all individuals in the school community and this is reflected in our support of students to learn to understand and regulate their own behaviour.

All of Doxa School's policy and procedural documentation is underpinned by our **5 key Pillars of the Doxa School Model: Student-Centred Approach, Trauma Sensitive Practice, Social and Emotional Literacy, Choice Theory and our Catholic Identity** and complies with the requirements of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd. This Policy can be found on our school website www.doxabendigo.catholic.edu.au and applies to all community members of Doxa School Bendigo.

These pillars inform the **Basic Beliefs** we have regarding this Complaints Management Policy, being that all members of our community:

- Will be treated with kindness, courtesy and respect
- Will be listened to
- Will feel they can express feelings and opinions confidently
- Will feel secure and safe in the school environment
- Will know that procedures will be fair, implemented consistently and respect the rights of all involved
- Will be valued for their individuality, including race, gender, sexuality, culture, physical or intellectual diversity
- Will be able to learn in a safe and supportive environment

Purpose

This Complaints Management Policy:

- outlines the process and guiding principles for managing complaints at Doxa School
- ensures that we meet our obligations to respond to complaints in a fair, equitable and efficient manner

- informs parents/carers/guardians, students and the school community how to lodge a complaint with Doxa School

The school has established procedures for responding to complaints which reflect the expectations of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd as described in the Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd 'Complaints Management Framework' (available via the Doxa School website). These procedures are contained within the document 'Procedures for Making a Complaint' which are available on the Doxa School website, or in hard copy from Doxa School.

Scope

This policy applies to complaints (other than those from staff) that should be able to be resolved by Doxa School and mostly relate to:

- general issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the 'Positive Behaviours Support Policy', including incidents of bullying or harassment (see 'Bullying and Harassment Policy')
- learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- communication with parents/carers/guardians
- school enrolments
- general administrative issues

This policy, and the accompanying document 'Procedures for Making a Complaint' (available via Doxa School website), also provide guidance regarding the procedures to be followed when:

- complaints cannot be resolved by Doxa School and are referred to Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd from the school community
- the school seeks assistance from Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd to resolve a complaint from a parent/carer/guardian or student
- a complaint is referred from an external authority

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, Doxa School and Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd will follow their procedures for responding to allegations of child abuse under various reporting obligations as outlined in the Child Safety Framework.

Principles

Doxa School commits to addressing complaints or concerns within a framework of dignity and respect. 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
- If the complaint goes to Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd, Doxa School 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 complaint resolution process
- the complaint resolution process will seek to achieve the restoration of good and respectful relationships

Policy Statement

The nature of the complaint will determine the most appropriate way to deal with it. Where a complaint comes direct to Doxa School, the staff member involved will consider the matter, consult with another staff member (with the complainant's permission) and determine the most appropriate action that is likely to achieve prompt resolution. To assist this process, Doxa School will follow these principles:

- ✓ Confidentiality will be maintained as far as reasonable
- ✓ Complaints will be 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 (generally within four weeks)
- ✓ Complainants will be informed if there is any change to the timeframe for dealing with their complaint
- ✓ Doxa School will attempt to address all complaints, but 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. Anonymous complaints will be recorded in the same manner as other complaints
- ✓ 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
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Follow our procedures for responding to complaints with the expectation that most complaints are able to be managed initially by Doxa School
- ✓ Doxa School's 'Complaints Policy' and 'Procedures for Making a Complaint' are available via our website, or in hard copy from the school

Complaints not covered in this Policy

The information provided in this policy is to assist parents/carers/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 directly to the Principal.

Complaints about teachers can also be reported to the *Victorian Institute of Teaching* (VIT- 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

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 (if they are not involved directly) may help to determine the appropriate course of action in these circumstances.

- **Complaints against the Principal of Doxa School (other than allegations of child abuse)**

Complaints involving the Principal of Doxa School should be made to Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd. This can be done via complaints@ceosand.catholic.edu.au or telephoning 03 5443 2377.

- **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 Doxa School, the complainant should contact and seek advice from Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd from the 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. Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd will also notify the relevant school governing body of the Religious Institute to ensure that the complaint has been referred and investigated.

Reviewed by Principal July 2021