RESOLVING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS AT SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

De La Salle Senior College, Cronulla is a Catholic School committed to living the Gospel values of justice, love and reconciliation.

We aim to:
- Develop a positive and collaborative relationship between home and school.
- Welcome and value diversity of opinion.
- Inform the staff of the changing needs of students and families.
- Have clear and open communication within the community.

The school acknowledges that parents and caregivers can sometimes have concerns about school related issues. The resolution of these concerns is vital to the well being and success of our community.

At our school we recognise that parents and caregivers must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns & complaints in a supportive conciliatory environment. These guidelines have been developed collaboratively within the context of the Vision Statement for Sydney Catholic Schools\(^1\)

THE SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to concerns of parents and caregivers about:

- Children’s learning, behaviour and welfare.
- School organisation and management.
- Student health and safety issues.

Certain matters concerning Child Protection or other areas covered by specific legislation will be referred immediately to the relevant external agency.

The resolution of conflict in every school community is vital to the well being and success of the school community.
YOUR RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Most concerns should be able to be resolved informally.

Any parent or care-giver has the right to raise a concern and have it responded to promptly, fairly and without fear of repercussions, according to principles of procedural fairness.

Parents/ Caregivers are encouraged to contact the College (through a note in the student diary, by letter or by telephone) to raise a concern. The appropriate staff member will contact the parents/caregivers as soon as practicable.

Parents/ Caregivers who come to the school must report to the College Office to ask for an appointment to see the appropriate staff member. Details regarding the matter will be taken at this time. Parents/ Caregivers should never directly approach students or staff members. Confidentiality will be respected and maintained by all parties involved.

At all times matters are best resolved in a calm and polite manner.

What is the process?

Some key elements of the policy include:

- **Generally, issues involving an individual child should be raised first with the appropriate teacher or Year Coordinator**
- Where the issue involves the class teacher and the complaint is unable to be resolved directly with him/her the matter should be taken up, at the appropriate level, with the Subject Coordinator, Curriculum Coordinator or Assistant Principal.
- Matters concerning school policy or management should be directed to the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- The guidelines contain clear timeframes for resolution.
- Where a matter cannot be resolved locally, it will be managed by Regional Catholic Education Office.

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PATHWAY FOR RESOLVING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS AT SCHOOL

Parent/ Caregiver has a concern related to issues including –
- Children’s learning, behaviour and welfare
- School organisation and management
- Student health and safety

OR

Parent/ Caregiver has a concern that may be of a –
Child protection or Serious legal nature

Step 1. Where possible try to deal with the matter informally with the person subject of the concern

Step 2. Subject or Year Coordinator

Step 3. Curriculum Coordinator

Step 4. Assistant Principal

Step 5. Principal

Step 6. The Regional Office

A concern should not be brought to this step unless every effort has been made to resolve it at the local level or if the concern is about the conduct of the Principal.

The Regional Office has its own processes and procedure in place to deal with concerns and complaints of parents including appeals.

OR

If the Concern relates to the conduct of a member of the school community

OR

If the concern relates to the conduct of the Principal

Outside authorities (eg Police, Dept Community Services, The Ombudsman) will be involved as necessary in serious matters.