

St Margaret's Communication & Grievance Policy

2019



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1 RATIONALE

St. Margaret's School aims to promote a community, family environment that supports the learning and development of students. It is important that every member of the community, including staff, parents and students, are contributors to the building of the school community.

In any community, there are times when members feel a need to raise their concerns. Frequently such concerns are resolved informally, but there may be occasions when a member wishes to make a formal complaint. As a community, all members have a right to be heard and treated with respect and courtesy, and this policy sets out the ways in which we, as a school community, will respond and resolve concerns.

Positive, clear and effective processes for resolving grievances between the school and community members can assist in building strong relationships, dispel anxiety, and ultimately provide students with a settled and happy learning environment.

2 PURPOSE

To provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment.

To resolve concerns fairly, efficiently, consistently and promptly.

3 IMPLEMENTATION

- All concerns, queries and formal complaints will be responded to within a reasonable time frame of the concern, query or formal complaint being raised.
- All communications will be confidential unless otherwise agreed.
- All formal complaints, the actions taken to resolve them and outcomes of those actions will be fully documented.
- A person who has made a formal complaint may withdraw it at any time. The withdrawal should also be in writing.
- If a formal complaint is made against a person, that person will be informed of the nature and content of the complaint and have the right to respond.
- We believe that it is best if formal complaints are resolved at a local level, but if this is not possible, then the complaint can be referred to other authorities.
- No one will be victimised as a result of making a formal complaint.
- A person who has made a formal complaint has the right to be represented and supported by another person e.g. his/her union, work colleague, friend or other person of his/her choice.
- The principal will exercise his/her judgement as to whether or not they will act upon anonymous complaints.

Note:

*RPC – Regional Principal Consultant

*RM – Regional Manager

* PP – Parish Priest

*REC – Religious Education Co-ordinator

4 INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

At St Margaret's School, we believe that the relationship between the home and the school is a very important part of ensuring that children are happy, secure and open to learning. We recognise that parents and teachers need to work closely together to provide the best educational opportunities for their children. We encourage you to discuss your child's progress with his/her teacher and to let us know if you have any concerns, so that we might work together to resolve these as promptly and effectively as we can. The staff at St Margaret's School are committed to resolving any issues that parents might have regarding their children and will discuss with you actions that might be taken in regard to your concern.

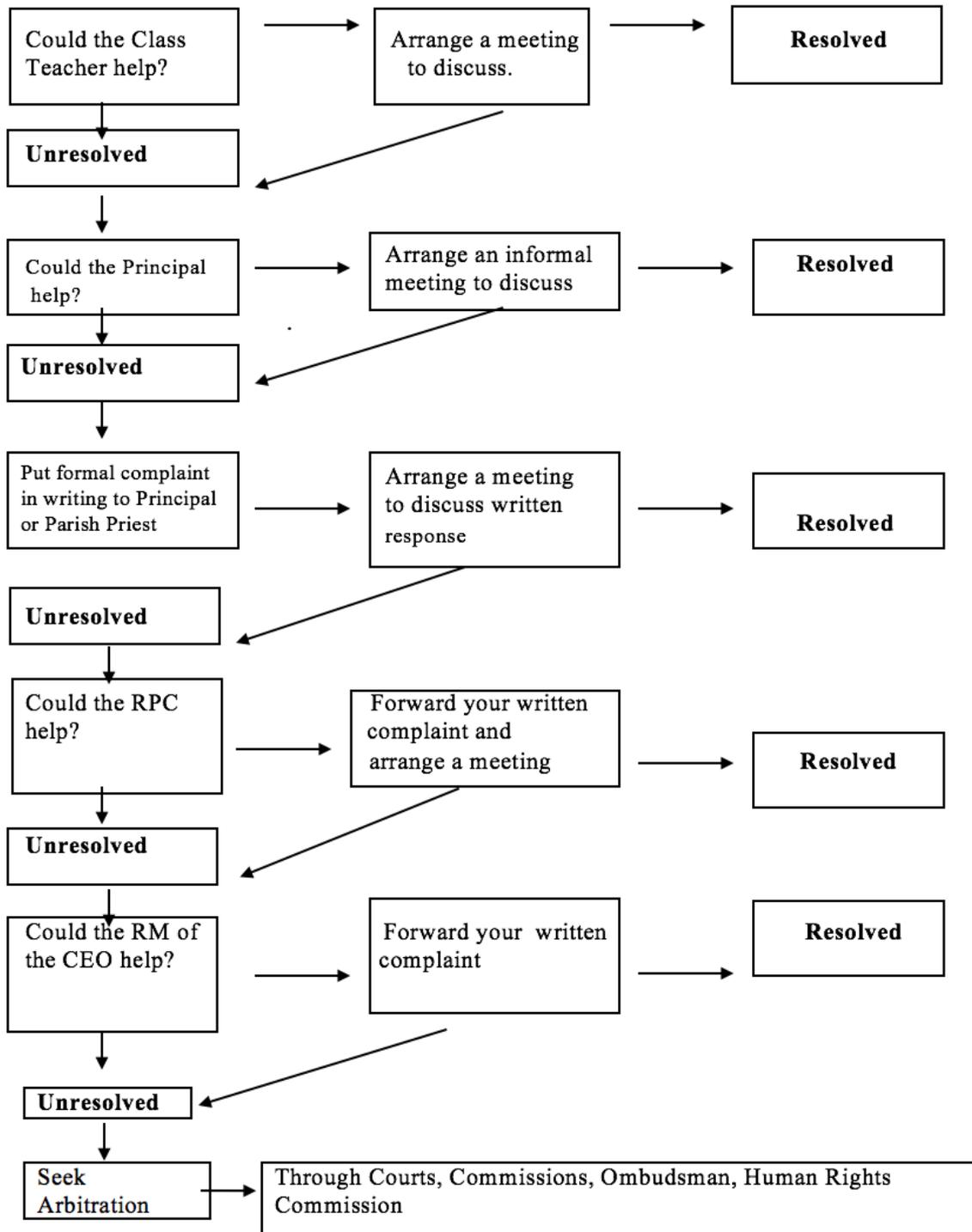
4.1 *What to do if you have a Problem:*

- Try to identify the problem clearly before contacting the school. If there is more than one problem, list them to ensure that the extent of the problem is clear to the school. Decide whether the problem is a concern, enquiry or formal complaint. This will help you to decide the correct approach.
- Make an appointment to meet with your child's class teacher or appropriate staff member. The best way to do this is to contact the school office to arrange a mutually convenient time for a telephone call or meeting with the teacher or staff member.
Please Note: Teachers are in class from 8.30 am each morning. Unless the matter is urgent this is not an appropriate time.
- Try to stay calm when discussing your concern. Even if you don't feel it, being calm will help you get your concerns across more clearly than if you are upset or angry. It may help to take someone with you.
- If you feel that the matter has not been resolved after your initial meeting with the class teacher or other staff member, or if you have a complaint about the teacher or staff member, you are entitled to make arrangements to meet with the Principal.
- If the matter has not been resolved after your meeting with the Principal, you may make a formal complaint in writing to either the Principal or the Parish Priest.
- The Principal or Parish Priest will respond in writing to your formal complaint and, if appropriate, may schedule a further meeting with you to discuss the response.
- If, after receiving the written response (and/or having a follow up meeting) you feel that the matter has still not been resolved, you may send your complaint in writing to the Regional Principal Consultant for Western Area at the Catholic Education Office.
- If the matter still has not been resolved, you may notify the Regional Manager of Catholic Education stating your concerns in writing. If no resolution has been achieved, the Director will arbitrate after thorough examination of the issue.
- If matters still remain unresolved, as a last resort parties might seek conciliation and/or legal process.

NB: The VRQA and the Secretary of the Department of Education **do not** deal with complaints within the Catholic Education system.

4.2 Flow Chart for Parents

(Mediation provided at appropriate time and/or upon request at any stage of the process)



5 INFORMATION FOR THE COMMUNITY

At St Margaret's School, we believe that the relationship between the community and the school is a very important part of ensuring that we provide a happy and secure environment. We encourage members of the community to let us know if you have any concerns so that we might work together to resolve these as promptly and effectively as we can.

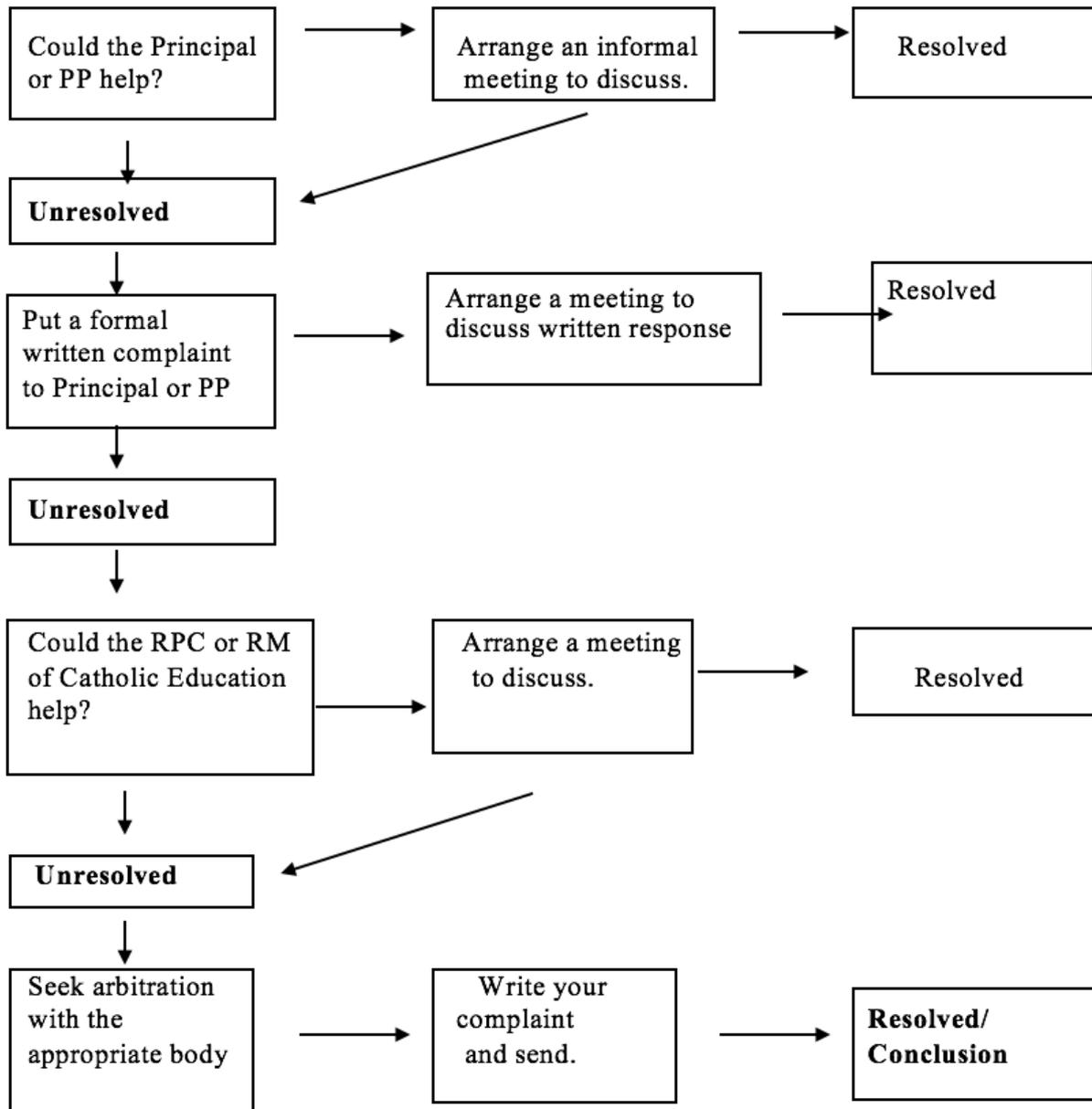
5.1 *What to do if you have a Problem*

- Try to identify the problem clearly before contacting the school. If there is more than one problem list them to ensure that the extent of the problem is clear to the school.
- Decide whether the problem is a concern, enquiry or formal complaint. This will help you to decide the correct approach.
- Make an appointment to meet with the Principal or Parish Priest. The best way to do this is to contact the school office to arrange a mutually convenient time for a telephone call or meeting.
- Try to stay calm when discussing your concern. Even if you don't feel it, being calm will help you get your concerns across more clearly than if you are upset or angry. It may help to take someone with you.
- If you feel that the matter has not been resolved after your meeting with the Principal or Parish Priest, you may make a formal complaint in writing to the Principal or Parish Priest.
- The Principal or Parish Priest will respond in writing to your formal complaint and, if appropriate, may schedule a further meeting with you to discuss the response.
- If, after receiving the written response (and/or having a follow up meeting), you feel that the matter has still not been resolved or if you have a formal complaint about the school, its staff or students, make an arrangement to meet with, or send a written complaint to the St Margaret's Regional Principal Consultant at the Catholic Education Office.
- If the matter still has not been resolved, notify the Regional Manager of Catholic Education stating your concerns in writing. If no resolution has been achieved, the Director will arbitrate after thorough examination of the grievance and related issues.
- If matters still remain unresolved, as a last resort parties might seek conciliation and/or legal process.

NB The VRQA and the Secretary of the Department of Education do **not** deal with complaints within the Catholic Education system.

5.2 Flowchart for Community Members

(Mediation provided at appropriate time and/or upon request at any stage of the process)



6 INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

At St Margaret's School, we believe that it is important that everyone feels happy and safe at our school so that the best learning can take place. We believe that everyone, staff and students, need to work closely together to provide the best educational opportunities for you.

Student Wellbeing Program:

The Student Wellbeing program focuses on the social and emotional development of students and helps teach strategies for dealing with everyday challenges. As part of this program, the School has appointed a Student Wellbeing Co-ordinator and has also implemented some steps and "Consequences" approach for dealing with behavioural issues.

Students may also have other concerns that require a different solution. If you have a problem, a concern or a complaint, we encourage you to speak to someone about it and we have provided some steps that you might work through to help you do this.

6.1 *What to do if you have a Problem*

- Try to identify the problem that is upsetting you. If there is more than one problem, list them so that you are clear about what you feel or need.
- If you feel you can talk to the person you are having the problem with, talk to that person about it.
- Try to stay calm when discussing your concern. Even if you don't feel it, being calm will help you get your concerns across more clearly than if you are upset or angry.
- If you feel uncomfortable speaking to the person, or your talk with the person does not solve your problem, talk to a teacher or your parents about your concerns and ask them to help you deal with it. They will often be able to give you good ideas on how to cope with it and will help you. You should explain:
 - Who was involved
 - What happened
 - What you did
 - What you believe was unfair and unjust
- Work with the teacher and/or your parents to decide what should be done to help you.
- If you still do not feel that the matter has been solved, make an appointment with your parents to talk to the Principal.

6.2 Flowchart for Students

(Mediation provided at appropriate time and/or upon request at any stage of the process)

