RATIONAL
As a school with a Catholic ethos, committed to Gospel values, Stella Maris has both a desire and responsibility to ensure that our school environment is a happy, welcoming and inclusive one where everyone can feel accepted and valued. However, in any normal community, there are times when people raise problems or complaints. Frequently such problems are minor and are resolved informally but sometimes there are occasions when a person wishes to make a formal grievance. This policy sets out the ways in which we as a school community will respond and resolve complaints.

AIMS

- To provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment.
- To resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, consistently and promptly.

Principles that will guide a response:

- Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and courtesy.
- Everyone at Stella Maris is aware of their rights and responsibilities, including a right to have grievances resolved.
- Everyone is aware of and have access to grievance procedures.
- If a 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.
- Discussions of complaints are confidential.
- Complaints may be made verbally or in writing.
- All complaints, the actions taken to resolve them and outcomes of those actions will be fully documented.
- A person who has made a complaint may withdraw it at any time. If the complaint is in writing, the withdrawal should also be in writing.
- We believe that it is best if 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 taking out formal grievance.
• At the formal stage, a person who had made a 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.
• If deemed appropriate and/or necessary, process of mediation may be available if a complaint is not satisfactorily resolved.
6.17.1 Making A Complaint: Information For Parents

RATIONALE
At Stella Maris, 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 let us know if you have any concerns so that we might work together to resolve these as promptly and effectively as we can.

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 complaint. This will help in finding a solution.

• Make an appointment to meet with your child’s class teacher. The best way to do this is to contact the school office to arrange a mutually convenient time for a telephone call or meeting.

• If you do not feel after your meeting that the matter has been resolved or if you have a complaint about the teacher or another staff member, make arrangements to meet with the Principal or Assistant Principal.

• 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.

• Remember, the staff at Stella Maris is 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.
• If you still do not feel that the matter has been resolved or if your complaint is about a very serious matter, send your complaint in writing to the Principal.
• If you feel your complaint has still not been resolved, send a copy to the Regional Director from the North West Catholic Education Office in Ulverstone.
• If the matter has still not been resolved, notify the Director 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 unsolved you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation and other government commissions such as Human Rights Commission etc. These might entail some financial cost to you.

Note: The School Registration Board or the Secretary of the Department of Education do not deal with complaints within the Catholic Education system.

When you make a complaint:
• If a complaint is made against a person, that person will be informed of the nature and content of the complaint and will have the right to respond.
• Discussions of complaints are confidential.
• Complaints may be made verbally or in writing.
• All complaints, the actions taken to resolve them and outcomes of those actions will be fully documented.
• A person who has made a complaint may withdraw it at any time. If the complaint is in writing, the withdrawal should also be in writing.
• No one will be victimised as a result of taking out a formal grievance.
• At the formal stage, a person who has made a complaint has the right to be represented and supported by another person e.g. a friend or other person of his/her choice as a support person.
• A process of mediation may be available if a complaint is not satisfactorily resolved.
Contact the class teacher

Arrange a meeting and discuss

RESOLVED

UNRESOLVED

Contact the Assistant Principal

Arrange a meeting and discuss

RESOLVED

UNRESOLVED

Contact the Principal

Arrange a meeting and discuss

RESOLVED

UNRESOLVED

Contact the School Consultant

Arrange a meeting and discuss

RESOLVED

Contact the Director of Catholic Education

Write your complaint and send

RESOLVED/CONCLUSION

If matters still remain unresolved you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation and other government commissions such as the Human Rights Commission etc. These might entail some financial cost to you.
Mediation is an option at any stage if the complainant and the person to whom the complainant is directed so agree. Normally mediation is facilitated by the Senior School Consultant.
6.17.2 Making A Complaint: Information For Students

RATIONALE
At Stella Maris 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. 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.

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 and if their behaviour is upsetting you, tell them to stop.
• Bring up the issue at your next class meeting.
• If you do not feel that you could do this or if your talk with the person does not solve your problem, talk to a teacher about your concerns and ask them to help you deal with it. Your teacher 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 or unjust
• Try to stay calm when discussing your problem or 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.
• Work with the teacher to decide what should be done to help you.
• Talk to your parents about the problem.
• If you still do not feel that the matter has solved, make an appointment to talk to the Assistant Principal at Stella Maris who deals with student problems.

• If you still do not feel that the matter has been solved, make a time to talk to the Principal about your concern.

Remember:

• Sometimes the person helping you will need to speak to someone else so that the problem can be solved. You need to let that person know that you are comfortable with that.

• You can bring a friend, parent or a teacher to support you when you need to talk about the problem.

• No one will be allowed to pick on you or hurt you because you are making a complaint.

• If you want to, you can write out your complaint in a letter instead of talking about it, but the person helping you will need to speak to you later.
A Student’s Guide To Making A Complaint

Can you cope with this yourself?

Discuss your complaint with the person involved.

ACTION WORKED

ACTION DID NOT WORK

Talk it over with your parent

Could a Teacher help?

Talk over your complaint with a teacher and ask for help

ACTION WORKED

ACTION DID NOT WORK

Talk it over with your parent

Could the Assistant Principal help?

Talk it over again and ask for help

ACTION WORKED

ACTION DID NOT WORK

Talk it over with your parent

Could the Principal help?

Make an appointment to discuss your complaint with the Principal

ACTION WORKED
If matters still remain unresolved you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation and other government commissions such as Workplace Safety, Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Commissions. These might entail some financial cost to you.

Mediation is an option at any stage if the complainant and the person to whom the complaint is directed so agree.