 <p>Our Lady of Grace School</p>	Policy	DISPUTE AND COMPLAINT RESOLUTION POLICY
	Policy Area	Catholic Community
	Originally released	2017
	Review due date	2020

RATIONALE

Our Lady of Grace School community seeks to create genuine communities. Such communities are always founded upon shared commitment to the common good (Mandate, para 6). On occasions there may be disagreement with a decision, and a dispute or complaint may arise within a school.

The interactions and protocols of Our Lady of Grace School emphasise the sacredness of human life and the dignity of the individual. The School is committed to providing a considered response to any informal or formal dispute between any parties, or their action, directly associated with the school.

“The Director General of the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the school observes the registration standards, including the standard about its complaints handling system. Any student, parent or community member is entitled to contact the Director General with concerns about how the school has dealt with a complaint. Information is available on the Department of Education website. While the Director General may consider whether the school has breached the registration standards, she does not have the power to intervene in a complaint or override the school’s decision.”

PRINCIPLES

1. Our Lady of Grace School is committed to providing an environment that is safe for its employees, students and parents.
2. Complainants are personally responsible and liable for the content of their complaints.
3. All decisions are to reflect the paramount importance of the student(s).
4. Any person may complain orally or in writing about any matter arising from the operations of Our Lady of Grace School.
5. It is preferable that the complainant is verifiable. However, if a complaint or any other information of unknown origin (i.e. anonymous) provides information that would cause the Principal concern, it should be considered by the Principal so that they can determine the appropriate course of action.
6. Disputes and complaints will be managed in accordance with the Principle of Subsidiarity, which requires that nothing should be done by a higher authority, agency or level that could be done as well or better by a lower one.
7. Disputes and complaints, and the resolution of such, contribute to continuous learning and improvement so that the potential and opportunity for incidents to be repeated are minimised.

8. Information in a complaint should only be disclosed to those parties who have a need to know in order to investigate and resolve the complaint.

9. Once a decision has been made, parties may request a review of the decision in accordance with the Procedures, including escalating the dispute or complaint to the Executive Director of Catholic Education in Western Australia.

PROCEDURES

1. The Principal will provide parents and staff with the information and process for dealing with a dispute.

2. A dispute or complaint can be made by any person regarding the provision of education depending on the nature of complaint it should be made in writing. If the complaint is anonymous it should be assessed.

3. Where there is a policy statement that is appropriate to the complaint, that policy shall be followed, for example:

a) Bullying and Harassment

b) Dealing with Bullying and Harassment (Students)

c) Termination of Staff Members – Incompetency or Misconduct

d) Child Abuse

e) Student Enrolment

f) Exclusion of Students for Disciplinary Reasons

g) Selection of Appropriate Texts in Catholic Schools.

4. If the dispute involves an employment issue, the prescribed process in the relevant Enterprise Bargaining Agreement or Award shall be followed.

5. In the first instance, the resolution of a dispute or complaint should be undertaken between the immediate parties involved. Only after attempts at this level are exhausted should the matter be referred to the next level.

6. Parties may involve a support person to assist in resolution.

7. Should the immediate parties involved fail to reach a resolution, then it can be referred to the next level.

8. The Principal is responsible for undertaking a procedure to resolve any dispute or complaint within the school. And should be mindful of the wider effects of the dispute or complaint.

9. The Principal may call on outside mediation, including the Employment and Community Relations Team of the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEWA) to assist in the resolution of a dispute or complaint.

10. It is the responsibility of the Principal to attempt to reach a resolution between the parties where possible. And to maintain appropriate records.

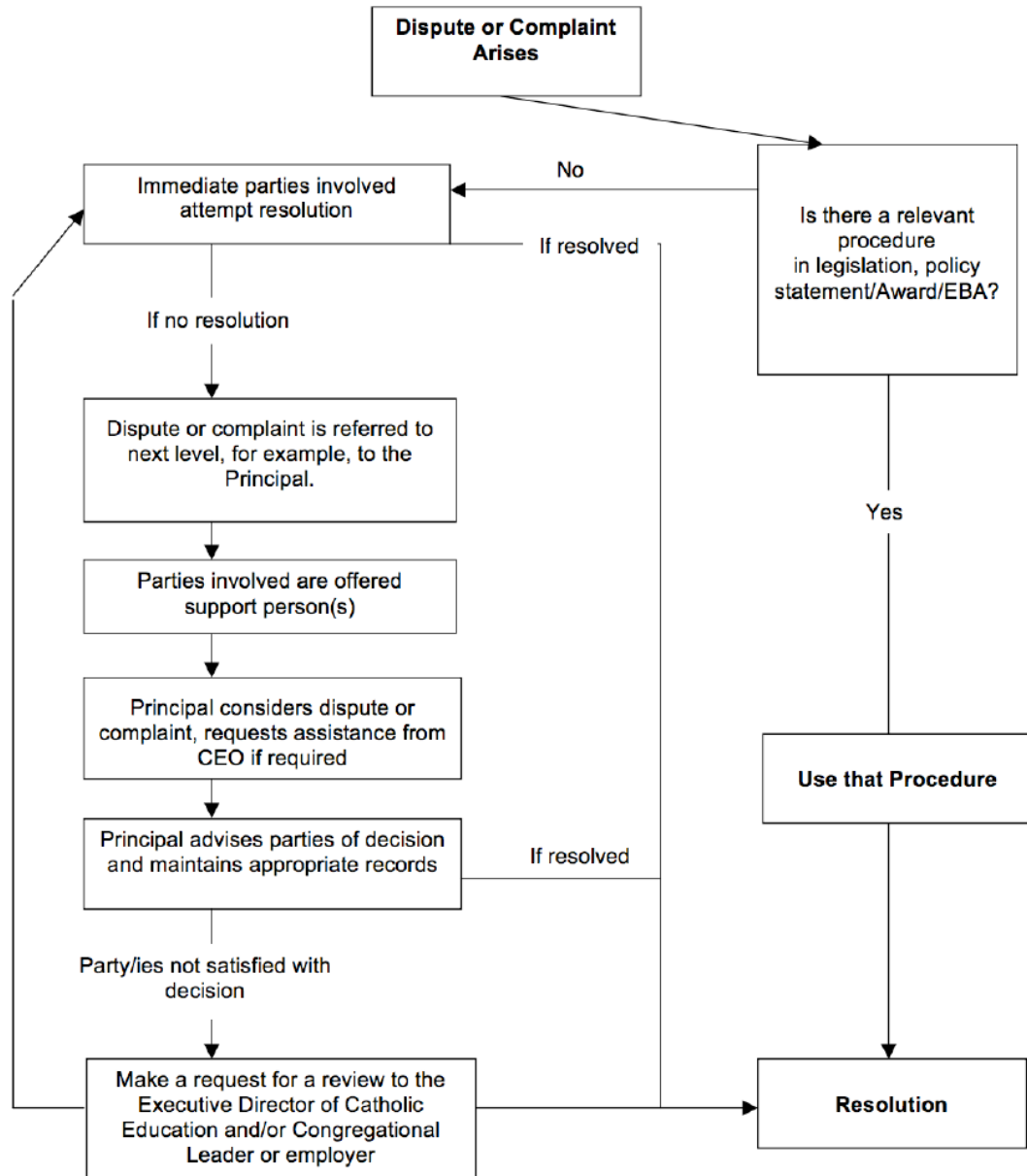
11. If failing to reach a resolution by agreement, the Principal shall make a decision. The Principal shall inform the complainant and relative parties of the outcome of their decision.

12. Any party may appeal the Principal's decision, in writing, to the Executive Director of Catholic Education.

13. The Executive Director of Catholic Education shall appoint an Investigating Officer. The parties to the dispute or complaint shall be notified of the findings of the appeal.

14. Where a dispute or complaint involves the Principal, the matter may be referred directly to the Executive Director of Catholic Education.

Flowchart for Dealing with Disputes and Complaints



Note: An individual has the right to make appeal to the Minister for Education with regard to a dispute or complaint (School Education Act 1999). An appeal will only be heard on a breach in process and will not be a re-examination of the merits of the case.