

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES MANAGEMENT POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (DOSCEL) *Complaints and Grievances Management Policy* (Policy) establishes the rights of all students for there to be a trusting and cooperative relationship between parents/guardians/carers and DOSCEL.

Complaints are an important way for school communities to provide information and feedback to the DOSCEL schools and DOSCEL Office. DOSCEL recognises the right of parents/guardians/carers or students to make a complaint and its responsibility to provide a framework within which efforts can be made to address matters raised in complaints. It is DOSCEL's belief that complaints are best handled at the DOSCEL School in an environment where individuals feel able to speak up about issues concerning the education of their children.

An effective complaint-handling system has a clear process for resolving complaints, treats people fairly, is timely, and provides those involved in a complaint with a fair opportunity to respond to issues and to present their views.

While DOSCEL is the governing body, all schools are empowered in the first instance to manage grievances and complaints at DOSCEL school level. The DOSCEL Office can provide support services and legal advice (where required) to school communities in managing complaints.

2.0 PURPOSE

This Policy ensures that:

- Parents, guardians, carers and students understand how to make a complaint at their school.
- DOSCEL schools and the DOSCEL Office respond to complaints in a fair, effective and efficient manner.
- Complaints processes comply with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Minimum Standards, including procedural fairness requirements.

This Policy provides the foundation for the *Complaints and Grievances Management Procedure*.

3.0 CATHOLIC MISSION

DOSCEL brings to life the mission of the Catholic Church by engaging and aligning all efforts toward the achievement of DOSCEL's vision for education: *faith-inspired educational excellence for a hope filled future*.

4.0 COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

DOSCEL holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of Catholic education. This commitment is drawn from the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ.

5.0 SCOPE

This Policy applies to the complaints made by students, parents/guardians/carers or community members in relation to DOSCEL and its schools.

This Policy does not apply to:

- responses to critical incidents emergencies.
- alleged criminal offences.
- conduct of religious clergy or other religious persons unless they are employees or Directors of DOSCEL.
- Complaints, concerns or reports relating to suspected or alleged child abuse will be managed in accordance with DOSCEL school and DOSCEL Office Child Safety policies and procedures.

6.0 POLICY OUTCOMES

- 6.1 Decisions are resolved at the most appropriate level.
- Complaints are managed and resolved at DOSCEL school level wherever possible, with DOSCEL Office support provided when required.
- 6.2 The complaints process is published on the DOSCEL website.
- Complainants can easily access information on how to make a complaint via DOSCEL website, and they can lodge complaints in person, by phone, or in writing. All actions and decisions are clearly documented with transparent reasoning.
- 6.3 Complaints are acknowledged and addressed promptly.
- DOSCEL schools and the DOSCEL Office acknowledge receipt of complaints as soon as possible and keep all involved informed of progress until resolution.
 - Complaints are handled impartially and fairly.
 - Every complaint is managed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.
- 6.4 There is no cost to complainants for making a complaint.
- Parents, guardians, carers and students can access the complaint-handling process at no cost at both DOSCEL school and DOSCEL Office level.

- 6.5 Personal information is protected.
- All personal information is safeguarded and only disclosed when necessary for managing the complaint or when required or authorised by law, including under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS).
- 6.6 Students' wellbeing is prioritised in all decisions.
- DOSCEL schools and the DOSCEL Office actively seek feedback, including complaints, and resolves all issues with the educational wellbeing of students as the first priority.
- 6.7 DOSCEL is transparent and accountable for its decisions.
- DOSCEL schools and the DOSCEL Office provide clear explanations and reasons for their decisions and are accountable for complaint-handling processes both internally and externally.
- 6.8 Complaint processes drive improvement.
- Procedures are regularly reviewed, and complaint data are analysed to identify themes and inform improvements, where needed.
- 6.9 Record-keeping meets all legal requirements.
- All complaint-handling records comply with the requirements of CISS and FVISS and the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM).

7.0 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Policy the following terms are defined as follows:

Parent, guardian or carer includes:

- A person who has parental responsibility for 'major long-term issues' as defined in the *Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)*.
- A person appointed as 'guardian' pursuant to the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)*.
- An informal carer with whom the child normally or regularly resides and who has day-to-day care and control of the child.
- A mature minor student.
- An adult student.

Complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction with an action taken, decision made or service provided, or the failure to provide a service, take action or make a decision at DOSCEL.

Directors are individuals appointed by the Bishop of Sale to serve on the DOSCEL Board.

8.0 COMMUNICATION

This Policy is available on DOSCEL website and provided to parents upon request.

This Policy is available to staff through the staff portal and staff are annually upskilled on this policy.

9.0 POLICY INFORMATION

Policy Owner	People, Culture and Safety
Approving Authority	DOSCEL Board
Assigned Board Committee	Finance, Audit and Risk
Board Approval	20 February 2026
Risk Rating	Medium
Implementation	March 2026
Review Date	March 2028

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION

Supporting Documents	Complaints and Grievances Management Procedure
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COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

The Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (DOSCEL) *Complaints and Grievances Management Procedure* (Procedure) must be followed to support the implementation of DOSCEL *Complaints and Grievances Management Policy* (Policy).

1.0 PURPOSE

This Procedure supports the implementation of the *Complaints and Grievances Management Policy* and outlines the process for receiving, responding to and resolving complaints made under that Policy.

2.0 SCOPE

This Procedure applies to complaints made by students, parents/guardians/carers or community members in relation DOSCEL Schools or DOSCEL Office.

This Procedure does not apply to:

- responses to critical incidents or emergencies
- alleged criminal offences
- conduct of religious clergy or other religious persons unless they are employees or Directors of Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (DOSCEL).

Complaints, concerns or reports relating to suspected or alleged child abuse are reported to the Principal of the DOSCEL School or to the School's Child Safety Champion. Such reports are managed in accordance with DOSCEL's and the School's Child Safety policies and procedures.

This Procedure is informed by *Complaints and Grievances Management Policy*.

3.0 CONTEXT

DOSCEL is the governing body for all Catholic primary and five Catholic secondary schools in the Diocese of Sale, we proudly serve over 18,000 students and more than 3,000 staff. Our commitment is to provide leadership, support, and essential resources to our schools, with a strong focus on child safety, sustainability, and delivering a high-quality education that aligns with our Catholic values.

4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 Managing Complaints at a DOSCEL School

- 4.1.1 DOSCEL Schools welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. DOSCEL Schools values open communication with families and community members and is committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately.
- 4.1.2 Students attending DOSCEL Schools who have a concern or complaint are encouraged to raise the issue with a trusted adult at a DOSCEL School (for example, their classroom teacher, Year Level Coordinator, Wellbeing staff, Learning or Education Support staff member).
- 4.1.3 This person takes the concern or complaint seriously and explains what steps the student can take to try to resolve the issue. Students can also ask their parent/guardian/carer or another trusted adult outside of the School to talk with the School on their behalf about the issue.
- 4.1.4 DOSCEL Schools encourage parents, guardians, carers or other members of the school community who may wish to submit a concern or complaint to:
- carefully consider the issues they would like to discuss
 - remember they may not have all the facts relating to the issues that they want to raise
 - think about how the matter could be resolved
 - be informed by checking the DOSCEL schools policies and guidelines
- 4.1.5 Parents/guardians/carers of students attending a DOSCEL School who have a complaint, in the first instance, make the complaint to the DOSCEL School, except when the complaint is about the Principal of the DOSCEL School.
- 4.1.6 Concerns in the first instance should be directed to the child's teacher or home group teacher. Where possible, school staff will work with them to ensure that their concerns are appropriately addressed.
- 4.1.7 The Principal of a DOSCEL School, is responsible for the efficient and effective organisation, management of complaint-handling processes.
- 4.1.8 Formal complaints are to be made to the Principal of a DOSCEL school in writing (by letter or email) or verbally (in person or over the phone).
- 4.1.1 The Principal of the DOSCEL school considers whether a request for information sharing under the CISS or FVISS may be appropriate, having regard to any concerns relating to the wellbeing or safety of a child or a group of children or any risk of family violence, in line with MARAM.
- 4.1.1 Complaints will be acknowledged as soon as possible (usually within two school days), and the DOSCEL school will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner.

- 4.1.2 Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Principal, Deputy Principal or delegate of the DOSCEL school may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
- 4.1.3 Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Principal or Principal Delegate of the DOSCEL School to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory for all parties.
- 4.1.1 DOSCEL Schools will complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting where appropriate within 10 working days of the complaint being raised.
- 4.1.2 If after the resolution meeting the complaint remains unresolved a DOSCEL School will work with the parent/guardian/carer to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event they would like to take further action. In some circumstances, the principal of the DOSCEL School may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
- 4.1.3 In situations where further time is required the Principal of the DOSCEL School will consult with parents/guardians/carers and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.
- 4.1.4 In support of the resolution of the complaint where required the Principal of the DOSCEL School will consult with their DOSCEL School Leadership Consultant to resolve or address the complaint. The Principal of the DOSCEL School and DOSCEL School Leadership Consultant (SLC) will engage relevant Workplace Relations Manager (IR/ER), if required, to support resolution of the complaint.

4.2 Misconduct or Serious Misconduct

- 4.2.1 All complaints of alleged misconduct or serious misconduct by a teacher or staff member are to be reported to the Principal of the DOSCEL School who informs the DOSCEL Executive Director, via the Chief People Officer, DOSCEL.
- 4.2.2 Complaints about registered teachers can also be reported to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), which is the regulator in relation to the registration and investigation of serious misconduct—including conduct which is of a physical or emotional nature—of all registered teachers in the State of Victoria. If unsure if the complaint constitutes serious misconduct by a registered teacher, contact VIT on telephone 1300 888 067 or email vit@vit.vic.edu.au.

4.3 Complaints Against the Principal of a DOSCEL School

- 4.3.1 Complaints regarding the Principal of a DOSCEL School, are to be reported to the Chief People Officer, DOSCEL, immediately.

4.4 Complaints About Privacy or Information Sharing

- 4.4.1 Privacy complaints or complaints relating to the way in which the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) or Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) are being applied are referred to the Principal of the DOSCEL School or the Chief Governance Officer, DOSCEL.
- 4.4.2 If a complaint about privacy or information sharing is not resolved by the DOSCEL School or the DOSCEL Office, it may be referred to the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner or the Health Complaints Commissioner (under Victorian law) or the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) (under Commonwealth law).

4.5 Complaints By, or On Behalf of, Students with a Disability

- 4.5.1 Students with disabilities have rights under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth), the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth) and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.) to access their education on the same basis as their peers, including the right to reasonable adjustments.
- 4.5.2 As with all complaints to which this Procedure applies, parents/guardians/carers raise any concerns or complaints regarding the treatment of a student with a disability with the DOSCEL School Principal in the first instance.
- 4.5.3 DOSCEL Schools also recognises that parents/guardians/carers of students with a disability can raise complaints or concerns regarding a student with a disability in several forums, including:
- consultation with the Principal of a DOSCEL School and any established student support group, to the relevant School Leadership Consultant. This may relate to matters arising under the Program for Students with Disabilities, including applications, Years 6 to 7 reviews, reappraisals and appeal procedures.
 - the Australian Human Rights Commission – in relation to complaints regarding compliance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) or the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth).
 - the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission – in relation to complaints regarding compliance with the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic).

4.6 Anonymous Complaints

- 4.6.1 DOSCEL Schools 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. To ensure procedural fairness, respondents have a right to know the particulars of the allegation(s) being made against them and be given an opportunity to respond to them.

4.7 Conduct of Parties During Complaint Resolution Process

- 4.7.1 When making and addressing a complaint, it is expected that parents/guardians/carers, students and DOSCEL school staff:
- show respect and understanding of each other's point of view
 - operate within applicable legislation
 - acknowledge that their goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
 - act in good faith and in a calm and courteous manner
 - recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.
- 4.7.2 If, at any point in the process outlined in this Procedure, the decision-maker considers a parent/guardian/carer or student's behaviour to be unreasonable, the decision-maker communicates in writing the basis on which it has been determined that the parent/guardian/carer or student acted unreasonably. The decision-maker also indicates an acceptable procedure for future communication with the parent/guardian/carer or student about their complaint.

Behaviour is considered unreasonable when:

- it is clearly and significantly outside the expectations of cooperation, courtesy and respect
- it calls for DOSCEL School staff resources and time unjustified by the nature or significance of the complaint
- an action or complaint is brought without merit, often to cause annoyance to another person
- it is oriented towards conflict.

4.8 Support Persons

- 4.8.1 At any point of the complaint process, a parent/carer/guardian or student can be supported by a support person. The role of the support person in this process is a supportive and enabling one. A complainant's support person may be a member of the family, a friend, a community member or a person provided through an appropriate support/advocate agency (provided the person does not receive a fee for service).

An advocate/support person's role includes:

- assistance for the complainant to clarify the issues in the complaint
- discussion of difficulties being experienced by the complainant
- assistance in the development of a cooperative and collaborative working relationship between the complainant and the DOSCEL school community

- assistance for the complainant to understand the DOSCEL School and DOSCEL Office policies and guidelines and the resolution being proposed for the complaint.

4.8.2 The complainant informs the DOSCEL School Principal (or DOSCEL Office, during any complaint escalation process) if they want to include a support person in the complaint process and provides the name of the support person, contact details and the relationship to the complainant.

4.9 Record-keeping

4.9.1 The DOSCEL School is required to comply with record-keeping obligations in relation to complaints under the CISS, FVISS and Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) (for further information, see: [Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Contextualised Guidance, Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines, Family Violence Information Sharing Guidelines, and Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework](#)).

4.9.2 DOSCEL School Principals treat parent/guardian/carer and student concerns seriously and reflects on the issues raised through complaints to, where appropriate, change their practices and improve the learning opportunities for students.

4.9.3 DOSCEL Schools maintains and publicises a fair, effective and efficient complaint-handling process, so that complaints about events or decisions at the DOSCEL School can be addressed.

4.9.4 DOSCEL Schools ensure that its school community is aware of the complaint-handling procedures, which are publicised on the DOSCEL School's website. DOSCEL Schools also ensure that their school community is aware of processes for complaint escalation to the DOSCEL Office.

4.9.5 DOSCEL Schools reviews their complaint-handling procedures regularly.

4.10 Receiving Complaints Directly from Students

4.10.1 Students are encouraged to raise concerns with a trusted adult if anything makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

4.10.2 DOSCEL School staff are expected to receive complaints thoughtfully, taking care to validate students' experiences – what may seem small to an adult might not be to a child.

4.10.3 DOSCEL Schools ensure that student complaints are managed in accordance with the relevant DOSCEL School policies (e.g. Anti-Bullying and Bullying Prevention Policy, Child Safety policies and procedures), including ensuring processes are confidential to the parties involved.

5.0 ESCALATION OF COMPLAINTS

It is not always possible to resolve all complaints to the parent/guardian/carer or student's satisfaction. Options for escalation of a complaint are detailed below.

5.1 Complaint Escalation to DOSCEL Office

- 5.1.1 When a complaint cannot be resolved using DOSCEL School's complaint-handling procedures, the Principal of the DOSCEL School seeks advice from the DOSCEL Office.
- 5.1.2 When a parent/guardian/carer or student is not satisfied with the manner in which their complaint has been treated by the DOSCEL School, is not satisfied that their complaint has been resolved by the DOSCEL School, or their complaint is about the Principal of the DOSCEL School, the parent/guardian/carer on behalf of a student contacts the DOSCEL Chief People Officer.
- 5.1.3 DOSCEL has responsibility to respond to complaints when:
- a complainant is not satisfied that the complaint has been addressed in accordance with the DOSCEL School's complaint-handling processes
 - a complainant is not satisfied that an acceptable resolution has been reached
 - the subject of the complaint relates to DOSCEL's educational policy outside the responsibility/management of the DOSCEL School
 - the DOSCEL School requests assistance to resolve a complaint
 - the subject of the complaint is the Principal of the DOSCEL School.

5.2 Actions to be taken following the receipt of a complaint by the DOSCEL Office

Following receipt of a complaint by the DOSCEL Office, the Chief People Officer (or delegate):

- 5.2.1 acknowledges receipt of the complaint as soon as possible, ensuring the complainant is aware of the complaint-handling procedures that will be used to respond to the complaint
- 5.2.2 assesses the complaint, which can result in the DOSCEL Office taking whatever action is considered appropriate to resolve the complaint, including any of the 'resolution options' described below
- 5.2.3 where necessary, seeks advice from within DOSCEL and/or external agencies to determine how a complaint should be managed and whether other avenues of appeal/redress already exist (this may include seeking specialist or technical advice from external agencies and/or DOSCEL Office to support the School in addressing the complaint or to inform DOSCEL's decision-making where a complaint involves a student with a specialist area of need)

- 5.2.4 where appropriate, considers whether a request for information sharing under the CISS or FVISS may be appropriate, having regard to any concerns relating to the wellbeing or safety of a child or a group of children or any risk of family violence, in line with the MARAM
- 5.2.5 where appropriate, informs the Principal of the DOSCEL School of the receipt of the complaint and provides an opportunity for the Principal of the DOSCEL School to respond to the issues raised
- 5.2.6 advises the complainant of any delays that may occur in the DOSCEL Office's ability to respond within a reasonable timeframe
- 5.2.7 where appropriate, provides the complainant with an opportunity to respond to the DOSCEL School Principal response to the matters raised prior to making a decision about the complaint
- 5.2.8 where necessary, actively supports the complainant with additional needs in the complaint process by providing appropriate support
- 5.2.9 provides the complainant and the Principal of the DOSCEL School with the results of the DOSCEL Office's considered view of the complaint
- 5.2.10 keeps a record of each complaint and its outcome (the complainant should be advised that a record is being maintained).
- 5.2.11 At all times, The DOSCEL Office retains discretion to manage complaints in any manner it considers appropriate, having regard to the principles of complaint management set out in the Complaints and Grievances Management Policy.

5.3 Resolution options

- 5.3.1 The DOSCEL Office takes whatever action is considered appropriate to the address the complaint, including by allowing more time for resolution at the DOSCEL School or by providing assistance to the DOSCEL School to resolve the complaint.
- 5.3.2 The DOSCEL Office allows more time for resolution at the DOSCEL School when:
 - the issues have not been raised with the DOSCEL School
 - the DOSCEL School is continuing to address the issues in the complaint
 - the issues raised are the responsibility of the DOSCEL School (e.g. school uniform, canteen shop duty)
 - the issues raised can be resolved at the school level.
- 5.3.3 The DOSCEL Office also provides assistance to the DOSCEL School to resolve the complaint, for example, when:
 - support is requested by the Principal of the DOSCEL School and/or complainant

- it is evident that there is a disruption to the learning program of the student involved in the complaint, including non-attendance at school
- the Chief People Officer is of the belief that the matter can be resolved with the support of the DOSCEL Office.

5.3.4 If the DOSCEL Office determines the action taken by the DOSCEL School is appropriate and assesses that no further action is required to address the complaint, the DOSCEL Office advises the parent/carer/guardian in writing and explains the basis upon which that conclusion has been reached.

5.4 Complaint Escalation to DOSCEL Executive Director

5.4.1 If a complaint remains unresolved after referral to the DOSCEL Office, parents/guardians/carers can request a review of process through the Executive Director, DOSCEL.

5.4.2 The DOSCEL Executive Director (or their delegate) takes whatever action is considered appropriate to resolve the complaint, including any of the 'resolution options' described above for the DOSCEL Office.

5.4.3 At all times, the DOSCEL Executive Director retains discretion to manage complaints in any manner considered appropriate, having regard to the principles of complaint management set out in the Complaints and Grievances Management Policy. The DOSCEL Executive Director (or their delegate), requires the undertaking of a review, for example, when:

- it appears that the DOSCEL School has not followed the complaint-handling procedure
- the DOSCEL School and the complainant were unable to resolve the complaint in a way that was appropriate and fair and consistent with policy and procedure.

5.4.4 The complainant is informed about the scope and timing of the review.

5.4.5 All reviews will:

- provide the Principal of the DOSCEL School with a copy of the complaint or a summary of the issues being raised in the complaint
- provide opportunities for the Principal of the DOSCEL School to explain the process followed when the DOSCEL School addressed the complaint and how the decision provided to the complainant was reached (the reviewer or DOSCEL Executive Director (or delegate of the DOSCEL Executive Director) may ask the DOSCEL School to provide a response in writing)
- provide an opportunity for the complainant to clarify and respond to the matters they have raised and to comment on the DOSCEL School's response to the complaint
- provide the Principal of the DOSCEL School with the issues raised and give 10 school days for the Principal of the DOSCEL School to respond to the

reviewer in writing, when the complaint is about the Principal

- provide recommendations for the DOSCEL Executive Director, DOSCEL (or delegate of the DOSCEL Executive Director) to consider, to resolve the complaint, once the review has been completed
- provide a response to the complainant.

5.5 Independent investigation

5.5.1 The DOSCEL Executive Director (or their delegate) arranges for an independent investigation, for example, where:

- the complaint is particularly complex
- there is a difference of opinion about the facts in relation to the complaint
- the issues raised by the complainant are serious and/or appear to be in breach of DOSCEL policy and/or procedure
- the issues raised in the complaint concern the ability of a child or young person to participate fully in their educational program
- the complaint indicates the existence of a systemic problem.

5.5.2 An independent investigation will:

- establish Terms of Reference developed by the DOSCEL Executive Director, DOSCEL (or their delegate)
- develop an investigation plan that defines the subject of the investigation
- comply with relevant privacy laws and maintains confidentiality
- provides procedural fairness
- gathers evidence, including oral, documentary and expert (technical advice)
- provides an Investigation Report to the DOSCEL Executive Director, DOSCEL, which includes a summary of the investigation, its findings and recommendations (if applicable).

5.5.3 At the conclusion of an independent investigation, the DOSCEL Executive Director (or their delegate) considers the information provided in the Investigation Report to determine the outcome of the complaint.

5.5.4 The outcome is provided to the complainant and the Principal of the DOSCEL School and to any others deemed to require a response because of their involvement in the complaint.

5.5.5 Every effort is made to ensure that there is no actual or perceived conflict of interest in the selection and appointment of an independent investigator.

5.6 Possible Outcomes of a Complaint

5.6.1 Where the DOSCEL Office or DOSCEL Executive Director (or their delegate) (as applicable) determines that the complaint is justified, advice is provided to the

DOSCEL School for action. This could include:

- an apology or expression of regret
- a change of decision
- a change of policy, procedure or practice
- a refund of payments
- the provision of counselling or other support.

5.6.2 Where the DOSCEL Office or DOSCEL Executive Director (or their delegate) (as applicable) determines that the complaint is not justified, the decision of the School is confirmed. This could include:

- an explanation of how the decision is consistent with policy and/or procedure
- an explanation that the decision taken is realistic and is supported by an external agency that specialises in the area under consideration
- an explanation that policy, guidelines and/or procedures support the decision.

5.6.3 It is not the role of the DOSCEL Office to 'sanction' the DOSCEL School and this is not a possible outcome of a complaint.

5.6.4 Due to the DOSCEL Office's obligations under privacy laws, it is not appropriate for the DOSCEL Office to disclose details of disciplinary proceedings relating to its employees. For this reason, it may not be lawfully possible for the DOSCEL Office to inform a complainant of any specific action that has been taken in relation to individuals about whom complainants have raised complaints.

5.7 Complaint Escalation to External Bodies

5.7.1 If a parent/guardian/carer is dissatisfied with the outcome or response from the DOSCEL Office, or if they feel their complaint is not being handled properly or in a timely manner, they may take their complaint to an external agency such as the VIT, Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC), the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) or the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

5.7.2 Where a parent/guardian/carer has real and substantial concerns that, as a result of raising a complaint, they may suffer a detriment and the allegations relate to corrupt conduct, they are made aware that they are able to take their complaint to an external agency such as VIT, VEOHRC, the AHRC or VRQA.

6.0 ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
School Principal	Receives and manages complaints (except complaints in relation to the School Principal)	DOSCEL Executive Director
School Leadership Consultant	Advises and supports the Principal.	DOSCEL Deputy Executive Director
DOSCEL Chief People Officer (or another appropriate delegate of the DOSCEL Executive Director)	Manages escalated complaints that are unable to be resolved at the school level.	DOSCEL Executive Director

7.0 COMMUNICATION

This Procedure is available on the DOSCEL website

This Procedure is available to DOSCEL Office staff via the staff portal and staff are briefed annually on this policy.

8.0 PROCEDURE INFORMATION

Procedure Owner	DOSCEL
Approving Authority	Principal
Risk Rating	Medium
Implementation	March 2026
Review Date	2028

PROCEDURE DATABASE INFORMATION

Supporting Documents

Complaints and Grievances Management Policy
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Behaviour Management Policy and Procedures
Child Safety Code of Conduct
Parent, Guardian and Carer Code of Conduct
Student Code of Conduct

APPENDIX 1- COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT FLOWCHART

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE			
STEPS	COMPLAINANT	SCHOOL (Principal / Delegate)	DOSCEL
1	<p>Raise a concern or complaint Student raises issue with trusted adult at school or parent/guardian/carer raises with teacher / home group teacher or lodges formal complaint with Principal</p>	<p>Receive complaint Encourage open communication and treat complaint seriously <i>Timeframe callout:</i> Acknowledge as soon as possible (usually within 2 school days)</p>	<p>Provide support to the School DOSCEL School Leadership Consultant supports Principal, where required.</p>
2	<p>Provide information Provide information (as requested) and participate in information gathering / meeting.</p>	<p>Gather information Principal / Deputy Principal / delegate gathers further information as required <i>N.B. Consider information sharing</i> <i>Consider CISS/FVISS request where appropriate, in line with MARAM</i></p>	<p>Provide support to the School DOSCEL School Leadership Consultant supports Principal, where required.</p>
3	<p>Attend resolution meeting Attend meeting (with support person if desired) and discuss resolution options.</p>	<p>Hold resolution meeting Arrange a resolution meeting where possible (4.1.3). <i>Timeframe callout:</i> Complete information gathering and hold meeting (where appropriate) within 10 working days of the complaint being raised Decision: <i>Resolved?</i> If YES: confirm outcome and close out complaint</p>	<p>Provide support to the School DOSCEL School Leadership Consultant supports Principal, where required.</p>

		If NO: provide written summary / written response and advise escalation options	
4	If unresolved: request written summary and/or choose to escalate	Seek support / escalate Principal seeks advice from DOSCEL Office Chief People Officer where complaint cannot be resolved <i>Timeframe callout:</i> If further time is required, consult with parents/guardians/carers and discuss interim solutions	Provide support to the School DOSCEL School Leadership Consultant supports Principal.
COMPLAINT ESCALATION			
5	Escalate to DOSCEL Chief People Officer When not satisfied with how the School handled/resolved the complaint, or where the complaint is about the Principal).	Request further DOSCEL advice/support Principal seeks advice from DOSCEL Office when unable to resolve.	DOSCEL assumes responsibility to respond Triggers for DOSCEL response are set out in 5.1.3.
6	Participate in DOSCEL process Complainant may be asked for clarification and may respond to the School's response before a decision is made (5.2.1–5.2.9).	Provide information to DOSCEL Principal is informed and given opportunity to respond where appropriate Decision: <i>Is the matter suitable to return to School for more time or support?</i> If YES , DOSCEL may allow more time or provide assistance Continue local resolution School continues to address issues, potentially with DOSCEL assistance (5.3.1–5.3.3).	Actions following receipt by DOSCEL Chief People Officer (or delegate) undertakes actions in 5.2.1–5.2.11 (acknowledge, assess, seek advice, manage delays, provide outcome, keep records). Resolution options applied DOSCEL may determine no further action is required and advise in writing (5.3.4), or apply resolution options (5.3).

7	<p>Escalate to Executive Director review If complaint remains unresolved after referral to DOSCEL Office, request review of process</p>	<p>Respond to review requests School may be asked to provide process explanation and/or written response</p>	<p>Executive Director review Executive Director (or delegate) manages review and may take action to resolve</p> <p>Decision: <i>Is an independent investigation required?</i> This may occur for complex/serious/systemic matters</p> <p>Independent investigation Executive Director (or delegate) arranges and considers investigation and outcomes are communicated (5.5.1–5.5.5).</p>
8	<p>Outcome received Complainant receives outcome and, where applicable, explanation of decisions and limits on disclosure</p>	<p>School action (if required) If complaint is justified, School may be advised to take action (5.6.1).</p>	<p>Possible outcomes Possible outcomes are set out in 5.6 (including apology, change of decision, change of policy/practice, refund, support).</p>
9	<p>External escalation (optional) If dissatisfied with DOSCEL outcome/response, complainant may escalate to an external body (5.7.1) and in limited circumstances may go directly to an external body where detriment is feared (5.7.2).</p>		<p>External bodies Examples include VIT, VEOHRC, AHRC and VRQA (5.7.1–5.7.2). See <i>Appendix 2 External Escalation Flowchart</i>.</p>

Note: This flowchart is a summary only. Detailed requirements and responsibilities are set out in **Sections of the procedure**