

# OUR LADY OF THE NATIVITY SCHOOL

## MUTUAL RESPECT POLICY



*Our Lady of the Nativity is a faith filled community that gives witness to, and proclaims, the Gospel teachings of Jesus.*

*Within a nurturing environment, inclusive of all its members, we uphold the dignity of the human person.*

*Through a holistic approach to education we aspire to develop lifelong learning.*

*With a commitment to social justice, a sense of purpose and hope we encourage our members to be active participants in the global community.*

*Our school is a living organism. There is no other school like ours in the world. No other school has the same complexity born of the 'lived lives' of the individuals who make up our community.*

Our Lady of the Nativity School considers all staff, students, parents, clergy and volunteers as members of the school community. Every member of our community has a role to play in ensuring that our vision is lived and strengthened. This mutual respect policy applies to all members of our community and to anyone who enters the school grounds in any capacity.

Policy creation: 2016

Review date: 2018

## **AIM**

At the core of our vision is living and witnessing the Gospels according to our Lord Jesus Christ. This is central to our Franciscan charism. We strongly believe, in accordance with the Gospels and Catholic social teaching, that upholding the dignity of the human person is integral to creating and maintaining positive relationships and the functioning of a strong community.

At the centre of all that we do is the Child. This is why our school exists – to educate children in the lived Catholic faith, to model positive, respectful relationships, to attend to their academic, spiritual, emotional and physical growth within a nurturing environment. We, school and families in partnership, are committed to the same aims for our children: a good education, to be happy at school, to learn how to get along with people, to have good friends, to be safe and to be challenged and supported so that they become the best person they can be.

Strong relationships between home and school, parents and teachers, adults and children, that are based on mutual respect and a willingness to work together are essential for our children's well-being and the health of the community.

## **VALUES UNDERPINNING EXPECTED BEHAVIOURS**

As a school community we expect that all members will uphold a high standard of behaviour that is consistent with Gospel values and our Franciscan charism. All members should provide positive role models for our students.

### **RESPECT**

Our Lady of the Nativity school strives to be a community where there is mutual respect among all members. All members of our community will be treated with respect by members of the school staff. It is expected that they will be respected in return by parents.

In our community we will not tolerate any harassment, whether physical or verbal. We will not tolerate any discrimination based on race, religion, family status etc. The school treats all members as being created in the image of God and works to uphold the dignity of all.

### **INTEGRITY**

We are committed to act honestly, responsibly and in a trust worthy manner in everything that we do and have the same expectation of all members of our community.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

High degrees of accountability apply to all members of our community – staff, parents, clergy, students and volunteers.

### **FRATERNITAS**

This Franciscan value calls us to extend a welcome to all. The concept of 'fraternitas' is bigger than community because it calls for strong relationships and interdependence for the common good. It calls for equality among all members and a willingness to work together in peace and harmony.

The functioning of a true 'fraternity' is one in which the Gospel teachings are witnessed through the actions and interactions of all.

## PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

All adults within our community have a responsibility to provide the children with positive role models both in word and action. We have a responsibility to nurture and support them at all times. Children are very perceptive and it is important that they learn positive relationships from the adults in their lives and community. Adults are seen by children to occupy a position of authority in regard to them and it is our responsibility not to take advantage of this or to involve them in issues best dealt with between adults.

Therefore, as adults within our community we should:

- Protect children from negative comments about the school or teaching staff that undermine a child's trust and confidence
- Seek appropriate avenues in accordance with school policy and procedures to resolve issues
- **NEVER approach a child directly about an issue or concern**
- Not make unwelcome or unwanted physical contact with a child or student
- Actively support the school's Behaviour Management policies and procedures.

Detailed information about child protection can be found in the following policies:

- *Child Safety Policy*
- *Behaviour Management Policy*

If the actions of a member of our School community are of an unacceptable standard or in contravention of the Child Safety Policy, you will be contacted by the school and further action may be taken by the school.

## PROTOCOLS FOR COMMUNICATION

### **Classroom issues:**

- The first point of contact is the class teacher
- The classroom teacher will communicate with the school leadership or appropriate colleague when deemed necessary.
- Parents are not to approach other students or families regarding issues at school.

### **Communication with teachers:**

- Appointments can be made by email, by phoning the school office or in person before or after school. When requesting an appointment please be prepared to provide information about the reason for the meeting.
- Please understand that trying to address issues whilst there are children and other parents in the classroom is not appropriate. Teachers are more than willing to meet with parents at an appropriate time.
- Staff will endeavour to respond to emails and phone calls in a timely manner during working hours (8:30 am to 5:00 pm). It is unrealistic to expect an immediate response but your concern will be followed up. Please understand that it is very difficult to respond to a parent during the school hours.
- The school diary can be utilised as a means of communication between home and school
- All dialogue, whether written or verbal, is to be respectful at all times.

Policy creation: 2016

Review date: 2018

Please note:

In the event that a meeting becomes disrespectful, it will be ended immediately.

Aggressive and/or abusive emails will not be responded to.

### **Communication with parents**

All staff will:

- endeavour to respond to parent communication in a timely manner
- make themselves available to meet with parents to discuss any concerns at a mutually agreeable time
- maintain records of parent communication, meetings etc
- follow up on parent concerns and address the needs of the students
- prepare a termly overview to keep parents informed of classroom initiatives and programming
- monitor and use school diaries as a means of communication
- keep parents informed in advance of changes to timetables or special events

If issues of major concerns need to be addressed the teacher will invite a member of the school leadership to attend the meeting and minutes will be taken.

Further information will be provided to parents via:

- the fortnightly school newsletter
- Tiqbiz
- Notes pertaining to special events, excursions etc
- The school website

### **PROTOCOLS FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers should:

- Attend appropriate training provided at the beginning of each year
- Have a valid Working with Children Card
- Respect the professionalism of the teacher
- Understand that Duty of Care rests with the teacher
- Maintain confidentiality
- Ensure mobile phones are switched off whilst working with children
- Understand that they may work with children other than their own child
- Never discipline a child other than to gently remind them to remain on task
- Never leave a group unsupervised
- Never be alone with a child.
- Discuss any concerns with the classroom teacher

Further information is available in the following policies:

- *Child Safety Policy*
- *Volunteer Handbook*

Policy creation: 2016

Review date: 2018

## COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

### Definition

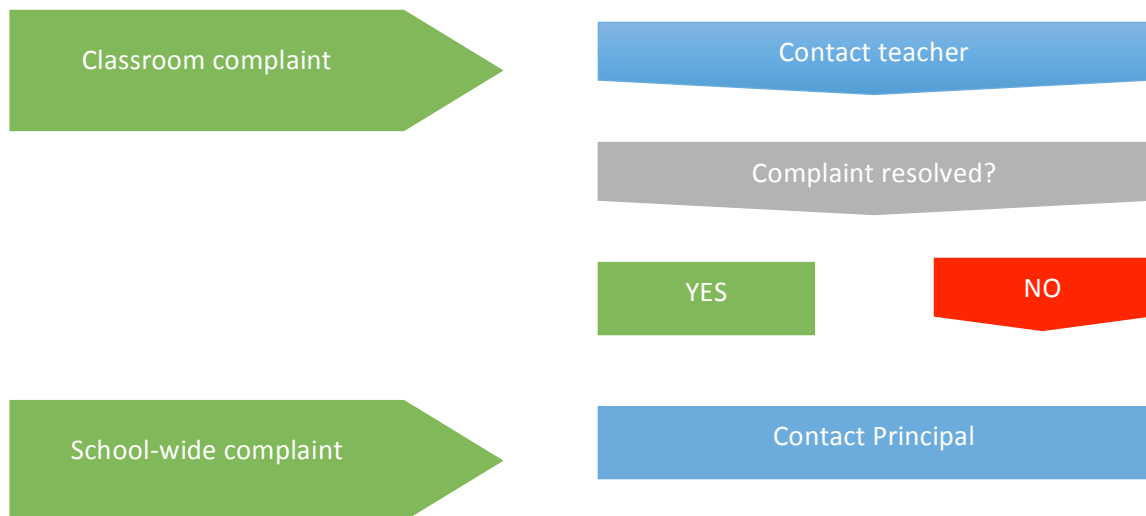
A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with an action taken, decision made, service provided or handling of an issue within Our Lady of the Nativity school.

### Guiding Principles

In receiving and responding to complaints, the following guiding principles will inform the process and actions taken

- Complaints of a school-based nature are best received and managed at the school level with all parties involved expected to act in good faith and work together with respect and openness to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- Complainants can expect their concerns to be addressed in a timely manner
- Confidentiality, protection of privacy, respect, access, dignity and impartiality will form the basis of the complaints resolution process.
- The complaints resolution process will seek to achieve the restoration of respectful relationships.
- The best interests of the school community will generally exceed those of any individual.

*Ref: CEM Policy 2.20  
School Vision*



If the issue is not able to be resolved at a school level, the CEM Northern Region may be invited to assist with the resolution of the complaint.