

# **CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY**

## **CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE (CCD)**

### **COMPLAINTS POLICY**



**CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF  
BROKEN BAY**

#### **CONTENT**

This document contains the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay (**the Diocese**) Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (**CCD**) Complaints Policy and a description of general procedures that are followed when a complaint is received. It refers to the way that the Diocese will resolve complaints made in relation to Special Religious Education (**SRE**). This Policy should be read alongside the Diocesan Management of Concerns, Complaints and Commendations Policy and the Department of Education's (**DET**) Complaints Handling Policy.

#### **APPLICATION & SCOPE**

This Policy applies to Diocesan CCD employees, Parish Priests, Parish CCD Coordinators and SRE teachers.

The Diocese is committed to open communication, ownership and transparency during the complaint or conflict resolution process. SRE teachers are expected to listen to the perspective of the public-school stakeholders and assume good intent and attempt to resolve issues at a local level in the first instance with courtesy and respect.

#### **PURPOSE AND INTENT**

The purpose of this Policy is to convey the process for the timely handling of complaints received in relation to the provision of SRE in public-schools. The Diocese will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner. Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. Internal reviews of how each complaint was managed will be conducted by a senior authority in the Diocese other than the original decision maker.

#### **STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR**

As the Approved Provider of SRE, the Diocese requires SRE teachers authorised by the Diocese to display high levels of professionalism in the complaint or conflict resolution process. This includes both the manner in which SRE teachers speak to and about a DET school (public-school), and how SRE teachers represent themselves and the Diocese. SRE Teachers are expected to comply with the Diocesan Code of Conduct Policy.

#### **DIOCESAN COMMITMENT**

The Diocese is committed to open communication, ownership and transparency during the complaint or conflict resolution process. SRE teachers are required to listen to the perspective of the public-school stakeholders, assume good intent on the part of any complainant or person providing feedback, and attempt to resolve issues at a local level in the first instance.

#### **CHILD PROTECTION COMPLAINTS**

Any complaint that falls within the Child Protection category must be reported to the public-school Principal and to the CCD Diocesan Coordinator. The DET and the public-school Principal have jurisdiction in respect of complaints that are categorised as a Child Protection complaint.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Personal information provided in the process of making a complaint is collected and used in accordance with the Diocese's Privacy Policy.

Complaints may be made anonymously; however anonymous complaints are discouraged. This is because of the inherent difficulty in investigating anonymous complaints, especially where further information might be required from the complainant.

## **RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUAL WHO IS THE SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT**

An individual who is the subject of a complaint has the right to know the particulars of the complaint, options to respond to the complaint, possible outcomes of the complaint handling process and how to appeal a decision.

## **RIGHT OF APPEAL**

SRE teachers who are the subject of a Child Protection complaint and wish to appeal the outcome will follow the DET's Employee Performance and Conduct Unit procedures.

For all other complaints, complainants (those who are the subject of a complaint) have the right to appeal the outcome determined by the Diocese. The appeal is to be received in writing (email will suffice) by the Diocese.

The appeal will be reviewed by an appropriate person in the Diocese who is not the original decision maker and who has not been involved in the original complaint handling process.

The appeal will involve the review of the complaints procedure, including the outcome.

The appeal will be concluded in a timely manner, usually within 20 working days. The outcome will be communicated to the respondent in writing.

## **ONGOING RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Diocese will:

- Take reasonable steps to prevent complainants being treated unfairly because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf;
- Ensure that the complaints process is accessible to SRE stakeholders;
- Where possible maintain confidentiality about a complaint, including after the complaint handling process has concluded. This requires everyone involved in the complaint handling process, including the complainant, to ensure that information is restricted to those who reasonably need to know. It may be necessary for the Diocese to disclose information about the complaint while undertaking an investigation or where required by law; and
- To the extent possible, offer ongoing support to those involved.

## **CATEGORIES OF COMPLAINTS**

### **1. Child Protection**

Child Protection complaints are the responsibility of the public-school Principal and the DET's Employee Performance and Conduct Unit. The Diocese will cooperate fully with any concerns a public-school may have regarding reportable conduct or allegations of abuse. It is expected that the DET is required to will follow its procedures regarding any such matter, including reporting a complaint to relevant authorities. The Diocese has a responsibility to manage risk identified as a result of the complaint by taking appropriate action to mitigate the risk.

## **2. Conduct of SRE Teacher (other than Child Protection)**

The Diocese will cooperate with any concerns a parent, student, public-school or other SRE teacher may have about the conduct of an SRE teacher from the Diocese in the classroom in relation to classroom or behaviour management, teaching strategies, incorrect use of the authorised curriculum material or the inability of the SRE teacher to teach the authorised curriculum with sensitivity or in an age-appropriate manner. The Diocese will follow its procedures regarding any such matter including appropriate action to mitigate risk.

## **3. Conduct of Student, Parent, Professional Classroom Teacher or SRE Teacher from Another Approved Provider of SRE**

The Diocese requires a public-school to cooperate and follow the DET's Complaints Handling Policy and School Complaint Procedure in relation to any concerns the Diocese or one of its SRE teachers may have regarding the conduct of a student, a parent, a professional classroom teacher or an SRE teacher from another Approved Provider of SRE, including reporting to relevant authorities. The Diocese will cooperate fully with the public-school in its investigation of the complaint.

## **4. Complaint About the Implementation of SRE**

The Diocese requires a public-school to fully cooperate and follow the Diocese's complaints procedures in relation to any concerns the Diocese or one of its SRE teachers may have regarding the implementation of SRE at a public-school. The Diocese will cooperate fully with the public-school in its investigation of the complaint.

## **CCD SRE COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES TIME FRAME**

Complaints received by the Diocese will be managed within a reasonable time frame, where possible within 20 days of receipt of the complaint. If an unforeseen delay is encountered in resolving a complaint, this will be communicated to the complainant and respondent.

The following are the procedures to be followed in the event of a complaint being received. The Diocese reserves the right to vary or modify the procedure at its absolute discretion and according to the seriousness and/or circumstances of the complaint.

### **1. Child Protection**

The CCD Diocesan Coordinator will:

#### **Receive and Acknowledge Complaint**

- Receive and acknowledge the complaint (as soon as possible within 1 working day);
- Notify Director, Office for Evangelisation;
- Notify Manager (Chancery), Office for Safeguarding;
- Notify public-school Principal (unless the complaint came via the Principal);
- Notify Parish Priest, Parish CCD Coordinator and the SRE teacher;
- Remove SRE teacher from teaching whilst complaint is investigated.

#### **Gather Information**

- Meet with public-school Principal;
- Meet with SRE teacher (subject of allegation), Parish Priest and Parish CCD Coordinator;
- Gather any relevant information pertinent to the complaint;

- Refer information to public-school Principal or DET Employee Performance and Conduct Unit;
- Refer to SRE teacher's training record;
- Consider risk.

#### **Assess and Investigate Risk**

- Assess risk around SRE teacher;
- Assess any systemic issues or concerns that have emerged (e.g. from the SRE teacher's training record).

#### **Determine Outcome and Action**

- Outcomes and actions will be determined considering the seriousness of the complaint and the risks involved;
- Take advice from the public-school Principal;
- Take advice from the DET Employee Performance and Conduct Unit;
- Consider risk management action;
- Consider any systemic issues or concerns that have emerged;
- Consider SRE teacher's suitability as an SRE volunteer;
- Determine actions;
- Determine implementation of actions.

#### **Notifications and Implementation of Action**

- Notify Parish Priest, Parish CCD Coordinator and SRE teacher of the outcome of the DET's investigation
- Notify Parish Priest, Parish CCD Coordinator, public-school Principal and SRE teacher of the outcome of the Diocese's risk assessment;
- Notify complainant of outcome
- Implement actions;
- Monitor outcomes of complaint and actions taken;

#### **Record Course of Action and Outcome**

- Maintain records;
- CCD Coordinator – complete and sign the CCD Child Protection - Review of Information Form;
- Director Office for Evangelisation – approve course of action and sign the CCD Child Protection - Review of Information Form;
- CCD Coordinator – provide the CCD Child Protection - Review of Information Form and relevant documents to Manager for Safeguarding (Chancery);
- Manager for Safeguarding (Chancery) – Store records within the Diocesan Child Protection system.

## **2. Conduct of SRE Teacher (Other than Child Protection)**

The CCD Diocesan Coordinator will:

### **Receive and Acknowledge Complaint**

- Receive and acknowledge the complaint (as soon as possible within 1 working day);
- Notify the Parish Priest and Parish CCD Coordinator;
- Notify the SRE teacher (subject of complaint);
- Remove SRE teacher from teaching until complaint is resolved, if necessary.

### **Gather Information**

- Meet with the public-school Principal or SRE School Coordinator;
- Meet with the SRE teacher (subject of complaint), the Parish Priest and the Parish CCD Coordinator;;
- Gather any relevant information
- Refer to DET 's SRE Policy and Procedures and Code of Conduct, if necessary;
- Refer to the Diocese's Code of Conduct;
- Refer to the Diocese's CCD Authorised Curriculum documents, if necessary;
- Refer to the Diocese's CCD Training documents, if necessary;
- Refer to the Diocese's CCD Authorisation Procedure including SRE teacher's authorisation card;

### **Assess and Investigate Complaint**

- Assess information gathered;
- Assess risk;
- Consider any systemic issues or concerns that have emerged;
- Assess SRE teacher's suitability as an SRE volunteer;
- Determine action.

### **Determine Outcome and Action**

- Outcomes and actions will be determined considering the seriousness of the complaint and the risks involved;
- Take advice from the public-school Principal, if relevant;
- Determine risk management action;
- Determine SRE teacher's suitability as an SRE volunteer;
- Determine actions;
- Determine implementation of actions.

### **Notifications and Implementation of Action**

- Notify Parish Priest, Parish CCD Coordinator, SRE teacher and, if necessary, public-school Principal of outcome;
- Notify complainant of outcome;
- Implement actions;
- Monitor outcome of complaint and actions taken.

#### **Record Course of Action and Outcome**

- Complete the **CCD Approved Provider of SRE Complaint Form**;
- Document complaint, assessment, interviews, phone calls, emails and discussions;
- Store records on OFE filing system.

### **3. Conduct of Student, Parent, Professional Classroom Teacher or an SRE Teacher from another Approved Provider of SRE**

The CCD Diocesan Coordinator will:

#### **Receive and Acknowledge Complaint**

- Receive and acknowledge the complaint (as soon as possible within 1 working day);
- Notify the Parish Priest and Parish CCD Coordinator, for their information;
- Refer the complaint to the public-school Principal for management.

#### **Gather Information**

- Meet with the complainant and gather information.
- Meet with public-school Principal and cooperate by providing relevant information;
- Maintain records.

#### **Provide information including reasons for decision**

- Take advice from the public-school Principal regarding outcome of complaint investigation;
- Notify Parish Priest and Parish CCD Coordinator of outcome of school investigation;
- Notify complainant of outcome of school investigation.

#### **Implement Actions**

- Implement actions that the public-school Principal may recommend (if any).

#### **Record Course of Action and Outcomes**

- Complete the **CCD Approved Provider of SRE Complaint Form**;
- Document complaint, interviews, phone calls, discussions and advice received from public-school Principal;
- Store records on OFE filing system.

### **4. Complaint About the Implementation of SRE**

The CCD Diocesan Coordinator will:

#### **Receive and Acknowledge Complaint**

- Receive and acknowledge the complaint (as soon as possible within 1 working day);
- Notify the Parish Priest and Parish CCD Coordinator, for their information;
- Refer the complaint to the public-school Principal or SRE Coordinator and work with them to resolve complaint;

#### **Gather Information**

- Meet with the complainant and gather information;
- Meet with public-school Principal or SRE Coordinator;

- Cooperate with the public-school to reach a satisfactory outcome for all stakeholders referring to the *Education Act 1990 (NSW)* and the DET 's SRE Policy and Procedures, as necessary.

#### **Provide information including reasons for decision**

- Notify Parish Priest and Parish CCD Coordinator of outcome of school investigation;
- Notify complainant of outcome of school investigation.

#### **Implement Actions**

- Implement any actions, as necessary;

#### **Record Course of Action and Outcomes**

- Complete the **CCD Approved Provider of SRE Complaint Form**
- Document complaint, interviews, phone calls, discussions;
- Store records on OFE filing system.

## **REFERENCES**

Department of Education Religious Education Policy

Department of Education Special Religious Education Procedures

Department of Education Code of Conduct

Department of Education Complaints Handling Policy

Department of Education School Complaint Procedure

Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)

Education Act, 1990 (NSW)

Privacy Act 1988

DBB CCD Authorisation Procedure

DBB CCD Authorised SRE Curriculum

## **RELATED FORMS/DOCUMENTS**

CCD Child Protection Matter – Review of Information Form

CCD Managing Child Protection Matters Process Flowchart

CCD Approved Provider of SRE Complaint Form

## **RELATED POLICIES**

Management of Concerns, Complaints & Commendations Policy

Code of Conduct

Privacy Policy

Risk Management Policy

## **POLICY REVIEW**

Review of this policy, related forms and resources will be undertaken every two years by the CCD Diocesan Coordinator in consultation with the Director, Office for Evangelisation and the Manager (Chancery) Office for Safeguarding and the approval of the Diocesan Financial Administrator.

## **REVISION/ MODIFICATION HISTORY**

Date	Version	Current Title	Summary of Changes	Approval Date	Commencement Date
30/10/18	1.	CCD Complaints Policy	New	30 Oct 2018	30 Oct 2018

#### APPROVAL DATE/REVISION SCHEDULE

**Approved by:** Emma McDonald, Diocesan Financial Administrator

**Date:** 30 October 2018

**To be Revised:** 30 October 2020