



BDSAC School Complaints Procedures

June 2017

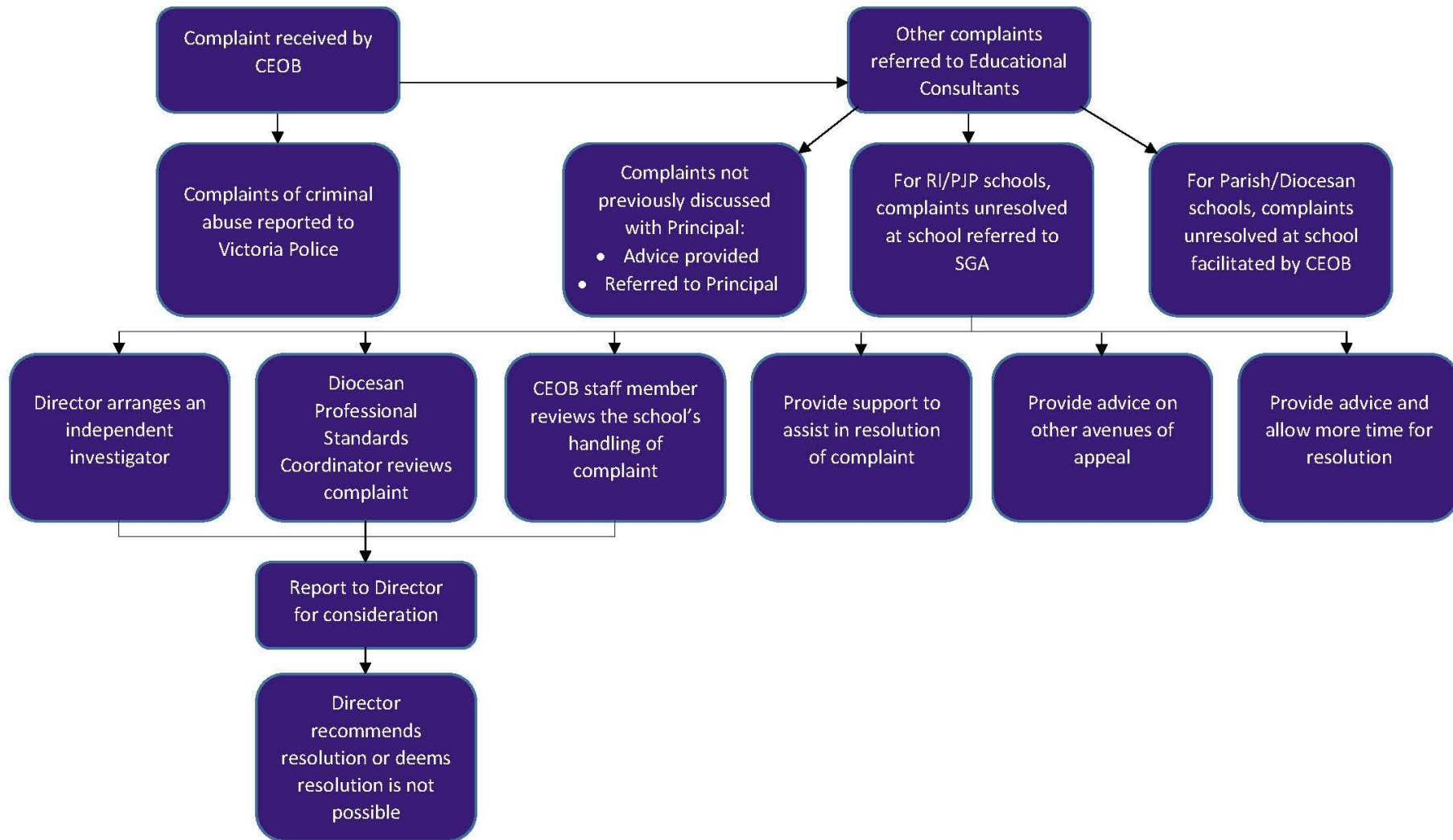
1. CEOB Complaint Handling Procedures

1. The person receiving the complaint advises the complainant that:
 - a. criminal matters should be referred directly to Victoria Police;
 - b. the BDSAC procedures for school complaints will be followed and that this policy is on the CEOB website;
 - c. their complaint will be communicated to the appropriate educational consultant who will contact them as soon as possible; **and**
 - d. there may be a short delay before the complaint can be followed up.
2. The educational consultant makes contact with the complainant, hears and makes a record of their complaint and reminds them of the diocesan protocol that complaints be handled first at the school level:
 - a. classroom concerns should be raised with the class teacher
 - b. concerns about the student's wellbeing or behaviour should be raised with the relevant school leader
 - c. school-wide concerns about policy or procedure or concerns about the performance of a teacher should be raised with the Principal.
3. Where complaints cannot be resolved at the school level:
 - a. For schools governed by a Religious Institute, Congregation or Ministerial PJP, the educational consultant will liaise with the SGA to determine who should follow up.
 - b. For parish and diocesan schools, the educational consultant will inform the principal that a complaint has been received, make an assessment of the complaint and provide advice to the complainant to assist them:
 - i. in resolving the complaint with the school;
 - ii. in understanding the school's policy; and
 - iii. in better understanding the standards that the school is required to meet.
4. If the educational consultant identifies that the school may be in breach of a policy or failing to meet the minimum standards, s/he will advise the Principal, assist the Principal to address the matter and, if the matter cannot be addressed, notify the SGA and the Director.
5. Where a complaint about a parish and diocesan school cannot be resolved with the assistance of the educational consultant it will be referred to the Director who will make an assessment of the complaint and recommend one or more of the following:
 - a. that more time be allowed for resolution at the school;
 - b. that support will be provided to assist the complainant and school in resolving the issue;
 - c. that a senior member of the CEOB staff will review the situation and make a recommendation;
 - d. that the Diocesan Professional Standards Coordinator will review the situation and make a recommendation;
 - e. that other avenues of appeal or redress already exist; **and/or**
 - f. that an independent investigation will be undertaken.

2. Summary Process for Resolution of a School Complaint

Allow more time for resolution at the school	<p>An opportunity for the complaint to be resolved at the school will occur when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the issues have not been raised with the school;• the school is continuing to address the issues in the complaint;• the issues raised are the responsibility of the school (e.g. school uniform); and/or• the issues raised are considered to be able to be resolved at the school level.
Provide CEOB support	<p>CEOB support to assist in the resolution of a complaint will occur when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• support is requested by the principal and/or the parent/carer;• it is evident that there is a disruption to the learning program of the student involved in the complaint, including non-attendance at school; and/or• the Director (or delegate) is of the belief the matter can be resolved with the support of the educational consultant or another CEOB staff member.
Undertake a review	<p>A complaint will be reviewed by a staff member of the CEOB when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• it is unclear if the school has complaint-handling procedures that are compliant with this policy;• it appears that the school has not followed the school's complaint-handling procedures; and/or• the school and the parent were unable to resolve the complaint in a way that was appropriate and fair and consistent with this policy.
Request a review by Diocesan Professional Standards Coordinator	<p>A complaint will be reviewed by the Diocesan Professional Standards Coordinator when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a complaint has been made about the professional conduct or competency of a staff member; and/or• it appears that the school has not been able to address the matter.
Identify other avenues of appeal or redress	<p>Other avenues of appeal or redress include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• criminal matters - refer to Victoria Police;• complaints about school fees – Consumer Affairs Victoria; and• complaints about a breach of contract – seek legal counsel.
Arrange an independent investigation	<p>A complaint will be referred to an independent investigator by the Director (or delegate) after considering the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the complaint complex or are there other complicating factors?• Is there a difference of opinion about the facts in relation to the complaint?• Are the issues raised by the parent serious and/or do they appear to be in breach of BDSAC policy and/or a breach of the minimum standards?• Do the issues raised in the complaint concern the ability of a child to participate fully in their educational program?• Does the complaint indicate the existence of a systemic problem?• Is there a more appropriate mechanism for dealing with the complaint?

3. Flowchart for Resolution of a School Complaint by CEOB



4. How to Make a Complaint

In relation to a School Staff Member

As soon as possible, contact the school and speak to the relevant person to explain the problem and the outcome you want. In many cases a simple phone call or visit can fix the problem.

If you are not satisfied, make an appointment to speak to the Principal.

If you are still having difficulty resolving a problem, you may want to seek assistance. Contact the CEOB on 03 5337 7135 to request to speak to the relevant Educational Consultant or in the case of a school governed by a Religious Institute, Congregation or Ministerial PJP, you should contact the Chair of the Board or SGA.

In relation to a Principal or Policy/Decision or matter of compliance

As soon as possible, contact the Principal to explain the problem and the outcome you want. In many cases a simple phone call or visit can fix the problem.

If you are still having difficulty resolving a problem, you may want to seek assistance. Contact the CEO to request to speak to the relevant educational consultant or in the case of a school governed by a Religious Institute, Congregation or Ministerial PJP, you should contact the Chair of the Board or SGA.

Catholic Education Office Contact Details

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