



CSO Operational Policy



Catholic Schools Office  
*Diocese of Armidale*

# Catholic Schools Office (CSO) Complaints Handling Policy & Guide

## Policy

The CSO Armidale welcomes feedback from all members of the System of Schools' community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously. This Complaints Handling Guide is designed to assist you to understand our complaints handling process.

### What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to CSO Armidale, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

### CSO Armidale Commitment

CSO Armidale is committed to handling complaints effectively and efficiently. To manage complaints effectively, we have established a Complaints Handling Program in line with both the international complaints handling standard (ISO 10002:2014 Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations), and the Australian/New Zealand complaints handling standard (AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations).

Our program includes the establishment of an online complaints management system which allows us to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints. Regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of rectification action, where deficiencies are identified, are key to CSO Armidale's commitment. Our internal complaints handling process are available at no cost.

## Guide

### Informal Complaints Resolution

The vast majority of issues causing concern in schools/CSO can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. In most cases these issues can be resolved through informal discussions with appropriate staff members. Even if an issue is able to be resolved informally, all staff are required to log issues through our complaints management system so we are able to identify any systemic issues arising, and take appropriate rectification action.

### How Do I Make a Formal Complaint?

If you have been unable to resolve a matter informally, or simply wish to make a formal complaint you can do so by any of the following means:

1. Sending an email to [complaints@arm.catholic.edu.au](mailto:complaints@arm.catholic.edu.au)
2. Writing a letter to CSO Armidale addressed to "The Complaints Manager".

All formal complaints will be logged into our online complaints management system and managed in accordance with the following procedure.

## **Our Internal Complaints Handling Process**

**Step 1** - All formal complaints are logged through our online complaints management system where they are screened by a nominated Complaints Officer.

**Step 2** – All valid complaints will be acknowledged in writing, as soon as practicable, and allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is our policy, where possible, to resolve all disputes within 21 days.

**Step 3** – The Complaints Officer shall conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.

**Step 4** - Following the determination, if appropriate, the Complaints Officer shall formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

**Step 5** - If the initial response is not acceptable the matter will be reviewed by the CSO Director, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The CSO Director seek to resolve all disputes within 21 days from the date that the review process is initiated. The matter will be closed if the response of the CSO Director, is accepted.

**Step 6** - All complaints received will be entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

**Step 7** - If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and, if relevant to a person against whom a complaint is made. CSO Armidale is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process.

Personally identifiable information about a complainant will only be made available for the purpose of addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) will be actively protected from disclosure.