Grievance Policy

Rationale:

At St. Patrick’s School we believe that good relationships among all parties within the school community give our children greater opportunities to succeed. It is natural that parents and community members will, at one time or another, have concerns about what happens at school. To maintain good relationships, grievances should be resolved so that all parties involved achieve satisfactory results.

Open criticism of any parties, including the use of the internet, twitter, Facebook and other digital mediums in a dispute does not support children’s education. To this end, fair communication conducted within this procedure, ensures that the rights and responsibilities of all parties are respected.

Policy Statement:

At St. Patrick’s School the resolution of grievances and disputes within our school community is vital to the wellbeing of everyone. This policy will describe the procedure for the effective and early resolution of the grievance.

Definition:

For the purposes of this policy a grievance is defined as any type of problem, conflict, concern, dispute or complaint related to the school environment, which cannot be resolved through normal communication processes.

Principles:

All disputes are to be settled in a calm and reasonable manner, with respect given to people’s dignity. Aggressive or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated. If a meeting degenerates and is no longer being conducted respectfully, it will be aborted. If suitable another meeting may be arranged for a time when parties affected have gathered their composure.

Any party to a dispute has the right to be accompanied to meetings convened to discuss a resolution of that dispute by another person in a supporting role. The role of the support person is to provide emotional support but they are not to be an advocate for the person
involved in the grievance process. Where circumstances warrant, and at the discretion of
the principal, some parties in a grievance process may be provided with an advocate to
assist them understand, and resolve, the issue being discussed.

Accurate records of proceedings will be maintained and held by the school. It is the
obligation of all parties to deal with a concern as promptly and amicably as possible. In
most cases, a reasonable time for resolution of the dispute might be one month. In some
cases where external personnel or other factors are involved, resolution might take longer.

The confidentiality of all parties involved in the grievance, and the matter at the centre of
the grievance, should be maintained at all times.

Procedures:

First contact the school:

- All personal matters, such as concerns regarding student, parent or staff relationships
  should be raised directly with the school.

- If the matter relates to an individual student and/or an issue of everyday class
  operation, the child’s teacher will be the first point of contact. Teachers are usually
  available to discuss minor issues in the fifteen minutes prior to the commencement of
  lessons, and after school, except when they have meetings to attend.

- If matters cannot be satisfactorily resolved it should be referred to the school
  Principal.

- Where the issue relates to school policy or matters beyond an individual classroom,
  the Principal should be the first point of contact.

- Grievances should be kept as confidential as possible.

- Appointments may be necessary, especially if the grievance involves staff who are
  teaching.

The following outline refers to grievances which are not easily solved or are of a more
serious nature.

1. At an agreed time, a meeting is organised with the Principal and, if necessary, other
   relevant parties.

2. Each person listens and has the opportunity to identify the issues. The issues may be
   listed and solution options generated.