



Factsheet

Being a support person

From time to time, Toowoomba Catholic Schools (TCS) may be required to conduct an investigation into the conduct of an employee or volunteer. In some cases, allegations are made regarding conduct which, if proven, may result in disciplinary action and/or other corrective action.

In all of these circumstances, TCS is committed to implementing an investigation process that is thorough, fair, timely and focused on resolution for all parties where possible.

Employees and volunteers who are subject of an investigation process have a right to be heard and to respond to any allegation before a finding or decision is made. This may involve an employee or volunteer participating in interviews with investigators, or formal meetings with their supervisor or other TCS representative.

In these situations, employees and volunteers are advised of their right to have a suitable support person of their choosing attend the interview or meeting. A support person could be, for example

- a trusted colleague
- a family member
- a friend
- a union or employee representative.
- a supervisor

The role of a support person

The role of the support person is

- to provide moral and emotional support to the employee or volunteer
- to observe the interview or meeting and take notes if desired
- to request breaks in the interview where appropriate, for example to privately discuss relevant issues
- to ask appropriate questions, and clarify any questions being asked of the employee or volunteer
- encourage the employee or volunteer to answer questions themselves
- allow the employee or volunteer to express their responses freely without suggesting answers
- remain neutral and refrain from sharing personal views or opinions during the interview or meeting.

It is expected that all parties will conduct themselves in an appropriate and respectful manner during an interview or meeting. Where a party, including the support person, is hostile or negatively impacts on the process, the interview or meeting will cease and be adjourned to a suitable time and date.

Conflicts of interest

A person may be approached by an employee or volunteer to be a support person, however may have a conflict of interest in taking on this role. For example, the person being asked may also be involved in the investigation process as a witness. This may compromise the investigation process, and therefore, where such a conflict arises, the person must not take on the role of support person. Where there is any uncertainty in this area, this should be discussed with the Professional Standards team within TCS People and Engagement Services.

Confidentiality

Support persons, like any other person involved in an investigation process, are bound by confidentiality requirements. This means respecting the privacy and dignity of everyone involved in the process by

- discussing the allegations only with the investigator/s or your support person
- sharing information from meetings or interviews exclusively with the investigator/s or your support person
- keeping all documentation and materials related to the investigation confidential.

For more information

PHONE 07 4637 1400

EMAIL professionalstandards@twb.catholic.edu.au

Version control and history

Effective date: 20/03/2025

First published: 28/08/2018

Review date: 20/03/2028