



## Factsheet

# Making a complaint

Complaints may be received by Toowoomba Catholic Schools (TCS) from a number of sources, including TCS employees, parents, students and members of the community. TCS has procedures and guidelines to address the different types of complaints that may arise. These procedures detail the process for raising the complaint, and how it will be resolved.

This factsheet has been created to provide information for people who have made, or are considering making a complaint, and the nature of the complaint means that it may be investigated under the TCS Investigation guidelines. Examples include

- A complaint about the conduct, behaviour or performance of a TCS employee or volunteer.
- A complaint about inappropriate behaviour of a TCS employee or volunteer towards a student.

### What is the investigation process?

The TCS Professional Standards team is responsible for managing and undertaking investigations in accordance with the TCS Investigation guidelines and works in collaboration with schools and colleges to do this.

After receiving a complaint that may require investigation under the [TCS Investigation guidelines](#), the first step is to gather all of the relevant information from the person making the complaint (the complainant).

TCS will appoint an investigator to conduct the investigation, who will either contact you directly, or will work with appropriate school staff (such as the school principal) to do so.

Usually, you will be interviewed in order to gather all relevant information. You may be asked a number of questions to clarify information and you will have the opportunity to ask questions of the investigator. You are encouraged to speak openly and honestly, and to answer any questions to the best of your ability. In some circumstances you may be asked to document your concerns.

Interviews are audio recorded to ensure everything that is discussed is accurately captured. Interview recordings and transcripts are stored confidentially, and you are able to access a copy of the interview recording if requested.

### Can I bring a support person to the interview?

Yes, you have the right to bring a support person to an interview if you wish. A support person must not be a person otherwise involved in the investigation, for example a person who is a witness. Support persons have a clearly defined role in an interview, which is detailed in the 'Being a support person' factsheet.

### What happens after I make my complaint?

Once the investigator has received all relevant information from you, they will determine the scope and next steps of the investigation in conjunction with the person who will ultimately be responsible for deciding the outcome (the decision maker). Dependent on the nature of the complaint, this may be the principal of a school, or the Director: Human Resources.

### Will I be kept informed as the investigation progresses?

TCS is committed to open and transparent processes, and you will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation. You may not be provided with specific information such as the names of other people being interviewed, however you will be provided with general information about the progress of the investigation.



### **Will I be told the outcome of the investigation?**

You will be informed when the investigation is concluded, and dependent on the nature of the complaint, may be provided with some details around the outcome and way forward from that point. The privacy of all parties involved in an investigation is important, therefore information is shared in a careful and considered manner.

### **Will I be identified in the investigation?**

A person making a genuine complaint should fear no repercussions for doing so. Appropriate steps are undertaken by the Professional Standards team to ensure that everyone involved in an investigation process is supported and treated fairly. Any inappropriate approach to a person as a result of making a complaint will be treated seriously by TCS.

The investigator will use the information you provide as part of the investigation report, which is a confidential document provided to the person making the decision as to the outcome of the investigation.

TCS will take all necessary steps to ensure that any investigation is conducted in a confidential manner. Whilst in most circumstances this means the name of a person making a complaint will not be disclosed, TCS cannot guarantee anonymity. Dependent on the nature of a complaint, the person making the complaint may need to be identified to allow the person responding to the complaint (the respondent) to be treated fairly. In some limited circumstances, TCS may be required by law to provide complainant information. You will be informed if this occurs.

### **Confidentiality**

People making complaints, 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

- Not discussing the allegations with anyone other than the investigator or your support person
- Not discussing information gathered from any meeting or interview with anyone other than the investigator or your support person
- Not distributing any documentation or material that forms part of the investigation process.

### **Support**

TCS recognises that any investigation process is challenging, and encourages all employees and volunteers involved in an investigation to access the support they require. TCS offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through CatholicCare, a free and confidential service accessible by calling 1300 477 433. Alternatively, you can access an alternative provider of your choosing, where TCS will meet the cost of the first three sessions and further sessions with prior approval.

Please contact the Professional Standards team at the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office should you have any additional queries regarding your rights and responsibilities as a complainant.

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### **For more information**

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