

# DISPUTES AND COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

## 1. Intent

To address and resolve disputes and complaints in a timely and fair manner in the best interests of Catholic Education Western Australia and informing continuous improvement.

## 2. Sources of Authority

*Registration Standards for Non-Government Schools in Western Australia*  
*AS/NZS 10002:2018 Quality Management – Customer Satisfaction - Guidelines for Complaint handling in Organisations*

## 3. Responsibility

Deputy Executive Director

## 4. General

**4.1** The Principal and Deputy Executive Director must address a complaint disclosing an immediate and serious risk to the safety or wellbeing of a person outside the terms of this Executive Directive.

**4.2** The Principal and Deputy Executive Director must prioritise the safety and wellbeing of a student in their community of faith in addressing and resolving a complaint.

**4.3** The Principal and Deputy Executive Director must address and resolve a complaint to their satisfaction and in accordance with Executive Directives.

**4.4** The Principal and Deputy Executive Director must address a complaint presented in any form.

**4.5** The Principal and Deputy Executive Director must address anonymous complaints to inform continuous improvement.

**4.6** The Principal and Deputy Executive Director must support a person to make a complaint in the manner described in this Executive Directive, which should include the appointment of a support person if the complainant is a staff member or student.

**4.7** The Principal and Deputy Executive Director must use complaints to inform continuous improvement in Executive Directives, CEWA processes, and staff training.

## 5. Process

**5.1** The Principal must address and resolve a complaint about the school.

**5.2** The Deputy Executive Director must refer a complaint about a school that has not been addressed to the Principal to allow the Principal to do so in accordance with this Executive Directive, unless the Deputy Executive Director assesses that the complaint would be more effectively addressed by not doing so.

**5.3** The Principal must acknowledge receipt of a complaint within three school days.

**5.4** The Principal must support complaint resolution by school staff as the first point of contact.

**5.5** The Principal must be satisfied that a complaint has been addressed and resolved in accordance with this, and any relevant, Executive Directive or process.

**5.6** The Principal should communicate with the complainant with the steps taken to resolve the complaint, or an update as to when this will occur, within ten school days of receipt.

**5.7** A Principal must refer a complaint whose resolution lies outside their authority to the Deputy Executive Director to address.

**5.8** The Principal must refer a person dissatisfied with the resolution of their complaint to the process in this Executive Directive on their option for review of the Principal's decision by the Executive Director.

**5.9** The Principal and Deputy Executive Director must suspend this process if notified by a law enforcement or external agency (other than the Department of Education) that all or part of the complaint is the subject of their inquiry, and resume when that agency authorises it.

**5.10** The Principal and Deputy Executive Director must suspend this process if continuing may put at risk the safety and wellbeing of a student, and resume when it is safe to do so.

**5.11** The Principal must notify the Executive Director of a complaint for recording on the CEWA Complaints Register.

**5.12** The Deputy Executive Director must maintain a Complaints Register in accordance with the System Agreement.

**5.13** The Deputy Executive Director must include in the acknowledgement of receipt of a complaint, and in the response resolving a complaint the following text:

The Director General of the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that Catholic Education WA (CEWA) observes the Registration Standards, including the standard about its complaints handling system. You are entitled to contact the Director General with concerns about how CEWA has dealt with a complaint. While the Director General may consider whether CEWA has breached the registration standards, she does not have power to intervene in a complaint or override CEWA's decision. More information is available here:

<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/non-government-school-concerns>

**5.14** The Deputy Executive Director must forward a complaint about school with governing body or school independently registered to the relevant non-diocesan governing body.

## 6. Director Instructions

**6.1** The Director should publish and keep updated Director Instructions to support the application and interpretation of this Executive Directive.

### **6.1.1** Director Instructions – Dispute and Complaint Resolution

## 7. Improvements

**7.1** The Principal and staff must identify any improvements to this Executive Directive and lodge requests for amendment.

## 8. Revision History

### **8. Revision History**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Major, Minor or Editorial Revision</b>	<b>Approved By</b>	<b>Description</b>
February 2021	Major	Executive Director	Launch of revised Executive Directive.
March 2023	Minor	Executive Director	Updated as part of Policy Framework

# Flowchart for Dealing with Disputes and Complaints

