



1. Purpose

The purpose of these procedures are to implement the Workplace Bullying Prevention Policy and outline the process, roles and responsibilities for reporting, responding to, and addressing complaints about workplace bullying.

2. Principles

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (**MACS**) upholds the right for all Staff to be afforded the principles of natural justice when a complaint is raised. Procedural fairness in the handling of a complaint strives to ensure:

- staff have the opportunity to raise their concerns
- staff are provided the opportunity to be accompanied by a support person during any investigation process
- all parties involved have the opportunity to be heard
- where appropriate, the use of an independent, unbiased decision-maker
- a final decision that is based on relevant evidence.

A complaint can be resolved using informal resolution processes and/or formal resolution processes. The approach taken should reflect the seriousness of the matter. For less serious matters, informal resolution processes should be explored prior to a formal resolution procedure. For more serious matters, or where informal approaches have been unsuccessful, a formal procedure may be appropriate.

Before initiating these procedures, complainants are encouraged to try and resolve any issues directly with the person(s) concerned, if they feel comfortable doing so.

A complainant should raise their grievance with the respondent as early as possible.

At any time during the resolution process, a complainant or respondent may consult, in confidentiality, with their support person, family members or legal/medical professionals, and may seek advice from their Principal, a senior leader or the MACS Employee Relations or People Experience Team where appropriate.

Procedures

3. Informal resolution processes

- 3.1. In attempting to manage a complaint, there are several informal options a complainant has available to them. These include:
- speaking directly with the respondent about their behaviour or actions (if the complainant feels comfortable doing so)
 - reporting the matter to a Leader/Manager/Principal, or to the relevant General Manager (Regions) if the complaint is about the Principal.

Informal resolution processes do not involve an investigation or making findings based on an investigation but generally involve the parties coming to an understanding or agreement as to how the issues can be resolved.

Speaking directly with the respondent

- 3.2. In the first instance, if the complainant feels comfortable about speaking directly with the respondent, this may be the quickest and easiest way of resolving the matter. The complainant should address the issue with the respondent in unambiguous terms and in plain language. If the complainant does not wish to speak to the respondent, another option is to address the issue with the respondent in writing, rather than face to face, if this is deemed appropriate.

Reporting a Workplace Bullying complaint or grievance

- 3.3. If a complainant does not feel comfortable pursuing the above options, they can report the matter for resolution, where relevant to a:

- Manager or Leader
- Principal
- General Managers (Regions)
- General Manager, Employee Relations
- General Manager, People Experience (for MACS Office Staff)

In instances where the complaint is against a person they would ordinarily report complaints to, they may refer the grievance to the MACS Employee Relations Team for school based staff or the People Experience Team for MACS Office based staff.

- 3.4. When making a complaint, the complainant should provide the relevant person with:

- a clear statement outlining the complaint, including the parties involved
- a potential solution which the complainant believes might address the concerns raised

An appropriate solution should focus on achieving a productive working environment or relationship rather than apportioning blame.

The Workplace Bullying Grievance Lodgment form at Appendix 2 may be used to lodge a complaint.

- 3.5. After receiving the complaint, the relevant person or nominated staff member will:

- gather the appropriate information required to appropriately deal with the complaint. This may include providing the respondent with a statement of grievance and the opportunity to respond
- attempt to resolve the complaint which may include using the following methods:
 - the process outlined by the complainant for settlement (if appropriate)
 - facilitated discussion
 - mediation.

4. Formal resolution processes

- 4.1. If a matter raised is sufficiently serious such that a formal investigation is warranted, then MACS reserves the right to take appropriate action in the circumstances, including referring the matter to formal internal or external investigation. This process will also apply where a complainant seeks to raise a formal complaint as opposed to an informal complaint.
- 4.2. If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of an informal process, they may lodge a formal complaint. The relevant person who receives the complaint will then determine whether it is appropriate to apply a formal process. If the complaint is determined not appropriate to be dealt with by a formal process, the complainant will be provided with an explanation as to why a formal process will not be initiated.

Lodging a formal complaint

- 4.3. A formal complaint must be lodged in writing to the relevant person as outlined in 1.3. Wherever possible, this should be supported by relevant information such as dates, times, locations, what happened, what was said, witnesses (if any) and steps already taken to

attempt to resolve the matter. The Workplace Bullying Grievance Lodgment form at Appendix 2 may be used to lodge a complaint.

Initial response

- 4.4. Following receipt of a formal complaint, an appropriate MACS staff member will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint. This will involve canvassing options for resolution which may include informal resolution processes. If the complaint is to be dealt with formally, the complainant and respondent will be provided with relevant information about the process.

5. Finalising the complaint

- 5.1. Where there has been an investigation, the complainant will be notified that the investigation has been completed, and the matter has ended. A complainant will not be provided with the Investigation Report or be advised of the action, if any, taken against the respondent.
- 5.2. If findings are made that bullying or any other misconduct has occurred, disciplinary action may be taken. Where a respondent to the complaint is covered by the *Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2022* (or as it replaced from time to time) the terms of the CEMEA will apply.

6. External resources

- 6.1. A complainant may choose to seek assistance or information at any time during the process from statutory support agencies such as the Fair Work Commission or Worksafe Victoria.
- 6.2. In dealing with complaints, MACS may seek external advice and assistance from professional mediators, investigators, external agencies and any other appropriate persons.

7. Confidentiality

- 7.1. Anyone involved in a complaint of bullying, or its investigation, must ensure that the circumstances and facts of the complaint are disclosed only to those people who are directly involved in progressing its investigation and resolution. It is important that staff who make a complaint, or who may be witnesses to the circumstances giving rise to the complaint, do not discuss the matter outside the investigation and resolution process. Staff may discuss the matter with their immediate family, support person or professional or health advisers; however, all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that they maintain the confidentiality of the matter.

8. Counselling support

- 8.1. In dealing with allegations of bullying, a staff member and their immediate family members may utilise the services of counselling support at any stage of the process.
- 8.2. MACS is a member of Access Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which can be contacted on 1800 818 728.
- 8.3. MACS Principals can access support from Converge International EAP on 1300 687 327 (24-hour service).

9. Vexatious claims

- 9.1. MACS will not deal with complaints under the Workplace Bullying Prevention Policy that:
 - are made anonymously and without sufficient detail being provided so as to allow investigation or resolution of the matter
 - do not have sufficient details so as to allow investigation or resolution of the matter
 - do not constitute bullying as defined by this policy.
- 9.2. Where a complainant makes frivolous, vexatious or malicious claims against a respondent, for example, where false or misleading information is provided, relevant information is withheld, facts are distorted or there is no demonstrated commitment to resolution, then depending on the circumstances, disciplinary action may be taken against the complainant.

10. Definitions

Definitions of standard terms used in this Policy can be found in the [Glossary of Terms](#).

Complainant

The staff member lodging the complaint.

Respondent

The person the subject of a complaint.

Workplace

For the purposes of this policy, the 'workplace' may include any location or circumstance where an employee is undertaking work-related activities or where there is a sufficient connection to work. This may include the office, school or usual location of the employee's work, work-related travel or official work-related event outside the office/school, or outside normal working hours, online or via social media.

11. Related policies and documents

Supporting documents

Appendix 1: Employment bullying complaints procedure flow chart

Appendix 2: Grievance Lodgement Form

Related MACS policies and documents

Workplace Bullying Prevention Policy

Code of Conduct for MACS Staff

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Whistleblower Policy

12. Legislation and standards

Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)

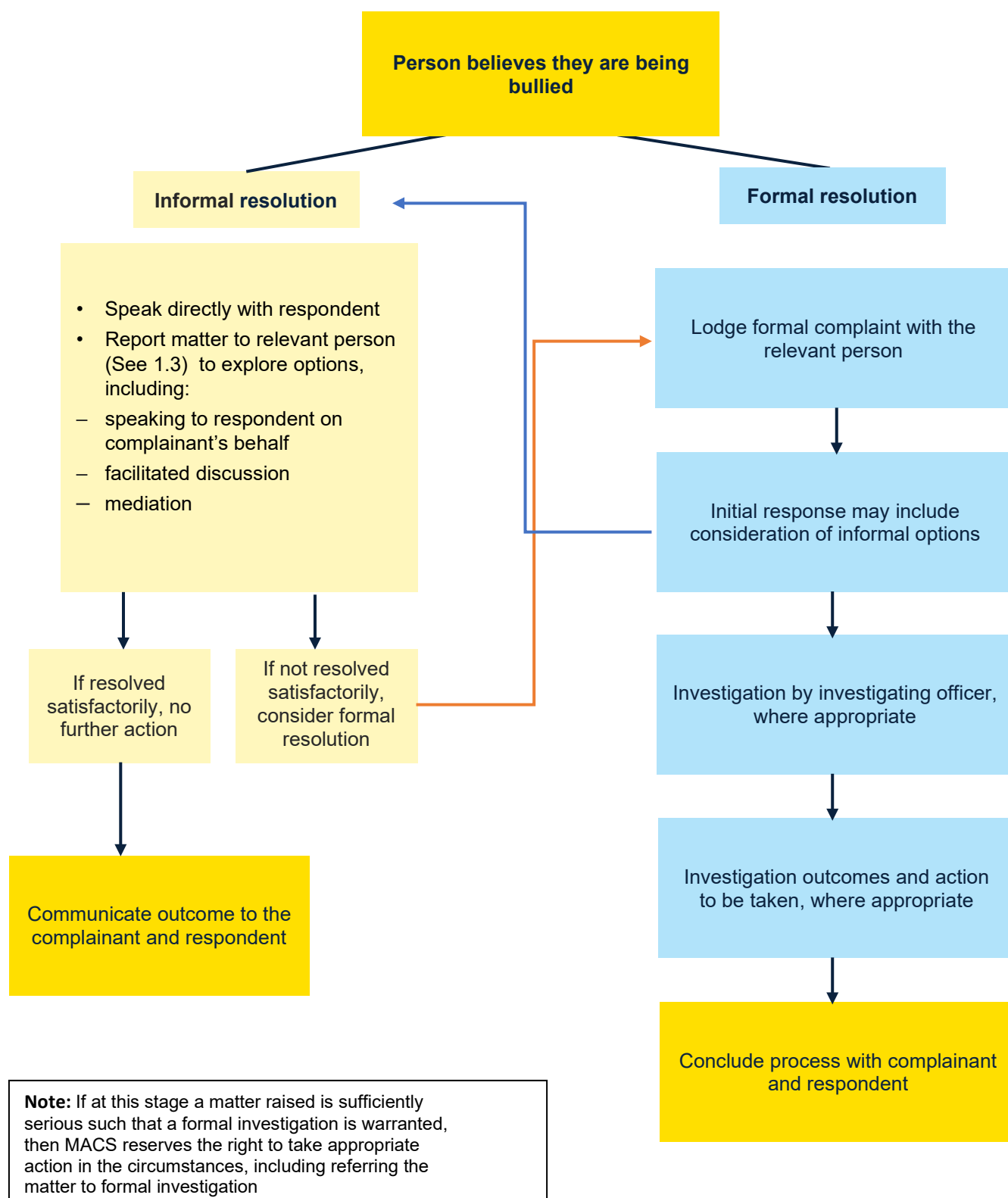
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

Policy information table

Responsible executive	Director, People and Culture
Procedure owner	General Manager Employee Relations
Approving authority	MACS Executive Director
Approval date	28 April 2025
Risk rating	Extreme
Review by	May 2027
Publication	Gabriel, CEVN

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned framework	Employment
Related documents	Workplace Bullying Prevention Policy Appendix 1: Complaints procedure flow chart Appendix 2: Grievance Lodgement Form
Superseded documents	
New procedure	

Appendix 1: Complaints procedure flow chart



Details

If you do not wish to provide your details and wish to leave an anonymous grievance you may leave the above section blank. This may limit the ability to contact you or follow up on your grievance.

Complainant category	
Staff member	Volunteer
Contractor/Consultant	Other

Please describe – what happened, where it happened, when it occurred, who was involved, any witnesses, how many times this behaviour has occurred, when the behaviour started, when the last time this behaviour occurred. Attach further pages if necessary.

Have you attempted to resolve the issue using informal resolution procedures at your workplace? Please provide details.

Potential resolution (Optional)

Have you attempted to resolve the issue using any other grievance /complaint procedure at your workplace? Please provide details.

Signature of staff member lodging the grievance:

Date: