



Special Religious Education
COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Policy

As an approved provider it is expected that our volunteers always maintain the highest level of professionalism in any conflict resolution process. This includes both the way they speak to and about a local school and how they represent themselves and their organisation. We expect our volunteers to listen to the school's perspective and never assume ill intent. We expect our volunteers to always try to resolve issues at a local level first, with courtesy and respectfulness. We are committed to open communication and taking ownership. This policy refers to the way the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, as an SRE approved provider will resolve complaints.

Types of Complaints

A. Parents may have concerns about the SRE curriculum or the SRE volunteer

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's Formation and Education Office will fully co-operate with any concerns a parent may have regarding reportable conduct or allegations of abuse attributed to an SRE volunteer or alternatively their concerns regarding the contents of the SRE curriculum. We will follow our procedures regarding any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities.

B. Schools may have concerns about the conduct of an SRE volunteer

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's Formation and Education Office will fully co-operate with any concerns a school may have regarding reportable conduct or allegations of abuse attributed to an SRE volunteer. It is expected that the Department of Education will follow its procedures regarding any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities.

C. Approved providers may have concerns about the conduct of a student or a parent or a professional classroom teacher

It is expected that a school will fully co-operate with any concerns the diocese may have regarding positive behaviour for learning. We would expect the school to follow its procedures regarding any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities.

D. SRE volunteers may have concerns regarding the implementation of SRE at a local school

Approved providers must follow the Department of Education School Community and Consumer Complaint Procedures. https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/School-complaint-procedure_AC.pdf

Managing complaints: Key Stages

1. Acknowledge Information

Acknowledge a complaint from a school, parent or SRE teacher as soon as possible, ideally within 3 working days. This can be done in person, by telephone, email or formally in writing. Where the acknowledgement was made verbally, it should be documented in writing. Let the principal know that they will be kept up to date with the progress. Keep the matter as confidential as possible by only sharing information with those who need to know about the complaint issues. Listen carefully to the issues and, if possible, resolve the complaint directly at the local level.

2. Gather information

Gather enough information to allow a proper assessment of concerns as quickly as possible. The information to be gathered could include:

- Special Religious Education Procedures
- relevant Department of Education policies and procedures e.g. Code of Conduct
- SRE curriculum teacher's manual

3. Resolve

Complaints should be finalised as soon as possible and no later than 20 working days. Keep the principal updated on the progress of the complaint. If a delay is anticipated, inform the principal and provide reasons for the delay.

The principal and the SRE provider to work towards a resolution.

Outcomes will depend on the circumstances of each complaint and take into account the role of SRE volunteers in a school and are subject to the Department's policies and procedures and the principal as its appointed site manager.

4. Inform

The diocese will report information about the outcome to the principal and where necessary to the local parish SRE Co-ordinator and other providers in the case of a combined arrangement. Reporting the outcome will include:

- the outcome of the complaint and any action to be taken, by whom and when
- the reasons for the decision
- any internal or external options for review

The complaint outcome should be confirmed in writing to the principal. Email is acceptable. Complex complaints may require additional record keeping e.g. notes of contentious meetings. While it is good practice to provide as much information as you can about outcomes, it is also important to keep confidential specific personal details.

If an SRE volunteer is the subject of a complaint, he/she should be provided with information about the outcome.

5. Implement actions

Take all reasonable steps to implement and monitor the outcomes of the complaint. Where the outcomes involve a combined arrangement, other providers shall receive the same information as the principal.

6. Record outcome

The diocese shall record;

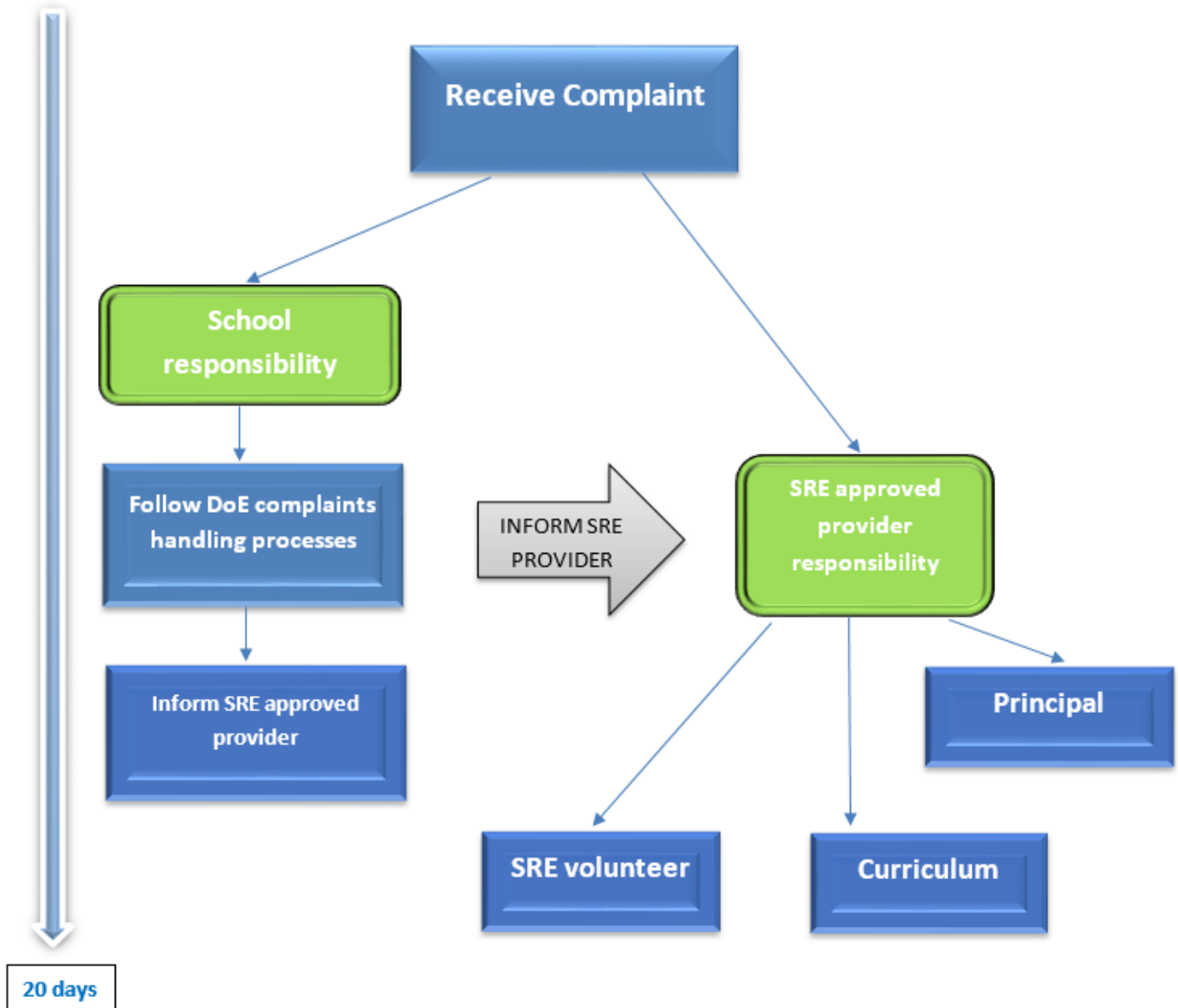
- their contacts with the principal
- how they managed the complaint
- the outcome of the complaint, including how and whether any concerns were substantiated and actions taken in response
- the steps taken to follow up the outcome actions

7. Ongoing responsibilities

The diocese recognises its ongoing responsibilities to;

- respond to and manage a complaint from a principal so that the complaints process is accessible to all
- take reasonable steps to prevent people making complaints being treated unfairly because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf
- always keep confidentiality about complaints, including after a satisfactory resolution. This requires everyone, including the complainant, to ensure that information is restricted to those who genuinely need to know. People should ONLY be told as much as they need to know
- support those involved. To the extent possible we will monitor the well-being of all parties involved in or impacted by the complaint and arrange support where available.

Complaint Flowchart



Approved SRE Provider Complaint Form

If you have a complaint about any aspect of our school services, we are keen to hear from you.

Please complete this form and send it to your approved provider; **Formation and Education Office**
Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
PO Box 756
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300
E: sregeneral@mn.catholic.org.au

General Information				
Please select from the following. I am a/an:				
<input type="checkbox"/> parent <input type="checkbox"/> student <input type="checkbox"/> member of the public <input type="checkbox"/> employee				
2. Personal details				
Title	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr	<input type="checkbox"/> Mrs	<input type="checkbox"/> Ms	<input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Other
What is your family name?				
What is your given name?				
3. Contact details				
What is your current residential address?				Postcode
				Postcode
What is your mailing address? (if different to residential address)				Postcode
				Postcode
Email address				
Telephone number				
Mobile phone number				
Preferred contact method:	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter	<input type="checkbox"/> Email
4. Complaint details				
Have you lodged a complaint about this issue before?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No	
	If yes, when and what was the outcome:			

5. Complaint summary			
When it happened			
Where it happened			
Who was involved			
What happened (details of your complaint)			
What you would like to happen to resolve your complaint			
Attach any documentation that supports your complaint			
6. Acknowledgement			
All the information provided above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.			
Signature		Date	
7. Privacy notice			
We will only use the information collected on this form to resolve your complaint and access will only be provided to authorised officers of the diocese and the Department of Education.			
8. Office use only			
Action officer			
Position		Date	
Complaint lodged	<input type="checkbox"/> by telephone	<input type="checkbox"/> in person	<input type="checkbox"/> in writing
Notes			