Rationale
St Bernard’s College has both a desire and a responsibility to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained by staff and students at all times, and that complaints are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.

Aims
• To provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment.
• To resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relevant legislation.

Implementation
• St Bernard’s College seeks to provide a positive, harmonious and productive environment.
• It is the principal’s responsibility to provide a healthy and positive school environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. In doing so, Principal’s must ensure that all staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
• The principal is required to use local complaints resolution procedures, where appropriate, for resolving complaints in relation to issues that fall within the school’s area of responsibility. All cases of serious misconduct – sexual offences, criminal charges, or other serious incidents – will be referred to the appropriate section of the Catholic Education Office Melbourne.
• It is incumbent upon the principal to act where unacceptable conduct is observed or brought to his or her attention.
• A complainant may at any stage choose to take their complaint directly to an external agency such as the Catholic Education Office, Edmund Rice Education Australia, Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission or the Ombudsman.
• The Principal may delegate the investigation and resolution of a complaint to another senior member of staff.
• It is important that all complaints, ensuing procedures and outcomes are fully documented.
• The principal may choose to respond to a complaint through an informal process in cases where the complaint is minor, the complainant wishes the matter to be dealt with informally, or the complaint has arisen from lack of or unclear communication.
• Formal processes will be used when informal processes haven’t been successful, a complainant seeks a formal process, or the principal believes the complaint warrants formal investigation.
• The formal process involves:
  1. Investigating the complaint including formal interviews, written statements, conveying the details of the complaint to the respondent in writing providing the opportunity for a written response.
  2. Dismissing or accepting the complaint. Acceptance may involve the Complaints & Investigations Unit, verbal or written warnings, conciliation, or counselling etc.
  3. Preparation of a detailed confidential report.
  4. Monitoring of the situation.
• Parties dissatisfied with the process can appeal to the previously mentioned external agencies.
• All matters must be treated with utmost confidentiality, and professional respect at all times.
• The Chair of the St Bernard’s College Board will be kept informed of all complaints.

Evaluation:
This policy will be reviewed by School Council in accordance with the review schedule.