

## 4.14 Grievance

### Grievance Policy

#### 1. Purpose of Policy

This policy is designed to give all members of the community an understanding of how they may deal with grievances as they arise. A clear, respectful and fair grievance policy can help to minimise conflict and if issues are dealt with early and in a respectful manner they can often be resolved more easily. We endeavour to ensure concerns are expressed and resolved in a timely and positive manner.

#### 2. Applicability

The policy applies to all members of the College community.

#### 3. Definitions

Grievance – a cause for complaint, especially of unjust treatment. Common sense should be used before pursuing a grievance. In cases of grievance there has to be an element of unfairness.

Procedural Fairness - the right to be heard, the right to be treated without bias, the right to be informed of allegations being made and to be provided with an opportunity to respond to them and the right to information regarding the status of the complaint.

#### 4. Policy Content

As a Christian community we seek to foster a spirit of unity and to work in a context of truth and love.

*If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Philippians 2:1-3*

We seek at all times to be accessible, courteous, confidential and consistent and to address concerns within a reasonable timeframe.

### Staff Grievance

In keeping with industrial law we require that matters in dispute be dealt with at the lowest possible level, with graduated stages for further discussions involving

successively higher levels of management. The establishment of reasonable time limits for the completion of each stage of discussion, and the requirement for normal work to continue while the procedure is being followed, are also components of disputes procedures under legislation.

The procedure that the staff should follow is based upon the Scriptural guidelines given by Jesus in Matt. 18:13-18. These are:

1. We have a responsibility toward one another to lovingly share any grievance.  
*If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.... v.16a*
2. If the problem is not resolved at the one on one level, the grievance may be taken to a member of the leadership team – such as a subject coordinator, Director of Primary or Secondary, or a Welfare Coordinator. They may act in an advisory capacity or seek to mediate the grievance. If it is an educational issue then College policies and procedures should be referenced.  
*...if your brother will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. v.16b*
3. If the problem is not resolved at this level then advice from the College Deputy Principal should be sought. He/She may arrange a meeting of parties with mediation, may seek to investigate the claims further or may intervene to enforce College policy and procedures. He/She will advise the Principal of any steps taken to handle the grievance.
4. If the problem continues to be unresolved then the Principal will handle the matter. The Principal may liaise with the Board Chair to seek advice in the handling of matters which impact the College's strategic functioning. The Board is not a grievance committee and staff would not ordinarily take grievances to the Board. The exceptions to this would include any unlawful or mischievous action by the Principal.

In all levels of the process the principles of procedural fairness must be considered.

If at any point the grievance involves child protection or a reportable allegation then the Child Protection Policy and its procedures must be invoked.

### **Parent or Student Grievance**

1. Issues related to the classroom should be directed to the teacher in the first instance. Parents and students should seek to make an appointment to speak with staff at a mutually convenient time. Staff should respond to such requests in a timely and courteous manner.
2. If the problem is not resolved at this level, the grievance may be taken to a member of the leadership team. In the case of welfare issues this would be a Welfare Coordinator. In the case of curriculum matters this would be subject coordinator, Director of Primary or Secondary, or a Welfare Coordinator. College policies and procedures should be referred to and leadership staff should seek to resolve the matter in a way which shows respect to both the parents/students and

the staff member. Matters related to non-educational issues, including finance should be directed to the Business Manager.

3. Teachers and other complaint receivers are encouraged to make a brief record of the complaint in their confidential records. A summary should be submitted to the Deputy Principal in writing outlining the concern and indicating the action taken.

4. If the problem is not resolved at this level then advice from the College Deputy Principal should be sought. He/She may arrange a meeting of parties with mediation, may seek to investigate the claims further or may intervene to enforce College policy and procedures. He/She will advise the Principal of any steps taken to handle the grievance. In some cases the parent or student may want to bring a support person with them – this should be arranged in advance.

5. If the problem continues to be unresolved then the Principal will handle the matter. The Principal may liaise with the Board Chair to seek advice in the handling of matters which impact the College's strategic functioning. The Board is not a grievance committee and parents or students would not ordinarily take grievances to the Board. The exceptions to this would include any unlawful or mischievous action by the Principal.

In all levels of the process the principles of procedural fairness must be considered.

If at any point the grievance involves child protection or a reportable allegation then the Child Protection Policy and its procedures must be invoked.

### **Guidelines for Staff for Dealing with Parent/Student Grievances**

The staff member should at all times be:

1. Accessible, conveying the attitude that input and feedback are most welcome. Staff may need to assist the parent to reach final resolution of the matter.
2. Courteous, personalised and respectful of the parent's cultural, educational and denominational background. It is important to take time to fully listen to and understand the issue from the parent's perspective.
3. Confidential. No discussion of the matter should occur outside of the relevant parties.
4. Clear and concise. Attempt to pinpoint the heart of the grievance.
5. Fair. Staff may need to assure parents that their children will not be disadvantaged as a result of their complaint.
6. Consistent. Staff may need to consult with each other to ensure consistent and fair responses are given to children and parents.
7. Within a reasonable timeframe. Delays in response add unnecessary further concern to the original issue.

## Additional Notes

- Staff should inform their immediate supervisor of any grievance brought to them and supply them with brief notes regarding any action taken.
- Whilst the above procedures describe a preferred method, complaints are sometimes lodged with a subject coordinator, Director of Primary or Secondary, a Welfare Coordinator, the Deputy or the Principal in the first instance. If it is appropriate then that person should direct the parent or student to speak directly with the teacher involved. If there are additional issues or concerns then the grievance may be handled by the College leader in the first instance. The relevant staff member should be involved in this process as early as possible and an attempt should be made to connect the parent and student with that staff member in a positive manner. This must be in keeping with procedural fairness.
- All concerns, whether expressed in writing or verbally, should be responded to as quickly as possible. If an immediate response is not practicable, a resolution should be attempted within one week. If further consideration needs to be given and a delay will ensue, an acknowledgment, in writing preferably, should be given within the week. A copy of this written response must be given to the Deputy Principal in advance. If resolution is not possible within a month, further acknowledgment, explaining the delay should be given.
- When a parent raises a concern about their child's safety, their child should be withdrawn from the activity in question until the matter is resolved.
- After resolution of an issue with a parent or student, the relevant staff member should make verbal or written confirmation to the parent that it believes the matter finalised. It should include a thank you for raising the issue and an offer of assistance if further, or other concerns should arise. This is particularly important if the resolution has stemmed from a disagreement.
- Resolutions should comply with Biblical principles and the relevant legal requirements. They should also be in accordance with the Christian ethos, aims and objectives of the school.

## 5. Related Documents

Proforma for interviews or complaints

## 6. Appendix

N/A

## 7. Procedures

Communication flow chart

Policy	Grievance Policy	Version 2	Feb 2014
--------	------------------	-----------	----------