



St Joseph's School
Port Lincoln

In all things love

Grievance Policy

Policy Statement

St Joseph's School will ensure effective, fair and impartial procedures are available to address grievances.

Rationale

Because of the nature of school communities there will inevitably be, at times, a lack of harmony where some individuals or groups will consider that their rights and responsibilities are being eroded. There must be opportunities for members of the school community to express complaints and seek remedies. A Grievance Policy and associated procedures constitute a component of the risk management that a school has in place.

A grievance may be defined as a complaint about a wrong that causes resentment and is seen as grounds for action; such a complaint could be judged eventually as justified or not. Wherever possible, grievances should be resolved by a process of discussion, cooperation and conciliation. The aim is to reach an acceptable outcome that minimizes any potential detriment to ongoing relationships.

Grievances can be between parents and staff, staff and students, parents and parents, staff and staff, students and students. Members of the school community should not instigate grievances that are frivolous or malicious. All individuals are expected to participate in the grievance resolution process in good faith.

Values

- Restorative justice
- Respect
- The dignity of each individual
- Acceptance of responsibility for one's own actions
- Active citizenship

Responsibilities

St Joseph's School and staff will:

- Ensure that the community is aware of the policy and procedures for resolving grievances.
- Facilitate and participate in meetings to discuss grievances in a fair and positive manner.
- Treat grievances seriously and sensitively, with due regard to procedural fairness, confidentiality and privacy. Requirements relating to confidentiality and privacy extend to the use and storage of any information and records related to a grievance.
- Respond to and manage grievances quickly and as close as possible to their source. This may be modified by the nature of the grievance and the wishes of the person who is seeking a resolution of the grievance.

Date approved:

Date of next review:

Related Policies: Child Protection Policy; Wellbeing Policy; Drug Policy; Student Driving Policy; Bullying & Harassment Policy

- Ensure that both the person raising the grievance (the complainant) and the person against whom the grievance is made (the respondent) will receive appropriate information about the nature of the complaint, support and assistance in resolving the grievance.
- Ensure that no person should be victimised because they raise a complaint or are associated with a grievance.

Parents/Caregivers will:

- Raise grievances as soon as possible after an incident has occurred.
- Attempt to resolve the grievance as close as possible to the source in the first instance.
- Commit to resolving grievances by a process of discussion, cooperation and conciliation where possible.
- Raise grievances through appropriate authorities and not take matters into hand if involving students and/or other parents.

Students will:

- Familiarise themselves with the procedures for resolving a grievance as outlined in the flowchart.
- Participate in raising and resolving grievances in a fair and respectful manner.

St Joseph's School Board will:

- Monitor and review the policy in accordance with legal requirements and the Church's teachings.

Associated Documents

- Behaviour Education and Personal Responsibility Policy and Procedures
- Procedure for Resolving Student Grievances Flowcharts (R-6; 7-12)
- CESA Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- CESA Responding to Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace Policy and Procedures

Approval of Grievance Policy

Chair of School Board _____

Date:



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Procedures for Dealing with Grievances

1. Parent – Staff

1.1 If a problem exists between a parent and a staff member the following process should take place:

- The parent arranges a time to speak with the staff member.
- If the problem is not resolved the parent arranges a time to speak with the Deputy Principal as soon as possible in order that the grievance is dealt with quickly.
- If the problem is still not resolved the parent makes an appointment with the Principal.
- At any point in the process student/s or adult/s may consult with the School Counsellor for support.

1.2 It is important that all meetings are approached in a manner that is conducive to finding resolution. Therefore it is expected that offensive or abusive language, harassment, physical intimidation or violence will not be an aspect of any communication. The School reserves the right to exclude people who use any form of intimidation.

School responses to this situation may include:

- Providing opportunities for individuals to meet with a Teacher, Deputy Principal or Principal.
- Providing opportunities for those affected to access counselling where appropriate.
- Providing an opportunity for mediation between the parties where deemed appropriate by the School Principal.
- Reporting the situation to the Police and/or Family SA.

2. Parents – Other Adults

If a serious problem exists between adults/parents within the school community or at school functions and it is likely that the matter will cause an issue during the course of the school day, then it is appropriate for those involved to notify the school:

- Make someone in authority i.e. Principal, Deputy Principal aware that a serious problem exists.
- Seek support from the School Counsellor or the Principal to initiate mediation if appropriate.
- Work with the School Counsellor or School Principal to find a way to resolve the issue as appropriate.
- While on school property or at school functions all those involved should avoid discussing the issue with other adults/parents.
- Be advised that the use of social media for discussing grievances is never appropriate.

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When there are difficulties between students:

- It is imperative that a parent does not confront someone else's child. Resolution between students must be mediated by appropriate school authorities.
- If the problem relates to a serious act of violence or ongoing serious harassment, we encourage parents to report the situation to the usual legal authorities i.e. the police.

School response to this situation may include:

- Providing mediation assistance when and if appropriate.
- Speaking individually with adults/parents concerned with a view to help resolve the situation.
- Providing counselling support or referral to other agencies or authorities.
- If necessary, instruction to those involved to leave the premises. If these instructions are not followed, SAPOL may be involved.

In a situation where problems between adults result in 'problem behaviours' being displayed during school hours on school property or at school related functions and activities, the result may include the following:

- The adult/s concerned being excluded from school premises, and/or attending school functions.
- Appropriate legal proceedings being implemented.

3. Student – Student

3.1 Where problems exist between students, it is important that the issues are addressed and that appropriate support procedures are in place.

Students are encouraged to:

- Speak directly to the person with whom the problem exists (if it is safe and practical to do so).
- If necessary speak with someone to work through a possible strategy to try to resolve the situation e.g. Class teacher, Learning and Wellbeing Leader, Pastoral Care Co-Leader, School Counsellor, Boarding House Supervisor or Director of Boarding.
- Implement the strategy discussed (for example, a conflict resolution session).

If the problem still exists, request the Deputy Principal to arrange a meeting between the student involved, their parent and the Deputy Principal to try to resolve the problem.

4. Student – Staff

4.1 If a student has a grievance with a staff member, the following process should take place:

- If possible, speak to the teacher concerned.
- Otherwise arrange a time to speak with a staff member who can best resolve the problem. Normally this will be your Pastoral Care teacher or a subject teacher, or Pastoral Care Co-Leader.
- Advise your parent/s of the concern.

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- If the problem is not resolved, arrange a time to speak with the Learning and Wellbeing Leader (R-6), Pastoral Care Co-Leader (7-12) or Director of Teaching and Learning, then, if necessary Deputy Principal.
- If the problem is not resolved, advise the Deputy Principal that you will be speaking with the Principal.
- Arrange a time to speak with the Principal as soon as possible.
- At any point in the process student/s or adult/s may consult with the School Counsellor for support.

5. Staff – Staff

If a staff member has a grievance with another staff member:

- If possible speak with the staff member concerned to try to mediate a solution.
- Arrange a time to speak with the Contact Officer who will advise a process to address the issue.
- If, after this process, the issue is not resolved, ask for an interview with the Principal to advise her of the issue.
- You may approach *Access Counselling* for support and/or external mediation.

6. Appropriate documentation of grievance procedures will be kept in the school.

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