



**Emmaus
Christian
School**

Dispute Resolution Policy

General Policy GEN 2-1 Version 1.0

Access Level - Public

February 2023

Growing together in faith, love and wisdom

General Policy GEN 2-1

Dispute Resolution Policy

Prepared by	Emmaus Board
Date prepared	Dec 2022
Date approved by the Board:	February 2023
Monitored by	Board and Principal
Review by	Board
Date for review	March 2025
Status	Final
Policy Pertains to:	Emmaus Community
File Details:	SharePoint/Policies and Procedures/General Policies

Version History

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	Feb 2023	Policy prepared by Snedden Hall & Gallop – approved by Board (Feb meeting)

Reference: Legislation - Education Act (ACT) 2004 Section 94



Contents

Vision/Purpose	3
Values	3
Rationale	4
Key Principles	4
The Grievance Handling Process	5

Vision/Purpose

Emmaus exists to partner with parents, in providing a Christ-centred, Biblically grounded and academically rigorous education, which enables students to grow in wisdom and character, to the glory of God.

Values

1. Caring for Others

At Emmaus, we value, care for and respect each other because we are all made in the image of God. We partner with parents to care for and develop the whole person- body, soul, and spirit. We foster a sense of belonging, celebrate one another's achievements, and choose to be grateful for our school and each other. We are a community that learns in a fun, creative, encouraging, and generous environment.

2. Striving for Mastery

At Emmaus, we encourage students to strive for excellence in all aspects of life: in study, work, and in relationships with God and with people. We believe God equips every person with gifts and abilities. We seek to instil in our students a strong desire to apply their utmost to what they do, an attribute that will long outlive their school years. Students are encouraged to master and apply academic and life skills to make the most of their opportunities in later life. Our goal is to equip students with the necessary skills and understanding to make wise and Godly choices, and to live resilient, fulfilled, and productive lives.

3. Equipping for Service

At Emmaus, our motivation for service is the love that Christ has shown us: his life of servant leadership is the example we seek to follow. Staff at Emmaus model integrity, accountability, and the value of excellence in our work. We strive to equip students with both the desire and the skills to make a difference in the lives of others. We aim to grow students who are rich in Godly wisdom and noble character and find their security in the love of Christ.



Rationale

A grievance is a problem, concern or complaint involving the School. The rationale of this policy is for the resolution of grievances of against the School or employees of the School arising from parents, carers, students and other members of the school community.

The aim of this policy is to bring resolution and solutions to the various issues that arise in the course of operating a school while keeping relationships alive and well.

A concerted effort is to be made by all parties concerned to communicate with love and respect for the benefit of our school community. We are an example to our children. The healthy resolution of issues helps to refine our school and make it a better place for all.

NOTE: The protocols in this policy are not applicable where there is an alleged serious breach of the ACT Teacher Quality Institute Code-of-conduct and e.g. an allegation concerning criminal conduct. In such cases, the government-mandated reporting protocols will be followed.

See: <http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>

Key Principles

The Christian school is a community in the Biblical sense. Covenant, not contract builds community in the Christian school. Trust and cooperation characterise student, staff and community relationships.

The principle of community - Christian love in action - means worshipping, sharing, encouraging and celebrating with Christian joy and hope.

As a community we cannot expect to be spared disputes and grievances. This is clearly acknowledged by our Lord who teaches us to first go to the fellow Christian who offends us before we take the matter any further (see Matthew 18: 15 – 20).

In any event we must always act in love - out of concern for the spiritual, physical, emotional and material wellbeing of all concerned while seeking just and Christ honouring outcomes.

Grievances raised under this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with the following principles:

- a) Only the people directly involved in investigating or adjudicating a grievance will have access to information about the grievance.
- b) All parties will have a chance to put their point of view.
- c) All grievances will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

To aid the process we require that relationships be treated with the utmost care and we must always respect and value the personhood of all involved.

In pursuing an issue, we ask that all parties read Colossians 3: 12 – 17 and agree to work with each other accordingly.

All parties must agree to work towards a solution that brings LIFE to each other and our school as a whole.



In working through the resolution process, it is understood that:

- Confidentiality will be respected and maintained, as far as is possible, by all parties concerned. While all parties have a right to seek advice in confidence, no party will canvass - within the school community or beyond - to support or defend an allegation;
- The school, through its teachers, its Executive and the Board will be open to the concerns of parents and pupils;
- Complaints will be received in a positive manner;
- Information that will assist in the resolution of a complaint will be clear and readily available;
- Concerns will be dealt with speedily and those who have raised them will be kept informed about progress;
- Students will not receive adverse treatment because they or their parents have raised a complaint;
- Clear confidential files and logs will be kept;
- Resolution of the matter will be sought;
- Staff training will cover the handling of complaints.

The Grievance Handling Process

The existence of a problem does not always mean that someone has a grievance. In a healthy school community, there will be many instances where different parties will work together in seeking the best way forward.

A grievance exists when one person or party has a complaint about another person's decision, action, or failure to act.

The following is the process to be applied where one person (the Complainant) has a complaint against a person who is employed by or acts on behalf of the School.

Step One	<p>Initial direct informal discussion about grievance</p> <p>A Complainant should try to sort out the grievance directly with the person involved first. This may be done by requesting a telephone call or meeting with the relevant employee of the School, and then discussing the concern.</p> <p>Following the meeting the relevant School employee will send you an email to acknowledge the discussion, and if a resolution was reached the agreed outcome.</p> <p>If the Complainant is not comfortable raising the issue directly with the relevant person involved in the issue, then they can commence the process at Step 2.</p>
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<p>Step Two</p>	<p>Escalation of informal discussion</p> <p>If resolution of an issue is not achieved at Step 1, the issue can be raised with the appropriate senior staff member to have a discussion about the concern as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="368 468 1469 860"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="368 468 999 524">Nature of concern</th> <th data-bbox="999 468 1469 524">Staff member</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="368 524 999 582">Preschool student or staffing matter</td> <td data-bbox="999 524 1469 582">Preschool Director</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="368 582 999 638">Primary school student or staffing matter</td> <td data-bbox="999 582 1469 638">Head of Primary</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="368 638 999 694">Secondary School student or staffing matter</td> <td data-bbox="999 638 1469 694">Head of Secondary School</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="368 694 999 750">Administration matters</td> <td data-bbox="999 694 1469 750">Assistant Principal (Operations)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="368 750 999 806">School management</td> <td data-bbox="999 750 1469 806">Principal</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="368 806 999 860">The Principal</td> <td data-bbox="999 806 1469 860">Board</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The Complainant should contact the relevant senior staff member to make an appointment to have a telephone or in person meeting to discuss the complaint further.</p> <p>The concerns raised will be dealt with by the senior staff member as appropriate. If required, the complaint will be investigated and handled with the relevant due diligence and addressed in an equitable and unbiased manner.</p>	Nature of concern	Staff member	Preschool student or staffing matter	Preschool Director	Primary school student or staffing matter	Head of Primary	Secondary School student or staffing matter	Head of Secondary School	Administration matters	Assistant Principal (Operations)	School management	Principal	The Principal	Board
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The Principal	Board														
<p>Step three</p>	<p>Lodgement of a formal Grievance</p> <p>This step is used when the Complainant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is not satisfied with the outcome in step 2; and • wishes to lodge a detailed, written and formal complaint. <p>To commence this process, the Complainant can lodge a grievance to the School in writing, by letter or email.</p> <p>So that the School can appropriately respond, the written grievance should include details of the concern including relevant times and dates and the people involved. The complaint should also be signed by the Complainant</p> <p>All formal grievances are to be lodged to the Principal. All formal complaints will be treated seriously. The School will determine the most appropriate method of dealing with the grievance, to ensure confidentiality of the process and that the appropriate people within the School are involved. If the grievance involves the Principal, the grievance can be submitted to the Board.</p> <p>Once a grievance has been received an acknowledgement of receipt will be issued.</p>														



<p>Step Four</p>	<p>Investigation</p> <p>The complaint will be investigated confidentially and in an equitable and unbiased manner, as deemed appropriate by the School.</p> <p>The School will inform you in writing about the outcome of the investigation, to the extent appropriate noting procedural fairness and confidentiality obligations.</p>
<p>Step Five</p>	<p>Appeal</p> <p>If you are not satisfied by the decision made following the investigation, you can appeal in writing.</p> <p>The School does not offer unlimited opportunities for appeal if a complainant is unhappy with the resolution of a complaint. Any appeal against the resolution of a complaint should be made in writing to the Principal. An appeal is only likely to be considered if there is evidence there was a procedural problem with the investigation. The Principal, at his/her discretion, will consider the application for an appeal and will either direct the complaint be re-examined or direct the matter be closed.</p>
<p>Step Six</p>	<p>External resolution</p> <p>If you are not satisfied by outcome of the review or the complaint remains unresolved, you may pursue external resolution alternatives.</p>



