



**Emmaus
Christian
School**

Dispute Resolution Policy

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Dispute Resolution Policy

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Version	Date	Notes
1.0	Feb 2023	Policy prepared by Snedden Hall & Gallop – approved by Board (Feb meeting)
2.0	March 2025	Reviewed by Executive

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



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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.

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 while 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.

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- (b) All parties will have a chance to put their point of view.
- (c) All grievances will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

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. Examples of matters about which a grievance or complaint can be made are workplace bullying or workplace conflict.

As an employer, Emmaus strives to provide a work environment that is equitable. If anyone believes that they have been treated unfairly by their fellow workers, it is important that such grievances are brought to light, investigated and resolved.

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

Internal Grievance Handling Process

<p>Step One</p>	<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. It can be a good idea to make it very clear what behaviour you are finding unacceptable, so that the other person has the opportunity to change their behaviour,</p> <p>It is also advised to have a supervisor or member of the HR team present at the discussion to assist with the issue.</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>
<p>Step Two</p>	<p>Escalation to a mediated discussion (early resolution)</p> <p>If resolution of the issue is not achieved at Step One, the Complainant may escalate the matter to their direct Manager for support in pursuing an early resolution.</p> <p>At this stage, the School strongly encourages the use of a mediated discussion before any formal grievance is lodged. The purpose of mediation is to provide a safe, structured and respectful process in which the parties can explore the concerns, clarify expectations, and attempt to reach an agreed resolution. Mediation will be facilitated by a trained and appropriately qualified mediator, who is independent of the issue and able to manage the process ethically, transparently, and impartially.</p>



	<p>The mediator’s role is not to decide or determine fault, but to assist both parties to communicate effectively and work toward a constructive outcome.</p> <p>Participation in mediation is encouraged as a means of resolving concerns early and avoiding the need for a formal investigation wherever possible.</p> <p>If mediation is not appropriate in the circumstances, if either party does not agree to mediation, or if the matter remains unresolved following mediation, the Complainant may proceed to Step Three.</p>
<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; or • wishes to raise a grievance regarding their direct Manager; and • wishes to lodge a detailed, written and formal complaint. <p>To commence this process, the Complainant can lodge a grievance to the HR. The written grievance should include details of the concern including relevant times and dates and the people involved.</p>
<p>Step Five</p>	<p>Investigation</p> <p>The grievance 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 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 If you are not satisfied by outcome of the review or the complaint remains unresolved, you may pursue external resolution alternatives.</p>
<p>NOTE</p>	<p>Throughout the grievance process, we encourage employees to engage with support services such as our Wellbeing Team and/or the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).</p>



