Resolution of Issues Policy & Procedure

BBP-701

PREAMBLE

As a community of Christians, we should seek to consider every aspect of our relationships in the light of the Word of God. Let us remind ourselves that our school community is a body, made up of many parts, as Paul illustrates in 1 Corinthians 12.

Scripture recognises the fact that there will be divisions, dissensions, and disputes even among Christians living in a fallen world. This is clearly illustrated in the Corinthian church, for example in 1 Corinthians 1:10 and following. This of course does not excuse us for sinful behaviour, and we are to strive to "live in harmony with each other, making every effort to live in peace with all men". Hebrews 12:14.

We are not to be quarrelsome people; instead, the Bible teaches us that, where necessary, we are to approach our opponents with a spirit of gentleness, remembering that quarrelling only causes disunity within the body. Paul's words in Philippians 2 stand as a constant reminder that we are to have the same mind in our relationships as that of Christ Jesus, who humbled himself, even to death on the cross, The person who considers others better than himself (verse 3) and looks after one another's interests (verse 4) is not likely to be factious and argumentative.

Nevertheless, differences may eventuate which call for clarification and resolution. In Matthew 18:15-17 Jesus directs us to speak first to a fellow Christian with whom we disagree. Within our school community we should always seek to speak directly to any person with whom we have a difference, then, if necessary, take the matter to the appropriate member of the school community who may be able to assist in resolving the concern.

The following procedure will be helpful in dealing with such matters, remembering, that the principles of Christian grace and forbearance should apply at every step along the way.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that student, parent, and employee disputes are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective, and fair way and that we actively promote mutual respect, harmony, and Christian unity within our School community.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to students, parents, and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements, and covers all forms of grievance, including workplace bullying and harassment.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Glenvale Christian School is committed to ensuring that student, parent, and employee disputes are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective, and fair way.

Glenvale Christian School views complaints and disputes as part of an important feedback and accountability process. GCS acknowledges the right of students, parents, and employees to complain when dissatisfied with an action, inaction or decision of the school and the school encourages such feedback. We recognise that time spent on handling disputes can be an investment in better service to students, parents, and employees.

All grievances will be handled seriously and prayerfully.

4. TYPES OF DISPUTES THAT MAY BE RESOLVED UNDER THIS POLICY

Glenvale Christian School encourage students, parents, and employees to promptly lodge concerns regarding sexual harassment, discrimination, workplace bullying and privacy breaches as well as more general complaints that include areas such as:

- the school, its employees or students have done something wrong
- the school, its employees or students have failed to do something that they should have done
- the school, its employees or students have acted unfairly or impolitely
- issues of student or employee behaviour that are contrary to their relevant code of conduct
- learning programs, assessment, and reporting of student learning
- communication with students or parents or between employees
- school fees and payments
- general administrative issues

Student complaints may be brought by students or by parents on behalf of their children, as appropriate in the circumstances.

Issues Outside of This Policy:

The following matters are outside of the scope of this policy and should be managed as follows:

- child protection concerns or risks of harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the law and the school's *Child Protection Policy* (BBP-501)
- bullying complaints should be dealt with under the *Student Bullying Policy* (SBP-1011) or the *Workplace Bullying Policy* (BBP-504)
- student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the *Behaviour Management Policy* (BBP-503)
- employee complaints related to their employment should be directed to their supervisor
- student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the Principal who will involve the Police as appropriate
- formal legal proceedings

5. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PRINCIPLES

Glenvale Christian School is committed to managing disputes according to the following principles:

- complaints will be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible
- complaints will be taken seriously
- anonymous complaints will be treated on their merits like any other dispute when possible
- disputes/complaints will be dealt with fairly and objectively and in a timely manner
- mediation, negotiation, and informal resolution are optional alternatives to investigation
- procedural fairness will be ensured wherever practicable, including the right of interested parties to the complaint to be heard
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- all parties to the dispute will be appropriately supported
- all parties are entitled to reasonable progress updates
- appropriate remedies will be offered and implemented
- a review mechanism will be offered
- complainants, respondents, and people associated with them will not be victimised as a result of lodging the dispute nor will they suffer any other reprisals
- the school will keep confidential records of disputes
- the school's insurer will be informed if a complaint could be connected to an insured risk

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

School

The school has the following role and responsibilities:

- develop, implement, promote, and act in accordance with the school's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures
- appropriately communicate the school's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures to students, parents, and employees
- upon receipt of a dispute, manage the dispute in accordance with the Dispute Resolution model prescribed in the procedures

- ensure that appropriate support is provided to all parties to a dispute
- take appropriate action to prevent the victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them
- appropriately implement remedies
- appropriately train relevant employees
- keep appropriate records
- conduct a review/audit of the Complaints Register from time to time
- monitor and report to the governing body on complaints
- report to the school's insurer when that is relevant
- refer to the school's governing body immediately any claim for legal redress

All Parties to a Dispute

The complainant and respondent both have the following role and responsibilities:

- apply and comply with the school's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures
- lodge disputes promptly as soon as possible after the issue occurs or as otherwise appropriate
- expect that the dispute will be dealt with fairly and objectively; in a timely manner; with procedural fairness wherever practicable; that natural justice principles will be observed wherever practicable; that confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
- not provide deliberately false or misleading information
- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints
- act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner
- show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame
- act in a non-threatening manner
- to be appropriately supported
- acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- not victimise or act in reprisal against any party to the dispute or any person associated with them

Employees Receiving Disputes

Employees receiving disputes have the following role and responsibilities:

- act in accordance with the school's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures
- inform the party lodging the dispute of how disputes can be lodged, when they should be lodged and what information is required
- provide the complainant with information about any support or assistance available to assist them in lodging their complainant
- provide the complainant with a copy of the school's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures
- maintain confidentiality
- keep appropriate records
- to forward complaints to more senior employees, including the Principal, as appropriate
- not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them

7. PROCEDURE PREAMBLE

When settling a dispute, we need to identify the particular problem area and then using the "Who's Responsible" guide below, approach the appropriate person/s, either by direct personal contact or by confidential note in a sealed envelope.

This is the procedure you should follow if as a parent or a member of staff, should you wish to raise a concern or have a grievance.

8. WHO'S RESPONSIBLE?

8.1 The Board, as the elected representative of the Association, is responsible for:

- setting the school policy

- the administration of the school, including the financial structure, appointment of staff, enrolment of pupils

8.2 The Board appoints the Principal to be responsible for:

- implementing school policy which directly concerns teaching matters and children attending the school
- the day-to-day administration of the educational responsibilities (which includes supervision of teachers, curriculum, and students)
- the communication with parents concerning any matter of an educational nature

8.3The Board appoints the Operations Manager to be responsible for:

- implementing non-educational policies (i.e. finance, building, administration office)
- the communicate with parents on non-educational administration matters
- the liaison with government bodies and to keep the Board familiar with current requirements
- the provision and maintenance of all school buildings and equipment

8.4The Board appoints Teachers to be responsible for:

- the teaching and nurturing our children whilst they are at school
- the implementing policies applicable to the classroom situation

9. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Step 1

Before initiating the grievance procedures, complainants are encouraged to try to resolve any grievance directly with the person/s concerned. If this is not possible or appropriate, the complainant should proceed to Step 2 of the grievance procedure.

If the matter can be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, no further steps are required.

Step 2

Where the complainant has been unable to resolve the grievance him/herself, the complainant should take the matter up with the appropriate school personnel (Refer to section 2 'Who's Responsible'):

- if the grievance involves the class teacher, the complainant should refer the matter to the Principal
- if the grievance involves the Principal or the Operations Manager, it is school policy for an appropriate support person to attend any meetings held with the complainant, Principal or Operations Manager.

This policy requirement is to remain until such time as the school has Heads of Departments and/or a Deputy Principal.

Step 3

The appropriate school personnel will address the grievance with a view to resolving it expeditiously, normally within two weeks of receiving the complaint. It is recommended that the *Resolution of Issue Record* ***(Appendix 1)*** be used to ensure all parties are aware of discussion that has taken place and the steps the school is undertaking to ensure resolution of the issue. Emailed correspondence is also sufficient, but it is imperative that a record of the email discussion is kept in the appropriate place (ie student file).

Step 4

Following resolution of the grievance, the appropriate school personnel will monitor the situation for a period of time.

Step 5

In any action taken, the appropriate school personnel will ensure procedural fairness for all parties involved, including informing any respondents of the allegations made against them and providing them with an opportunity to respond.

Step 6

If the complainant believes the grievance has not been resolved to their satisfaction by reference to the appropriate school personnel, they can refer the matter in writing to the Board (only after steps 1-5 have been followed).

This procedure step is to remain until such time as the school has Heads of Departments and/or a Deputy Principal, at such time the complainant will refer the grievance to the Principal before referral to the Board.

Step 7

After giving due consideration to the grievance the Board may do one or more of the following:

- refer the complaint back to the Principal or to a nominee, with:
  i. advice for resolution; or
  ii. initiate an investigation into the matter; or
  iii. seek to resolve the matter directly.

Any determination made by the Board in accordance with Step 3 of these procedures with regard to the grievance will be final.

10. DOCUMENTATION

10.1 Recording Grievance

Resolution of Issue Record should be used for grievances that progress beyond step one in the grievance procedure section 4. If the process is done via email correspondence, a record of all emails and any notes made by the Principal or other involved parties **must** be kept. The Principal should be able to check the log and report on it regularly to relevant authorities

If the complainant or the person dealing with a complaint believes that the issue may be ongoing or escalate, they are advised to fully document all conversations and other things they think are relevant.

Recording is necessary because:

- it may become the cause of legal action in the future
- patterns in the record may indicate a need for action

The record should contain the following information:

- date when the issue was raised
- name of people concerned
- brief statement of issue
- location of detailed file
- member of staff handling the issue
- brief statement of outcome, and
- processes used to get to the outcome

10.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important issue. It is essential that any grievance is treated in a confidential manner and with respect.

11. IMPLEMENTATION

Glenvale Christian School:

- is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving disputes at the school, including by the development and implementation of this policy and related procedures, and via the clear support and promotion of the policy and procedures and will ensure that the Resolution of Issues Procedures are readily accessible for staff, students, and parents
- is committed to appropriately training relevant employees (especially senior staff) on how to resolve disputes in line with this policy and the related procedures
- will keep appropriate records of disputes, will monitor disputes and their resolution, and will report to the school Board on dispute resolution at the school. The Principal will refer to the board immediately any claim for legal redress
- will act to encourage students, parents, and employees to contribute to a healthy school culture where disputes are resolved with Christian grace, and as little formality and disruption as possible
- will conduct a review/audit of the complaints register from time to time
- will report to the school's insurer when relevant

12. OUTCOMES

Outcomes could include:

- the complainant gaining a better understanding of the situation and no longer being aggrieved

- the complainant receiving a verbal or written apology
- the respondent receiving a verbal or written reprimand
- one or both parties agreeing to participate in some form of counselling
- disciplinary action where the Staff Code of Conduct has been found to have been breached and/or where misconduct/serious misconduct or unsatisfactory performance has occurred

13. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2017*
- *Australian Education Regulations 2013*
- *Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Act 2011*
- *Fair Work Act 2009*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*

14. OTHER RELATED POLICIES

- BBP-404 Anti-Discrimination Policy
- BBP-505 Disability Discrimination Policy
- BBP-601 Staff Employment Policy
- BBP-604 Staff Code of Conduct
- BBP-606 Sexual Harassment Policy
- BBP-607 Workplace Bullying Policy
- BBP-705 Privacy Protection Policy
- BBP-711 Work Health and Safety Policy

- Form-BBP-701 Resolution of Issues Record

Policy Level/Authority	Board		
Distribution	Board, Staff, Volunteers & Parents		
Version	3.3		
Revision History	Version 1	?	
	Version 2	April 2015	
	Version 3	March 2017	Major rewrite in line with ISQ
	Version 3.1	May 2019	Updated legislation references, minor wording updates
	Version 3.2	May 2021	Updated links to legislation
	Version 3.3	May 2023	Updated in line with ISQ template
Next Review Date – biannually	April 2025		

Appendix 1

Glenvale Christian School

Resolution of Issues Record

Form-BBP-701

- All issues need to be handled seriously and prayerfully. A gentle expression of concern, or a simple query, may grow into a painful matter if staff or volunteers felt that they have been brushed aside. Equally, issues with the potential to become acutely difficult may dwindle and fade if they are handled well at the initial stage.
- It is essential that any issue is treated in a confidential manner and with respect.

	Log number :(year/month/date/number e.g. 20220623_01:) _____
MEETING DETAILS	
Date:	**Location:**
Full Name of all people in attendance:	
BRIEF STATEMENT OF ISSUE	
RESOLUTION	
Statement of agreed resolution of issue:	
Time frame in which agreed resolution is to be actioned:	
Meeting date to review outcome of resolution:	

SIGNATURES (By signing below you agree to the accuracy of the information therein contained)		
Name:	**Signature:**	**Date:**
Name:	**Signature:**	**Date:**
Name:	**Signature:**	**Date:**
Name:	**Signature:**	**Date:**

OUTCOME
Desirable outcome achieved by all parties: yes ☐ no ☐ (if no refer to Resolution of Issues Policy procedure) **Date:**