

# Complaints & Grievance Policy

<b>Purpose:</b>	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that student, parent and employee complaints and disputes are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair way.	
<b>Scope:</b>	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.	
<b>Status:</b>	Approved	<b>Replaces:</b> NEW
<b>Authorised By:</b>	School Council	<b>Date of Authorisation:</b> 26 March 2024
<b>References:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2017</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Australian Education Regulations 2013</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Fair Work Act 2009</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• Peace Lutheran Primary School Enterprise Bargaining Agreement</li> <li>• Peace Lutheran Primary School Work Health and Safety Policy</li> <li>• Peace Lutheran Primary School Anti-Discrimination Policy</li> <li>• Peace Lutheran Primary School Disabilities Discrimination</li> <li>• Peace Lutheran Primary School Privacy Policy</li> <li>• Peace Lutheran Primary Complaints Handling Procedure</li> </ul>	
<b>Review Date:</b>	Every 3 years	<b>Next Review Date:</b> 2027
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Principal	

## **Policy Statement**

Peace Lutheran Primary School is committed to ensuring that student, parent and employee complaints are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, and effective and fair way.

Peace Lutheran Primary School views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process.

Peace Lutheran Primary School acknowledges the right of students, parents and employees to complain when dissatisfied with an action, inaction or decision of the school. The school encourages constructive criticism and complaints.

Peace Lutheran Primary School recognises that time spent on handling complaints can be an investment in better service to students, parents and employees.

## **Complaints that may be Resolved under this Policy**

Peace Lutheran Primary School encourage students, parents and employees to lodge promptly any concerns regarding sexual harassment, child protection, discrimination, workplace bullying and privacy breaches as well as more general complaints that include areas such as:

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

The following matters are outside 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
- student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the Respectful Relationships Policy
- student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the Respectful Relationships Policy
- 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

## **Complaints Handling Principles**

Peace Lutheran Primary School is committed to managing complaints according to the following principles:

- complaints will be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible (refer to Complaints Handling Procedure)
- complaints will be taken seriously
- anonymous complaints will be treated on their merits
- complaints will be dealt with fairly and objectively and in a timely manner
- Peace Lutheran Primary School will determine the appropriate person to deal with the complaint in the first instance.
- mediation, negotiation and informal resolution are optional alternatives
- procedural fairness will be ensured wherever practicable, including the right of interested parties for the complaint to be heard

- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- all parties to the complaints will be appropriately supported
- Peace Lutheran Primary School will give reasonable progress updates
- appropriate remedies will be offered and implemented
- provide a review pathway for parties to the complaint if warranted
- complainants, respondents and people associated with them will not be victimised as a result of lodging the complaints and they will not suffer any other reprisals
- the school will keep records of complaints
- the school's insurer will be informed if a complaint could be connected to an insured risk.

## Responsibilities

### School

The school has the following role and responsibilities:

- develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the school's Complaints & Grievance Policy and Complaints Handling Procedure
- appropriately communicate the school's Complaints & Grievance Policy and procedures to students, parents and employees
- ensure that the Complaints Handling procedure is readily accessible by staff, students and parents
- upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the Complaints Handling procedure
- ensure that appropriate support is provided to all parties to a complaint
- take appropriate action to prevent 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
- immediately refer any claim for legal redress to the school's governing body.

### All Parties to a Dispute

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

- apply and comply with the school's Complaints Handling Policy and procedure
- lodge the complaint as soon as possible after the issue arises
- expect that the complaint will be dealt with fairly and objectively; in a timely manner; with procedural fairness 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
- 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 Complaints**

Employees receiving complaints have the following role and responsibilities:

- act in accordance with the school's Complaints & Grievance Policy and procedure
- inform the party lodging the complaint of how complaints 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 complaint
- provide the complainant with a copy of the school's Complaints & Grievance 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.

## **Implementation**

Peace Lutheran Primary School is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints 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.

Peace Lutheran Primary School is also committed to appropriately training relevant employees (especially senior staff) on how to resolve complaints in line with this policy and the related procedures.

Peace Lutheran Primary School will keep appropriate records of complaints, will monitor complaints and their resolution and will report on a high-level basis to School Council on complaint handling at the school.

Peace Lutheran Primary School will act to encourage students, parents and employees to contribute to a healthy school culture where complaints are resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.