



### Description: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Trinity Lutheran College is a complex organisation. The college values each of its members and believes that a clear process for the resolution and monitoring of conflict, complaints and grievances is in the best interests of all.

The grievance process is managed separately by several guiding documents as listed below:

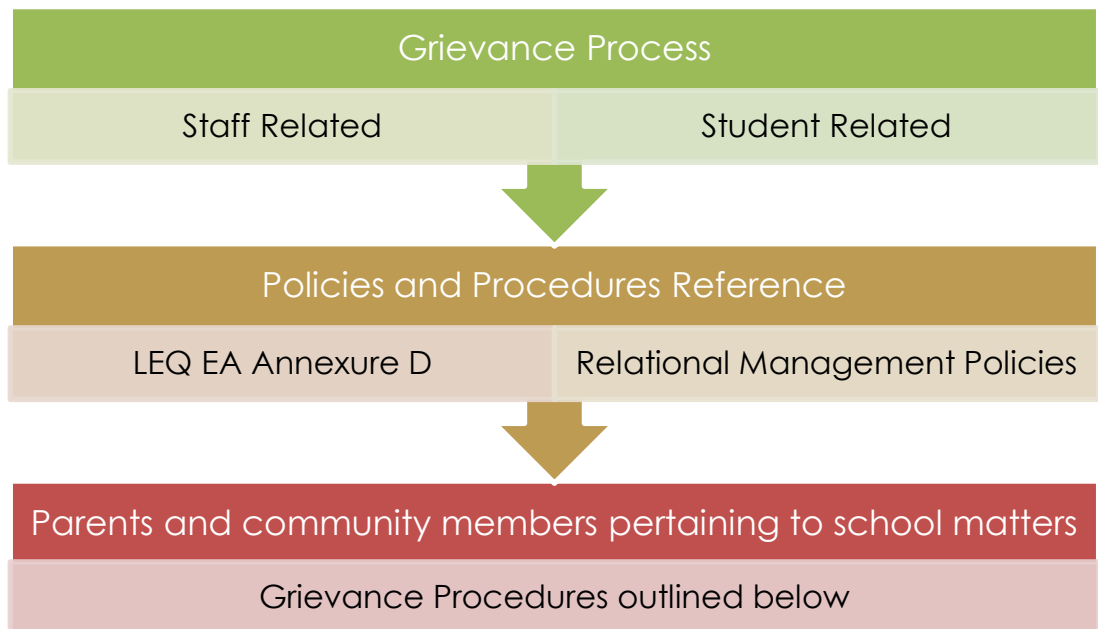
- (a) Grievances against staff are guided by the latest version of Queensland Lutheran Schools Single Enterprise Agreement 2016, in particular Annexure D Complaints handling policy and procedures, in conjunction with other college policies and procedures.
- (b) Grievances against parents and students are guided by the terms set out in the enrolment contracts and relevant college policies and procedures.
- (c) Grievances against any other members of the community, including volunteers and parents, not covered in parts (a) and (b) above are guided by the process set out in this document.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide parents, students, employees and other community members with the opportunity to have a complaint dealt with formally through the most appropriate channels, speedily and flexibly.
- 1.2 The objectives of these procedures are to promote the prompt resolution of grievances at the lowest level possible by consultation, cooperation and discussion, and to promote efficiency, effectiveness and equity in the college.
- 1.3 The process followed will be confidential and all related documentation securely stored. Any complaints are a matter between the parties directly concerned and those involved in this procedure. However, the college may be required to release confidential information under legal requirement and/or to ensure the safety or welfare of others.

## 2. SCOPE

- 2.1 Subject to 2.2, these procedures extend to grievances presented to the college by parent, student, employee or other college community member.
- 2.2 Some grievances are better handled under other policies and procedures of the college. The college has specific policies and procedures in place for issues such as child protection, workplace discrimination, complaints by or against staff covered by the Queensland Lutheran Schools Single Enterprise Agreement 2016 (as that document is amended or replaced from time to time) amongst others.



### 3. PROCEDURE

When a parent or members of the community, e.g. past parent, alumnus, business partners, sponsors, ...etc, has a complaint which has not been resolved by level 1 and 2 approaches outlined in 3.1 and 3.1, he or she should lodge the complaint with the College Principal in writing outlining the grievance, steps taken to resolve it and some contact details for follow up actions to be undertaken. The complaint can be lodged at [principal@tlc.qld.edu.au](mailto:principal@tlc.qld.edu.au) or mail to **Attention: College Principal, Trinity Lutheran College, 641 Ashmore Road, Ashmore, QLD 4214.**

If the complaint is against the Principal, then it should be lodged in writing at [chairman@tlc.qld.edu.au](mailto:chairman@tlc.qld.edu.au) to the College Council Chair person or mail to **Attention: College Council Chair person, Trinity Lutheran College, 641 Ashmore Road, Ashmore, QLD 4214.**

Upon assessment of the complaint, it would be registered on the complaint register. Correspondence of receipt of the complaint, possible actions and estimated timeline will be provided in the college's attempt to address the grievance.

At all times, the College Principal and College Council Chair person adopts the following approach to ensure that the aggrieved person feels supported.

1. Listen carefully to the complainant and get him/her to present/express their grievance.
2. Listen with empathy by trying to understand the core of the issue raised, repeat the issue back to the complainant in his/her words using statements such as, "It sounds like you..."
3. Always apologise to the complainant for how he/she felt due to the issue raised, e.g. "I am sorry that you have experienced...";
4. Always let the complainant know what you will do next, e.g. pass their expressed concern/complaint to a specific person, ask for their contact details, e.g. name, phone number and email address.
5. Act on what you promised to do to address the complaint;

6. Let the complainant know that you have acted on your promise and be sure to do this within 24 to 48 hours. Regardless of whether the matter is still being investigated, ongoing updates will help ensure the complainant knows that his/her concern has been addressed and is being taken seriously.
7. Complete a brief summary of the complaint indicating date, time, details of complainant, the complaint and your actions.

In the event of a grievance lodged by a parent or a college community member (**Complainant**) may seek resolution through following the steps below. As stated in 1.2 above, the objective (where appropriate) is to resolve the grievance at the lowest level possible.

### 3.1 LEVEL 1: INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS

The college recognises that often grievances are simply misunderstandings that are easily resolved via effective communication.

- 3.1.1 If at all possible and appropriate, the parties directly involved should first seek to resolve the grievance in a timely manner by way of informal discussion personally and in a spirit of goodwill and commitment to the maintenance of a safe and harmonious environment.
- 3.1.2 If the grievance cannot be resolved satisfactorily, within a mutually acceptable time frame, or the seriousness of the matter is not suitable for resolution informally, the Complainant may process to Level 2.

### 3.2 LEVEL 2: THIRD PARTY TO ASSIST RESOLUTION

At this level, the Complainant seeks assistance from an impartial third-party facilitator to help the parties to identify the disputed issues, understand the perspective of the other, develop options, promote co-operation, consider alternatives and endeavour to reach a mutual agreement the parties are prepared to abide by.

If the grievance cannot be resolved satisfactorily at this level, within a mutually acceptable time frame or the seriousness of the matter warrants, the Complainant may proceed to Level 3.

### 3.3 LEVEL 3: REFERRAL TO PRINCIPAL OR COLLEGE COUNCIL CHAIR PERSON

At this level, the Complainant refers their grievance, preferably in writing, to the Principal (or Principal's delegate) for resolution. Grievances in writing may be handed to the School Office marked confidential or emailed to [principal@tlc.qld.edu.au](mailto:principal@tlc.qld.edu.au). However, should the grievance involve the Principal, it shall be referred to the Chair Person of Trinity Lutheran College Council.

Reference to the Principal (or Principal's delegate) should resolve most, if not all grievances. However, if the grievance is still not resolved at this level, then the Complainant may properly refer a matter to the Chair of Trinity Lutheran College Council. Grievances in writing may be handed into the School Office addressed to the Chair of College Council and marked confidential or emailed to [chairman@tlc.qld.edu.au](mailto:chairman@tlc.qld.edu.au)

It is important to note the role of the governing body is to ensure the college staff adhere to the college policies and procedures.

## **8. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- 4.1.1 Grievances should be assessed as soon as possible.
- 4.1.2 Grievances will be addressed in accordance with principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.
- 4.1.3 Investigations (where deemed appropriate) will be conducted thoroughly, with care, and with sensitivity to the privacy of individuals.

## **9. GRIEVANCE AGAINST PARENTS**

- 5.1 During discussions an individual can have a support person present.

## **10. GRIEVANCE AGAINST SENIOR STAFF AND THE PRINCIPAL**

- 6.1 The college acknowledges that Complainants are entitled to raise a grievance in good faith.
- 6.2 A grievance/s shall be assessed and (if deemed appropriate) investigated in a thorough, fair and impartial manner.
- 6.3 A senior staff member/ Principal can have a support person present during discussions.
- 6.4 If a member of Senior Staff or the Principal is unable to resolve the issue, they will advise the Complainant to take the grievance to the next step of the process. However, this only pertains to the Complainant's concern about the adherence of the college policies and procedures, not the dissatisfaction of the outcome of the investigation.
- 6.5 The Principal (or delegate) should advise the parties directly concerned, in writing, at Level 3 of:
  - 6.5.1 The decision taken by the college
  - 6.5.2 A summary of the reasons for the decision made;
  - 6.5.3 What and when follow up action, if any, is to be taken.

## **11. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS**

Complaints handling policy and procedure (Annexure D of the EBA) – for staff members only

Relational Management Policy: P – 12 – for students only