

## Managing Parent Complaint Policy

### Rationale

1. It is recognised that from time to time complaints may be received by Golden Grove Lutheran Primary School (GGLPS) from parents (including guardians, and any other person with whom a student normally or regularly resides) in our community. This policy sets out guidelines and processes by which such matters can be addressed respectfully, fairly, in a non-adversarial manner, quickly and with sensitivity to all concerned. It is the aim of GGLPS that school harmony be maintained and Christian harmony and lifestyle continue to be fostered.
2. At GGLPS we value strong interpersonal relationships that are based on mutual respect and trust.
3. The policy and procedure which follow seek to provide for the resolution of complaints by parents. For the purposes of this policy a complaint can arise if a parent believes, in good faith and with supporting information, that GGLPS has, for example:
  - 3.1. done something wrong;
  - 3.2. failed to do something that it should have done;
  - 3.3. acted unfairly, unreasonably, inappropriately or unprofessionally.
4. **Definitions**
  - 4.1. Concern/complaint/ grievance: matters that may be raised informally via conversation, a phone call or email to a member of staff that may be dealt with quickly (this policy will refer to these globally as a 'complaint').
  - 4.2. Restorative Practice: a process by which the healing of relationships between community members is at the centre of the complaint management processes adopted by GGLPS.
  - 4.3. Natural Justice: an unbiased and fair process which allows all parties to be heard and kept informed.
  - 4.4. Resolution: where the complaint is withdrawn or parties agree on a future course of action or a compromise is agreed upon.

## **5. Policy and Procedure detail**

GGLPS is committed to:

- 5.1. delivering in partnership with parents, education and care of the highest quality;
- 5.2. ensuring the school is a safe and fair place in which to work and study;
- 5.3. actively promoting the development of positive and respectful relationships and seeking to minimise the incidence of conflict that otherwise might give rise to a complaint;
- 5.4. encouraging wherever possible the resolution of complaints if and when they arise at the school level;
- 5.5. supporting the right of parents to have their complaints listened to, taken seriously, in good faith and to be addressed and resolved fairly, reasonably and quickly;
- 5.6. complying with all relevant statutory and legal requirements. These include for example, but are not limited to: anti-discrimination and vilification laws, child protection laws and Family Court orders;
- 5.7. dealing with complaints in a way which reflects our Christian values of love, support and forgiveness.

## **6. Guiding principles:**

- 6.1. The safety and wellbeing of all those involved is paramount.
- 6.2. All those involved have the right to be treated with respect and courtesy.
- 6.3. All parties respect and adhere to confidentiality and a respect of privacy of those involved taking into account relevant legislation.
- 6.4. All parties provide full and accurate information and details of any event or incident.
- 6.5. All parties work to facilitate respectful communication and openness to others.
- 6.6. The rights and responsibilities of all parties are balanced in seeking a mutually acceptable outcome.
- 6.7. All parties are open to participation in Restorative Practice and the principles of natural justice.
- 6.8. Allegations/grievances/concerns/complaints will be considered in a timely, consistent and impartial manner. The best interest of a student is served when there is open and timely communication between parents and GGLPS.

## **7. Informal resolution**

GGLPS recognises that often complaints are simple misunderstandings that are easily resolved via effective communication.

- 7.1. If at all possible and appropriate, the parties directly involved should first seek to resolve the complaint 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.

## **8. Formal and serious complaints**

- 8.1. Complaints that cannot be resolved as above (7: Informal resolution), or are of a serious nature, may be referred to in writing to the Principal. However, should the grievance involve the Principal, it shall be referred to the Chair of School Council.

## **9. Referral of complaint to School Council**

- 9.1. Generally, the Chair of School Council and members of School Council are not directly involved in the first instance with the receipt, investigation or resolution of complaints other than complaints arising within or about the School Council itself.
- 9.2. In instances where a complaint concerns the Principal or where the complainant feels that they have not received a satisfactory outcome of a complaint due to a failure of the processes outlined, the complainant is able to make a direct approach, in writing, to the Chair of Council. The Chair of Council will take advice from appropriate persons to determine the manner in which to deal the most effectively with the complaint.

## **10. Referral of complaint to an external authority**

- 10.1. When a complaint is not or cannot be resolved within the School, the parties may seek the assistance of external professional agencies. This is subject to the following provisions:
  - 10.1.1. Lutheran Education South Australia, Northern Territory and West Australia (LESNW) will not act as a mediator between parents and schools but if a matter remains unresolved, or parents feel that the school has failed to take their complaint seriously, LESNW may be able to provide general assistance to help parents understand the school's position.
  - 10.1.2. The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA) will not act as a mediator between parents and schools but if a matter remains unresolved, or parents feel that the school has failed to take their complaint seriously, AISSA may be able to provide general assistance to help parents understand the school's position.
  - 10.1.3. Lutheran Education Australia will refer any complaints concerning GGLPS back to the school and will not be involved in any resolution process.
  - 10.1.4. Neither the Minister for Education nor the Department for Education has any power to directly intervene in any complaints relating to the operations of a non-government school.

## **11. Record keeping by the school**

- 11.1. Accurate, appropriate and secure records will be kept at the School. These records will detail:
  - 11.1.1. the complaint;
  - 11.1.2. a summary of the outcome;
  - 11.1.3. any action that arises from addressing the complaint.

Approved School Council: 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018  
Next review: July 2020