

Grievance (Students and Parents) Policy

Revised: March 2017

Introduction

The School's policies which are made from time to time are made pursuant to the requirements set out in section 47 of the *Education Act* and of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for registration of the school.

Vision Statement

The purpose of Pacific Hope School Ltd. is to provide a Christian educational community as a centre of teaching, learning and serving excellence, founded on Biblically-based beliefs, values and behaviour.

Rationale

The purpose of Pacific Hope School Ltd.'s Grievance (Students and Parents) Policy is to provide a student or parent(s)/legal guardian with the opportunity to access procedures to facilitate the resolution of a complaint or grievance. These internal procedures are a conciliatory and non-legal process. The policy is intended to reflect the desire of the School to function as a Christian community.

Policy:

Pacific Hope School Ltd. recognises that it is good and fitting that members of communities have opportunity to express disappointment or disapproval and seeks to engage with such situations with the intent of clearly reaching mutual understanding amongst the parties involved.

Principles:

- A grievance is defined as a complaint by a student or parent based on an actual situation in which the person believes that there is a just cause for protest or disagreement. The grievance must be one that lies in the power of the management to resolve for example not about matters determined by legislation.
- Resolution of issues of concern and preservation of relationship should be the intent of all communication regarding a concern of a parent.
- Parents and caregivers have a recognised right to seek access to information about and clarification of circumstances relating to the education and welfare of children in their care.
- The School retains full responsibility for protecting members of the community, including staff, from circumstances that might be harmful to the individual's well being or reputation.
- Concerns of parents and students should be communicated to the School according to the accompanying procedures. Guidelines have been set in place to protect both staff and parents from unnecessarily escalating issues of concern whilst ensuring that matters of concern for a parent are heard openly and responded to appropriately.
- When processing any student or parent concern all parties are to show the utmost respect for the privacy of students, parents and staff. No other communication about the matter should be entered into by anyone involved.
- All communication by staff and by parents should conform to the Privacy Policy and the Communication Policy of the school and be characterized by courtesy and respect.
- Staff are designated with responsibility for resolving parental grievances in a manner that is in keeping with School policies and procedures.
- All issues of parent grievance should be resolved at the lowest level of hierarchical responsibility as is possible to the mutual satisfaction of the School and the parents.
- A record of communication should be kept for all formal interviews.
- A formal written communication of the resolution of the grievance should be distributed to those involved in the process.
- Concerns relating to the Principal should be directed to the Executive Principal.

Procedural Guidelines:

- In the first instance, there is an attempt to informally resolve the issue. If this is unsatisfactory or does not result in a resolution of the matter, the School's internal formal complaints handling procedure will be followed.
- The process of this grievance procedure is confidential and any complaints are a matter between the parties concerned and those directly involved in the complaints handling process.
- If the student or parent(s)/legal guardian remains dissatisfied with the outcome, the School will advise of access to an independent external appeals process.

1) Students

- a) Students should at the first instance approach the staff member or student and attempt to resolve the concern. Staff members should respond by the end of the next working day.
- b) If this is not resolved, students should approach the relevant staff supervisor. In this case the Teacher, students (Yrs. 3-10) will complete an Incident Report form and the Teacher will initially deal with the grievance. This will be referred to the Director or Principal (or delegate) if a resolution is not reached. In the case of a curriculum issue students will be referred to the Teacher who will ask the student to put their concerns in writing. This matter will be referred on to the Director or Principal (or delegate).
- c) If the matter cannot be resolved through mediation, the matter will be referred to the Principal (or delegate) and/or Executive Principal.
- d) At this point, the student should notify the school in writing of the nature and details of the complaint.
- e) Each complainant has the opportunity to present his/her case to the Principal (or delegate). Students may be accompanied by a support person.
- f) The formal complaints process will commence within 10 working days of the lodgement of the complaint with the Principal (or delegate).
- g) Once the Principal (or delegate) has come to a decision regarding the complaint, the student will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome.
- h) If the complaints procedure finds in favour of the student, the School will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventative action required.
- i) If the complaints procedure does not find in favour of the student or the student is dissatisfied with the result of the complaints procedure, he/she will be informed of the external complaints and appeals process available to them at minimal or no cost.
- j) The School undertakes to finalise all grievance procedures within 20 working days.
- k) For the duration of the appeals process, the student is required to maintain enrolment and attendance at all classes as normal.

2) Parent(s) / Legal Guardians

- a) In the case of an initial concern, the parent should contact the staff member concerned by phone or email. Staff should respond to this by the end of the next working day.
- b) If the issue is not resolved, parent(s)/legal guardians should contact the Teacher or Director in the first instance to attempt mediation/informal resolution of the complaint.
- c) If the matter cannot be resolved through mediation, it will be referred to the Principal (or delegate).
- d) At this point, parent(s)/legal guardians must notify the school in writing of the nature and details of the complaint.
- e) Each complainant has the opportunity to present their case to the Principal (or delegate). Parent(s)/legal guardians may be accompanied by a support person.
- f) The School's formal complaints process will commence within 10 working days of the lodgement of the complaint with the Principal (or delegate).
- g) Once the Principal (or delegate) has come to a decision regarding the complaint, the parent(s)/legal guardian will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome.
- h) If the complaints procedure finds in favour of the parent(s)/legal guardian, the School will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventative action required.

- i) If the complaints procedure does not find in favour of the parent(s)/legal guardian or the parent(s)/legal guardian is dissatisfied with the result of the complaints procedure, the School will advise of the external complaints and appeals process available to them at minimal or no cost.
- j) The School undertakes to finalise all grievance procedures within 20 working days.

3) External Appeals and Mediation

- a) At the conclusion of the Grievance process the aggrieved party/s may request that the matter be considered by an external third party.
- b) When so requested the School will advise the aggrieved parties to direct their appeal in writing to External Appeals Mediator.
- c) Such external appeals should be lodged within seven (7) working days of the final determination of the internal Grievance process being issued in writing to the concerned parties.
- d) The body to whom Pacific Hope School Ltd. refers requests for external review is Association of Independent Schools, NSW (AISNSW).