



Emmaus
Christian College

Grievance Policy

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1 Purpose

Romans 12:18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

It is recognised that, from time to time, grievances may arise within the school community. This policy sets out principles and processes by which matters of concern can be addressed expeditiously, with due discretion and with sensitivity to all concerned.

2 Definitions

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived situation or outcome. The dissatisfaction may be based on a perception that a student, parent or staff member has:

- done something wrong, or
- failed to do something it should have, or
- acted unfairly or inappropriately.

Emmaus Christian College is committed to:

- ensuring that the school is a safe, fair and just place
- ensuring all individuals are treated fairly and impartially
- actively promoting the development of positive personal relationships, where persons respect one another
- being proactive in seeking to minimise the incidence of conflict
- supporting the right of every member of the school community to have his/her/grievances listened to, addressed fairly and dealt with expeditiously
- attempting to resolve disputes and grievances in a non-threatening, respectful manner and in a supportive environment
- Ensuring that no person will be victimised as a result of lodging a formal complaint.

All sections of our community, students, staff and parents are addressed by this policy and are organised in separate sections for ease of use.

3 Scope of Policy

This policy applies across Emmaus Christian College. It is recognised that it is beyond the scope of this Policy to cover all aspects of legal responsibilities; however, the policy is intended to provide direction for staff, students and families of the College.

- 2.1. This policy is formed within the mission and values of Emmaus Christian College. The values of love, compassion, justice, reconciliation and hope lead all members of the school community into the justice and love of the Reign of God.
- 2.2. Every person is part of the Body of Christ and their physical, spiritual, social and emotional growth towards personal and social responsibility, and self-discipline is a lifelong process. Each person's growth is nourished by the many opportunities to develop positive relationships, build resilience skills and form deep connections in a learning community.
- 2.3. Neither the Minister for Education and Child Development nor the Department for Education and Child Development has any power to directly intervene in any complaints relating to the operations of a non-government school.

4 Policy – Guiding Principles

It is the policy's intent that:

- 3.1 Complainants are encouraged to firstly and, where practicable, seek to resolve a complaint informally. Formal procedures for the resolution of grievances will normally only be invoked when a matter cannot be resolved by informal means. A formal grievance must be placed in writing including all areas of concern and outcome desired.
- 3.2 The school supports, where possible, an informal, amicable and equitable resolution of grievances through discussions, mediation and/or conciliation to achieve an agreed outcome aimed at enabling all parties to continue in the school community free from harassment or retribution.
- 3.3 All resolution policies and processes acknowledge and value different perspectives and operate under the principles of: impartiality, promptness and protection from victimisation.
- 3.4 Communication and resolution processes should always be based on the parties acting in good faith, exercising good judgement, being honest and open, focusing on the issue and not the person.
- 3.5 In dealing with a complaint, informally or formally, every reasonable effort shall be made to ensure that natural justice is afforded to all Parties. This means, in practical terms:
 - a. Subject to duty of care or other legal obligations, respondents should normally be informed of all allegations, and the basis for and the specific circumstances which give rise to the grievance.
 - b. The right of all parties to be heard and to put their case.
 - c. Investigations into the grievance must be undertaken expeditiously and thoroughly.
 - d. Only matters that are relevant to the grievance under consideration should be taken into account.
- 3.6 It is recognised that the application of the principles of procedural fairness can vary, depending upon the context and nature of the grievance and the nature of the response proposed or sought.
- 3.7 All complaints will be treated with respect and sensitivity. It is important to note that communications and documents given to the school will not always be kept confidential. Although we endeavour to deal with complaints with appropriate discretion, we reserve the right to disclose details of the matter to other persons who in our opinion need to know them, in order to facilitate the resolution of the complaint.
- 3.8 Whilst complaints from an anonymous source will be taken seriously and investigated as far as practically possible, it is very difficult to proceed or undertake a thorough and extensive investigation if the Complainant cannot be identified and hence cannot provide further and better particulars or information to assist with that investigation. Complainants are therefore encouraged to identify themselves.
- 3.9 Where complaints or grievances are made in circumstances where an alleged crime may have been committed, the Police or similar outside agencies will normally be contacted and formally advised of the complaint or grievance. In some cases (e.g. Mandatory Reporting), there is no discretion and the matter must be reported to the relevant authorities.
- 3.10 Emmaus Christian College commits to appropriate pastoral, educative, disciplinary and legal responses to grievance related issues and incidents.
- 3.11 Emmaus Christian College seeks to respond to grievance related issues at the earliest reasonable opportunity and with regard to the uniqueness of each situation, the stage of development of those involved with an understanding of the cultural and special needs of all members of the school community.
- 3.12 Upon the conclusion of the grievance process outlined above, it is necessary for all parties to be respectful and supportive of the outcome.

5 Responsibilities

All members of a school community contribute to the development of grievance related policies and practices and their successful implementation. The College Leadership has responsibility for ensuring that pastoral care is extended to all members of the school community.

4.1. Responsibilities of School Leaders

- To demonstrate consistency and fairness in implementing grievance related policy and practices.

4.2 Responsibilities of Staff

- To provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.
- To develop and maintain inclusive and engaging teaching and learning programs and initiatives for all students with a focus on building social and emotional competencies and the development of personal and social responsibility.

6 Responsibility for implementation, monitoring, and continual improvement

Responsibility for implementation, monitoring and review of the policy is vested at the level appropriate to the following roles:

College Leadership

7 Resources – related policies, procedures and support documents

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with, and is additional to, any other relevant Emmaus Christian College policy, procedure or support document. Consideration should also be given to the following resources:

AISSA 2016 Resolving Student concerns and Grievances

AISSA 2015 Handling Complaints

South Australian Department for Education – Student Support Services

<https://www.decd.sa.gov.au/supporting-students/student-support-services>

Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011

<http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au>

8 Revision Record

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