

COMMUNITY GRIEVANCES

Rationale:

As a Christian school community it is important that we have positive, clear and effective processes for resolving grievances between the College and community members in order to assist in the building of strong relationships, dispel anxiety, and ultimately provide students with an enhanced learning environment. The College community works to create a safe, caring and nurturing environment where students are encouraged to pursue their own growth and development. The College actively promotes the IB Learner Profile¹ attributes and their application in daily life. In relation to bullying, this includes:

- “Open-minded – being open to the perspectives of other members of the community and seeking and evaluating a range of points of view;
- Caring – showing empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others;
- Principled – acting with integrity and honesty and a sense of fairness, justice and respect;
- Risk-takers – being brave in supporting others;
- Thinkers – making reasoned, ethical decisions about their behaviour”².

Aim:

To provide clear, positive and fair processes that allow grievances to be aired and resolved in a timely and effective manner, that honours God and one another in the process.

Implementation:

Our college desires to have clear, consultative and open communication.

While we accept our responsibility to consult, and to communicate both clearly and effectively with the community, community members also have an obligation to seek clarification when required.

There will, however, still be times when members of the community disagree or are confused about the things that we are doing.

It is essential that the established processes as outlined below is followed to resolve grievances:

1. All grievances are to be kept confidential.

¹ IBO (2009); *IB Learner Profile Booklet*; pp.5

² Ibid.

2. Try to establish the facts as clearly as possible, being wary of third hand information or gossip.
3. Concerned community members may be provided with a copy of '*The Community Grievances Policy*' unless the matter is easily and satisfactorily resolved. This is readily available from the college office.

All formal discussions and processes involving grievances will be documented.

The Principal will exercise his/her judgement as to whether or not they will act upon anonymous complaints.

The Parents & Friends Association and/or School Board, will not simply become a conduit for community complaints, will not become involved in confidential or personal issues, and will generally refer specific grievances about individuals to the Principal.

It is essential that the established process as outlined below is followed to resolve grievances:

- Try to establish the facts as clearly as you can, be wary of third hand information or gossip.
- The community member may seek to resolve the issue on a one-to-one level with the person they feel is responsible for the behaviour. This step should only occur if the grievance **does not** involve a member of the student body.
- If a personal resolution process is not desired or unable to be achieved, the aggrieved community member may wish to be accompanied by another person of their choice in a support role. This support role may include, but is not limited to, the Principal, Deputy Principal and/or Business Manager. This person is to act in a mediator role to discuss the issue. Both parties must agree with the choice of the third party nominee.
- If the issue is unable to be resolved, then a formal complaint should be lodged with the Principal, Deputy Principal and/or Business Manager who will undertake an investigation into the dispute until the matter has been resolved.
- Should the matter fail to be resolved in the mediation processes, the Principal will make a decision on the best course of action required to resolve the issue. This may include seeking assistance from an external consultant.
- Should the issue concern a member of the student body, mediation with the student present will only occur with the agreement of the student's parent or guardian who may wish to attend.
- At all stages of the process, community members have the right to seek external legal advice and assistance should they wish to.
- Copies of '*The Community Grievance Policy*' are readily available from the College office.
- The Chairman of the School Council will be included in the resolution process for issues that may directly involve the Principal.
- All grievances are to be kept as confidential as possible.

- All formal discussions and processes involving grievances will be documented.
- The Principal will exercise his/her judgement as to whether or not they will act upon anonymous complaints.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed by the School Board as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

