



KNOWLEDGE IS THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION

Complaint, Grievance and Dispute Resolution Policy

Western Grammar School
15 Cannery Road, Plumpton NSW 2770

1 Purpose:

Western Grammar School has policy and procedures to resolve complaints and grievances raised by staff, students, parents or community members to ensure that complaints are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently and promptly. It is one of the expectations from the school staff and school community to display a high level of moral and ethical conduct that is free from political interference, back-biting, belittling, slandering, ganging up, making groups or any other misconduct which may damage the school's working and educational environment. It is also expected from the school staff to play an active role to create and maintain a positive and safe school environment.

2 Aims:

- To create and maintain a positive, productive and pleasant working environment.
- To provide a healthy and safe school environment that is free from discrimination and harassment.
- To resolve complaints through a fair and efficient procedure.
- To provide clear and effective processes for resolving complaints or grievances between the school staff, students, parents and community members.

3 Procedures:

The Principal's or the Principal's delegate will:

- ensure that all staff are aware of their rights, responsibilities and procedures for resolving complaints and/or grievances.
- provide access to students, staff, parents and community members to raise complaints and/or their grievances by either:
 - emailing their concerns with accurate and proper information to the Principal.
 - giving written formal complaint to admin manager at the school reception desk.
 - calling and reporting their complaints to the Principal or Principal's delegate.
- choose to respond to a complaint through an informal process in cases where the complaint is minor and has arisen from lack of or unclear communication, by referring the matter to Head of Department or the Principal's delegate.
- investigate and/or refer the matters of serious misconduct – sexual offences, criminal charges, or other serious incidents to the Community Services or Office of Children Guardian (refer to Child Protection Policy).
- ensure that all complaints, ensuing procedures and outcomes are fully documented.
- be required to use school complaints resolution procedures, where appropriate, for resolving complaints in relation to issues that fall within the school's area of responsibility.

Formal Complaints:

- The Principal may choose to respond to a complaint through an informal process in cases where the complaint is minor, or the complainant wishes the matter to be dealt with informally or the complaint has arisen from lack of or unclear communication.
- Formal processes will be used when informal processes haven't been successful; or when a complainant seeks a formal process; or the Principal believes the complaint is of a serious nature and requires board involvement and warrants formal investigation.
- The formal process involves:
 1. The Principal contacts the School Board Chairman and requests the chairman to be present in the meeting with the complainant and any other individuals involved or to appoint any other Board Member as his delegate to act on his behalf. Board may refer the complaint back to the Principal to resolve the complaint
 2. During the meeting, minutes will be taken by the chairman or the Principal.
 3. Accepting the complaint: Acceptance may involve further investigation by the Principal and the School Board, reconciliation or counselling, informing the individual/s involved in writing.
 4. Preparation of a detailed confidential report.
 5. The Principal or School Board should report to the relevant authorities if required.
 6. The Principal or Principal's Delegate should continue to monitor, review and evaluate the situation.

4 Staff Grievances:

- If staff members have complaints, they should consult with the Principal. Individual staff members are free to consult with the Principal or Principal's delegate any time during the week.
- The Principal and Principal's delegate may resolve the grievances of the staff through an informal process in cases where the complaint is minor and has arisen from lack of communication or unclear communication, by referring the matter to Head of Department or the Principal's delegate.
- If the complaint is about any senior staff member or about the Principal and it is significantly important, the concerned staff should raise complaints and/or their grievances through formal process by:
 - emailing their concerns with accurate and proper information to the Principal (or Board Chair if it is about the Principal).
 - giving written formal complaint to Assistant Principal.

- If the complaint or grievance is not resolved within a reasonable period of time, the complainant may choose to forward his/her complaint to the school board by:
 - emailing their concerns to the Chairman/secretary school board with evidence including formal correspondence with the Principal and measures adopted for dispute resolution.
 - giving written formal complaint to admin manager ensuring that copy of the complaints including supporting documents are kept by the complainant and receipt are obtained.
- The Western Grammar School Board will be kept informed of any complaints of a serious nature which required special attention.
- All matters must be treated with utmost confidentiality and professional respect always.

5 Parent Community Grievances:

Western Grammar School is proud to provide clear and open communication. While we accept our responsibility to consult and to communicate both clearly and effectively with the WGS community, WGS community members also have an obligation to read notices and newsletters, to attend briefings, and to seek clarification when required. There may, however, still be times when members of the community disagree or are confused about the things that require explanation. It is essential that the established process as outlined below is followed to resolve parent/community grievances.

- If the matter involves your child or an issue of everyday class operation, make an appointment to see their classroom teacher, detailing the reasons for the appointment.
- An appointment should be made with the Principal or the Principal's delegate to discuss issues involving school policy, operations beyond the child's classroom and concerns about staff or grievances that are not effectively and easily resolved.
- The Principal or Principal's delegate will provide the concerned parent community member with a copy of this Policy unless the matter is easily and satisfactorily resolved.
- While in principle, support may be sought from the Parents & Community Association (P&C), the P&C will not simply become a conduit for community complaints and will not become involved in confidential or personal issues rather will assist in resolving disputes, by referring specific grievances about individuals to the Principal and by engaging in the process of mediation.
- A parent community member may be accompanied by another person, in a support role, at appointments to resolve grievances.
- All formal discussions and processes involving grievances will be documented.
- The Principal and School Board will exercise their judgement as to whether they will act upon anonymous complaints.

- The Principal will provide parents' community members with appropriate contact names and numbers for the School Board Chairman and Secretary if grievances are not resolved.
- All grievances are to be kept as confidential as possible, and must not be disclosed to any irrelevant person or parents in order to create pressure groups that may damage the image of the school and that may be detrimental to the educational environment of the school causing damage to the students by losing respect for the school, teachers and other school staff.

Approval Date: _____ **Review date:** _____

Secretary's Signature: _____ **Chairman's Signature:** _____