



IMMANUEL PRIMARY SCHOOL

A School of the Lutheran Church

"Building Foundations for Life"

Saratoga Drive, Novar Gardens 5040



Complaints Policy

Rationale

Positive, clear and effective processes for resolving grievance between parents and other members of the school assists in the building of strong relationships, dispels anxiety, and ultimately provides students with an enhanced learning environment.

The policy also enables ongoing analysis of the root causes of complaints, thereby forming part of the school's risk management process and facilitating improvement.

Definitions

A *complainant* is any person making a complaint.

A *respondent* is the person(s) alleged to have been explicitly involved in the act or acts to which the complaint relates.

A *receiver* is the person with whom the complaint is lodged.

An *expression of concern* is a comment made by a person who is not requiring a response. Action may still be required however under the terms of the policy statement.

A *complaint* is an expression of dissatisfaction with a service provided, a decision made or action taken.

Discrimination is unfair treatment of others because of prejudice about ability, race, gender or religion etc.

Principal refers to the Principal or his/her delegate.

Policy Statement

"Lutheran schools seek to be places of physical, social and psychological safety for all where legal requirements are fulfilled, and where caring, cooperative and respectful relationships contribute to supportive communities that reflect the values of the gospel of Jesus Christ and where there is a focus on love, justice, compassion, forgiveness, service, humility, courage, hope, quality, appreciation and restoration" (LEA Valuing Safe Communities, 2008)

Immanuel Primary School recognises that the majority of complaints will be resolved at the first point of contact as an example of positive working relationships. In most cases this will be the classroom teacher.

Immanuel Primary School is committed to:

- Optimal educational outcomes, preventing discrimination and provision of harmonious and cohesive working and learning environments within a culture which values people
- Responding to complaints with an attitude of grace
- Using the complaints process as a means for community members to contribute to the positive improvement of the school's services
- Managing complaints consistently, confidentially and in a timely manner, while reflecting the mission, vision and core values of the school.

Procedures

Complaint resolution processes rely on people acting in good faith, exercising good judgement, being honest and open, focussing on then issues not the person and communicating in a courteous and respectful manner.

It is important that all complaints related to the school are directed to the school and not dealt with outside the context of the school.

Any complaint should be received in the following manner:

- Being respectful and helpful
- Not being defensive and apportioning blame
- Remaining positive
- Not perceiving anger as a personal attack
- Reflecting the mission and vision statements and core values of the school

WHEN A COMPLAINT IS RAISED (AT THE FIRST POINT OF CONTACT):

- Listen to the event that gave rise to the complaint
- Identify who is the most appropriate person to deal with the complaint (from the table below) and
- Refer the complaint and/or complainant to that person immediately or within 3 working days
- If it is an anonymous complaint, the staff member most appropriate to deal with the complaint is to make an assessment of the complaint and legal responsibilities in relation to employees and students in determining what action should be taken.

What is the event that gave rise to the complaint?	Who is the most appropriate person?
Award of academic mark, grade or other recognition Student behaviour Curriculum/programming Classroom matters	Classroom teacher-always first point of contact ↓ If not resolved: Assistant Principal PYP Coordinator/ Assistant Principal Learning Support ↓ If not resolved: Principal
Financial matters Equipment, Resources, Maintenance of grounds Occupational Health and Safety of Staff	Business Manager
Protection and support of children (refer to LSA Policy on Child Protection) Discrimination Conflict between staff (refer to LEA Valuing Safe Communities)	Pastoral Care Coordinator/Counsellor ↓ If not resolved: Principal Principal Principal

Conflict between staff and student/parent Conduct class volunteer	Assistant Principal PYP Coordinator/ Assistant Principal Learning Support Pastoral Care Coordinator ↓ If not resolved: Principal
Staff misconduct/Conduct of specific staff member	Principal
Human Resource Management Conflict between management and staff	Principal
Process and administration (legislation, policies, procedures and practices)	Assistant Principal Administration ↓ If not resolved: Principal

The **MOST APPROPRIATE PERSON** to deal with the complaint will then:

Step 1: **Receive the complaint**

- Contact the complainant as early as possible and within 3 working days, to acknowledge the complaint and proceed with complaint handling process
- Listen to the issues being raised and *identify the events* that gave rise to the complaint
- Acknowledge the complainant's feelings and thank them for communicating the issues
- If the complainant does not require a response then the complaint is considered an *expression of concern* and then evaluated and determined whether an action is required or not
- If the complainant requires a response, and the complaint is not able to be managed immediately, arrange for a mutually agreed time to proceed

Step 2: **Manage** the complaint

- Summarise the issues and clarify your understanding of the situation is accurate
- What does the complainant want to happen-Ask, "What is it you hope we can do to resolve this?"
- Dispel any unrealistic or misconceived expectations and explain any limits of your powers
- Inform complainant of their responsibilities
 - Be honest and open throughout the process. Provide all known information at the outset
 - Maintain confidentiality
- Diarise complaint, discussion and subsequent action plan
- Action plans should be reassessed at a mutually agreed time
- If the complaint remains unresolved or without an agreed action plan, the complaint is referred to the next appropriate person

Step 3: **Refer to Assistant Principal/Principal for review (as appropriate)**

The Assistant Principal/Principal must contact the complainant as early as possible to acknowledge the complaint and proceed with the complaint handling process.

Thereafter the complainant and the respondent (if applicable) should be involved in the process and informed of the progress.

The Assistant Principal/Principal takes further action, which may include:

- An initial meeting to attempt to resolve the complaint. Notes of the meetings will be documented at the discretion of the Principal or request of complainant.
- An investigation of the complaint, collect and analyse information and facts relevant to the issue
- Consulting the relevant policies on issues that relate to the complaint and legal requirements
- A request that the complaint be submitted in writing by the complainant
- Making a timely decision on the complaint and informing the complainant and other involved persons
- Referring the complaint externally. Options may include:
 - Chairperson of the school Council
 - Director of Lutheran schools of Australia (SA/NT/WA)
 - An agency outside the Lutheran Schools system

All documentation to be retained by the school in accordance with the Privacy Policy, and can be used to review school practices and policies.

Step 4: **Review of decision**

If the complainant or respondent is not satisfied with the decision/outcome, they are encouraged to

- Discuss it further with the Principal
- Follow other formal avenues available to them

Step 5: **Review of complaint handling process**

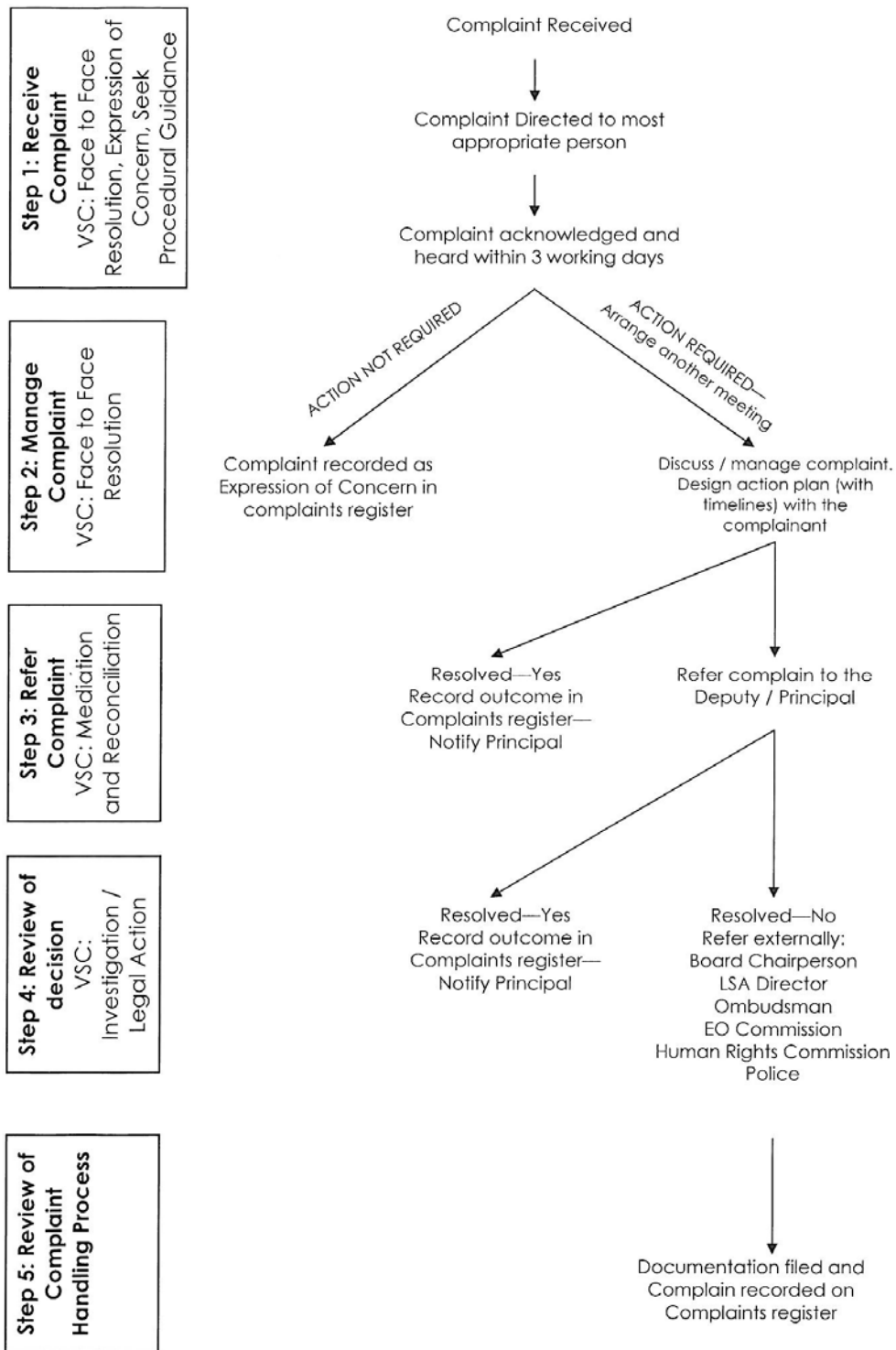
All complaints that have been referred to the Principal are to be detailed on the School Complaints Register (Appendix 1)

Please Note:

- Grievances that occur between one parent and another, falls outside our jurisdiction
- If you, the parent, have a grievance with a student, do not approach the student as this a breach of the Child Protection Policy.
- Not all grievances are formal and it is at the discretion of the Principal whether the information is passed on.
- Neither the Minister for Education and Child Development nor the Department of Education and Child Development has any power to directly intervene in any complaints relating to the operations of a non-government school.

Grievance Process for Adults (flowchart)

GRIEVANCE PROCESS FOR ADULTS - Immanuel Primary School



Appendix 1 :

Immanuel Primary School Grievance Policy

COMPLAINT REGISTER

Confidential

Date complaint raised	Complainant	Respondent	Managed by (name /role)	Complaint details (brief)	Date of advice to complainant (of resolution/no further action)	File Ref