

SCHOOL COMPLAINTS & DISPUTES RESOLUTION POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that student, parent and employee (where related to the operation of The Glenleighden School (TGS)) complaints and disputes are dealt with and resolved in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair way.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to parents/carers, students and all employees, contractors, volunteers and agents of TGS and Speech & Language Development Australia (SALDA) as well as those persons undertaking work experience or vocational placements and the SALDA Board.

3. REFERENCES

- Child Protection Policy
- Student Bullying Policy
- Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- Workplace Grievance Procedure
- *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2001*
- *Australian Education Regulations 2013*
- *Fair Work Act 2009*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*

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Responsible Manager	School Principal		
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Gareth Davies		Chair	
Name	Position	Signature	

4. POLICY

4.1 Rationale

TGS is committed to ensuring that student, parent and employee complaints and disputes are dealt with and resolved in a timely, efficient, effective and fair manner.

TGS views resolution of complaints and disputes as an integral part of its operations and accountability process. TGS acknowledges the right of students, parents and employees to complain when dissatisfied with an action, inaction or decision of the school and the school encourages such feedback. TGS recognises that time spent on handling disputes can be an investment in better service to students, parents and employees.

4.2 Types of Disputes that may be Resolved under this Policy

TGS encourages students, parents and employees to promptly lodge complaints regarding matters including but not limited to the following:

- TGS, its employees or students have acted contrary to TGS policy;
- TGS, its employees or students have failed to act when action was reasonably required
- TGS, its employees or students have acted unfairly or improperly and in cases where there may be concerns with:
 - issues of student behaviour that are contrary to other procedures
 - learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
 - communication with students or parents or between employees
 - school fees and payments
 - general administrative issues.

Student complaints may be brought by students or by parents on behalf of their children, as appropriate in the circumstances.

4.3 Issues Outside of this Policy

The following matters are outside of the scope of this policy and should be managed as follows:

- Child protection concerns or risks of harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the law and the school's Child Protection Policy.
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the Student Bullying Policy.
- Student discipline matters, should be dealt with under the Positive Behaviour Management Policy.
- Employee complaints related to their employment should be made in accordance with the Workplace Grievance Procedure.
- Student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the Principal in the case of TGS and to the Chief Executive Officer in respect of SALDA generally; they will involve the Police as appropriate and for all criminal matters.

4.4 Dispute Resolution Principles

TGS is committed to managing disputes according to the following principles:

- disputes will be resolved promptly and with as little disruption as possible

- disputes will be taken seriously
- anonymous complaints will be treated on their merits like any other dispute when possible
- disputes will be dealt with fairly and objectively and in a timely manner
- mediation, negotiation and informal resolution are available alternatives to investigation
- procedural fairness will be ensured wherever practicable
- natural justice principles will be observed wherever practicable
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- all parties to the dispute will be appropriately supported
- all parties are entitled to reasonable progress updates
- appropriate remedies will be offered and implemented
- a review mechanism will be offered
- complainants, respondents and people associated with them will not be victimised as a result of lodging the dispute nor will they suffer any other reprisals
- the school will keep confidential records of disputes.

4.5 Responsibilities

4.5.1 School

TGS has the following role and responsibilities:

- develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the School Complaints & Disputes Resolution Policy and procedures
- appropriately communicate the School Complaints & Disputes Resolution Policy and procedures to students, parents and employees
- upon receipt of a dispute, manage the dispute in accordance with the School Complaints & Disputes Resolution model prescribed in the procedures
- ensure that all parties to a dispute are offered a support person
- take appropriate action to prevent the victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them
- appropriately implement remedies
- appropriately train relevant employees
- keep records of any complaints or disputes and ensure such records are maintained as required by law
- monitor the outcome of any complaint or dispute and report any complaints or disputes as required by law

4.5.2 All Parties to a Dispute

The complainant and respondent both have the following role and responsibilities:

- apply and comply with the School Complaints & Disputes Resolution Policy and procedures
- lodge disputes promptly after the issue occurs or as otherwise appropriate

- expect that the dispute will be dealt with fairly and objectively; in a timely manner; with procedural fairness wherever practicable; that natural justice principles will be observed wherever practicable; that confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible and otherwise as required by law
- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
- not provide deliberately false or misleading information
- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints
- act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner
- show respect and understanding of each other's points of view and values, rather than judge and blame
- act in a non-threatening manner
- to accept support as needed
- acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- not victimise or act in reprisal against any party to the dispute or any person associated with them.

4.5.3 Employees Receiving Disputes

Employees receiving disputes have the following role and responsibilities:

- report any complaint or dispute to their line manager or Principal, and otherwise act in accordance with the School Complaints & Disputes Resolution Policy and procedures
- inform the party lodging the complaint or dispute of how complaints or disputes can be lodged, when they should be lodged and what information is required
- provide the complainant with information about any support or assistance available to assist them in lodging their complaint or dispute
- provide the complainant with a copy of the School Complaints & Disputes Resolution Policy and procedures
- maintain confidentiality
- keep records of any complaints or disputes and ensure such records are maintained as required by law
- to accept support as needed
- not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

4.6 Implementation

TGS is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints and disputes at the school, including by the development and implementation of this policy and related procedures, and via the clear support and promotion of the policy and procedures.

TGS is also committed to appropriately training relevant employees (especially senior staff) on how to resolve disputes in line with this policy and the related procedures.

TGS will keep records of complaints and disputes, will monitor their resolution and will report on a high-level basis to the SALDA Board on complaints and dispute resolution at the school.

TGS will act to encourage students, parents and employees to contribute to a healthy school culture where complaints and disputes are investigated and resolved with as little disruption as possible.