Grievance Policy (Students)

Policy Statement
Education is a partnership between the School and the parents. Open communication will support both parties in meeting the needs of the child.

In all instances we encourage parents or students who have concerns to make it known to the School as soon as possible. We are more than willing to listen and to work together to find a resolution to the issue. Often what may seem to be a small issue or concern can be addressed easily, but if left can escalate into major and more difficult issues.

The purpose of this policy is to outline identification and management of matters that can be described as a grievance.

Scope
This policy applies to all parents and students at Presbyterian Ladies' College.

Addressing Complaints/Grievances
The following principles determine our policy for addressing complaints/grievances:

- Where a grievance arises, in the first instance it should be dealt with in an informal manner, by discussing it with the staff member involved.
- If a grievance cannot be resolved at an informal level, the complainant shall advise the other party that the grievance will be taken to the formal process.
- Grievances should be discussed and resolved within a general framework of co-operation which emphasizes prevention of future disputes. A complainant shall not be disadvantaged for having lodged a complaint.
- There must be an end to the process at some point; hence there must be an acceptance by the parties that it is possible that the resolution of a complaint may not take the form that all of the parties would wish.
- It may be necessary to involve an external mediator, mutually agreed by both parties and the Chair of the School Council, to help resolve an issue.

The purpose of these guidelines is to establish mechanisms to facilitate resolution of conflicts and grievances involving students, parents and staff associated with the School.

The process is based on the principles of natural justice in that all parties (both complainant and those perceived to have caused the grievance) have the right to be heard without prejudice and to be treated fairly and with respect.

Throughout the grievance resolution process, the basic principle is to keep open all channels of communication.

A grievance arises from any decision, act or omission by any person or persons within the School, which is considered by the complainant to be wrong, mistaken, unjust, inequitable or discriminatory and is causing concern or distress.

There are two grievance processes - an informal grievance process and a formal grievance process.

Informal Grievance Process
An informal grievance process allows:

- The grievance to be dealt with at the local level.
- Documentation and record keeping to be kept to a minimum.
- The greatest likelihood of reaching an outcome acceptable to all parties.

The Formal Grievance Process
The formal grievance process only occurs when it is unlikely that the parties involved will reach a conciliation via the informal process. At each stage of this process a record should be made, beginning with documentation of the original complaint.

In describing the following grievance procedure steps, a worst-case approach has been taken; that is the complaint continues as far as possible. It is hoped that complaints can be resolved at the earlier stages.

Junior School (K-6)
Step 1 Parent > Teacher
If unresolved
Step 2 Head of Junior School, Deputy Head of Junior School or with other staff where appropriate eg psychologist.
Step 3 Principal
If unresolved
Step 4 Principal and/or Chair of Council (or Chair's nominee mediator)

Middle School Year 7-9/Senior School (Year 10-12)
Step 1 Parent/Student and Subject Teacher (academic)
Parent/Student and Year Co-ordinator (pastoral/academic)
If unresolved
Step 2 Head of Department (academic) or Head of Middle or Senior School (pastoral), or with other staff where appropriate eg Psychologist.
If unresolved
Step 3 Head of Curriculum or Deputy Principal MYP
If unresolved
Step 4 Principal, if unresolved.
Step 5 Principal and/or Chair of Council (or Chair's nominee mediator)

Boarding House
Step 1 Parent/Student and Residential Staff
If unresolved
Step 2  Director of Boarding and/or Head of Staff

If unresolved
Step 3  Principal

If unresolved
Step 4  Principal and/or Chair of Council (or Chair's nominee mediator)