



Complaints and Grievance Policy

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to enable Lutheran Ormeau Rivers District School (LORDS) to provide an environment where complaints and concerns can be raised and addressed in an appropriate manner and consistent with scriptural principles.	
Scope:	<p>(a) The scope of this policy extends to Complaints brought by any member of staff, parents, students or other members of the School's wider community.</p> <p>(b) Queensland Lutheran Schools have specific policies/ procedures in place for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Child Protection; (ii) Unsatisfactory Performance; (iii) Serious Misconduct and Summary Dismissal; (iv) Any mandatory complaints handling processes applicable under federal and/or state funding agreements or funded programs; (v) Accidents/ incidents more appropriately dealt with under the School's Incident Recording and Reporting and Incident Investigations procedures. <p>(c) Complaints determined as relating to matters of the above nature should be dealt with under the specific policies and or procedures in place relating to such matters.</p> <p>This policy is therefore applicable where Complaints are not dealt with under another policy/procedure.</p>	
Status:	Approved	Supersedes: 5/9/2018
Authorised by:	School Council	Date of Authorisation: 14/09/2023
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QLD Lutherran Schools Single Enterprise Agreement 2020 	
Review Date:	Every 3 Years	Next Review Date: 14/09/2026
Policy Owner:	School Council	



Revision/Modification History			
Date	Version	Summary	Policy/Procedure
5/9/2018	1.0	New document	Lutheran Ormeau Rivers School Complaints and Grievance Handling Policy
3/9/2019	1.0	New document	Grievance and Complaints Procedure
1/08/2023	Draft1.1	Renamed, content updated, added Version Control and combined above documents.	Complaints and Grievance Policy
14/09/2023	V2.1	Draft approved.	

Policy Statement

LORDS is committed to providing a safe, fair, responsive, accessible and transparent environment in which complaints and concerns can be raised, addressed by means of a professional and effective process, and resolved appropriately.

Theological Foundation

The completed work of Christ in his life, death, resurrection and ascension is the foundation and focus of our Christian life and activity (2 Cor 5:16). Through faith in Jesus Christ, human beings become reconciled to God, and to one another.

Nevertheless, our old sinful nature continues to lead us into situations of conflict with one another. This makes reconciliation an ongoing challenge. We are reconciled to God. As a result, we have the opportunity to share God's ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18–19). Christians can experience complaints, disputes and concerns as opportunities to glorify God (1 Cor 10:31), to serve others (Gal 6:2) and to grow to be more like Christ (1 Cor 11:11).

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Promote reconciliation of relationships and resolution of issues based on sound scriptural principles.
- Encourage an environment in which a complaint or concern can be raised without fear of reprisal or unfair treatment.
- Enable the complainant and the respondent to be provided with pastoral care and support.
- Enable all complaints to be addressed in accordance with principles of natural justice.
- Enable a process where confidentiality is maintained in the assessment and/or investigation of complaints.
- Enable a fair, impartial and transparent process which is applied in a consistent manner.

Definitions

Within the context of this process, a Complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by a complainant about an act, behaviour, omission, situation or decision that they consider unfair or unjustified.

A Complainant is any member or members of the school's extended community making a complaint.

Procedural Principles

The application of the policy will provide for:

- All complaints to be addressed in accordance with scriptural principles and consistent with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Church.
- Clear and transparent procedures for lodgement and processing of complaints.
- The handling of complaints in a confidential and respectful manner that safeguards the integrity and dignity of both the complainants and the respondents.
- The availability of pastoral care and support to all parties during the complaints handling process.
- Timely response to complaints.
- A system that ensures appropriate records are maintained.
- Effective external communication of the policy.

Related LORDS documents

- LORDS Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Child Protection Compliance Strategy
- Workplace Anti-bullying policy

Appendix One

Grievance & Complaints Procedures

Purpose:	The purpose of these procedures is to provide parents, students, employees and other community members with the opportunity to have a complaint dealt with formally through the most appropriate channels, speedily and flexibly.	
Scope:	These procedures extend to grievances brought by any LORDS employee, parent, student or other LORDS community member.	
Status:	Approved	Date of Approval: 14/09/2023
Approved by:	School Council	
References:		
Review Date:	Every three years	Next Review Date: 14/09/2026
Policy Owner:	Principal	

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The objectives of these procedures are to promote the prompt resolution of grievances at the lowest level possible by consultation, cooperation and discussion, and to promote efficiency, effectiveness and equity in LORDS.
- 1.2 The process followed will be confidential and all related documentation securely stored. Any complaints are a matter between the parties directly concerned and those involved in this procedure. However, LORDS may be required to release confidential information under legal requirement and/or to ensure the safety or welfare of others.
- 1.3 Some grievances are better handled under other policies and procedures of the School. The School has specific policies and procedures in place for issues such as child protection, workplace discrimination, complaints by or against staff covered by the current *Queensland Lutheran Schools Single Enterprise Agreement* amongst others.

2. PROCEDURE

In the event of a grievance, any employee, parent, student or other LORDS community member (**Complainant**) may seek resolution through following the steps below. As stated in 1.1 above, the objective (where appropriate) is to resolve the grievance at the lowest level possible.

2.1 LEVEL 1: INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS

LORDS recognises that often grievances are simple misunderstandings that are easily resolved via effective communication.

- 2.1.1 If at all possible and appropriate, the parties directly involved should first seek to resolve the grievance in a timely manner by way of informal discussion personally and in a spirit of goodwill and commitment to the maintenance of a safe and harmonious environment.
- 2.1.2 If the grievance cannot be resolved satisfactorily, within a mutually acceptable time frame, or the seriousness of the matter is not suitable for resolution informally, the Complainant may proceed to Level 2.

2.2 LEVEL 2: THIRD PARTY TO ASSIST RESOLUTION

At this level, the Complainant refers their grievance to a third party facilitator to help the parties to identify the disputed issues, understand the perspective of the other, develop options, promote co-operation, consider alternatives and endeavour to reach a mutual agreement the parties are prepared to abide by.

2.2.1 A Complainant may refer the grievance to a staff member's immediate supervisor who shall consult with the parties and attempt to facilitate resolution of the grievance by negotiation. However, if the supervisor is the source of the grievance, the Complainant shall refer the matter to any other member of LORDS Senior Staff, namely Junior School Coordinator, Pastoral Care Coordinator, Secondary School Coordinator or Business Manager to facilitate the negotiation.

2.2.2 If the grievance cannot be resolved satisfactorily at this level, within a mutually acceptable time frame or the seriousness of the matter warrants, the Complainant may proceed to Level 3.

2.3 LEVEL 3: REFERRAL TO PRINCIPAL

At this level, the Complainant refers their grievance, in writing, to the Principal (or Principal's delegate) for resolution. Grievances in writing may be handed into the School Office marked confidential or emailed to principal@lords.qld.edu.au. However, should the grievance involve the Principal, it shall be referred to the Chair of School Council.

Reference to the Principal (or Principal's delegate) should resolve most, if not all grievances. However, if the grievance is still not resolved at this level, then the Complainant may properly refer a matter to the Chair of School Council. Grievances in writing may be handed into the School Office addressed to the Chair of School Council and marked confidential or emailed to SchoolCouncilChair@lords.qld.edu.au.

3. GENERAL

- 3.1 Grievances should be assessed as soon as possible.
- 3.2 Grievances will be addressed in accordance with principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.
- 3.3 Investigations (where deemed appropriate) will be conducted thoroughly, with care, and with sensitivity to the privacy of individuals.

4. EMPLOYEES

- 4.1 During discussions an employee can have their union representative or other support person present.
- 4.2 While the Grievance Procedure is being followed, normal work is to continue where appropriate.
- 4.3 For all parties, it is useful to make diary notes of dates and discussions.

5. PARENTS

- 5.1 During discussions an individual can have a support person present.

6. STUDENTS

- 6.1 During discussions a student can have a support person present.
- 6.2 If students take a grievance to Level 2 of the Grievance Procedure, parents may be advised.

7. SENIOR STAFF AND THE PRINCIPAL

- 7.1 LORDS acknowledges that Complainants are entitled to raise a grievance in good faith.
- 7.2 A grievance/s shall be assessed and (if deemed appropriate) investigated in a thorough, fair and impartial manner.
- 7.3 A senior staff member/ Principal can have a support person present during discussions.
- 7.4 If a member of Senior Staff or the Principal is unable to resolve the issue, they are to advise the Complainant to take the grievance to the next step of the process.
- 7.5 The Principal (or delegate) should advise the parties directly concerned, in writing, at Level 3 of:
 - 7.5.1 The decision taken by LORDS;
 - 7.5.2 A summary of the reasons for the decision made;
 - 7.5.3 What and when follow up action, if any, is to be taken.