Dispute resolution

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that disputes involving students, parents, and employees are addressed and resolved promptly, effectively, fairly, and with care.

Scope

This policy applies to students, parents and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.

References

- *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)*
- *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*
- *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)*
- Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2022, NEQ)
- *Corporations Act 2001*

Policy

Parklands Christian College is committed to addressing and resolving complaints from students, parents, and employees in a timely, caring, effective, efficient, and fair manner.

The College recognises complaints as an essential component of feedback and accountability and actively encourages constructive criticism and complaints.

Parklands Christian College acknowledges and supports the right of students, parents, and employees to lodge a complaint if they are dissatisfied with any decision, action, or inaction by the school.

Parklands Christian College recognises that the time and effort dedicated to addressing and resolving complaints is an investment towards improving our service to students, parents, and employees.

TYPES OF DISPUTES THAT MAY BE RESOLVED UNDER THIS POLICY

Parklands Christian College encourages students, parents and employees to promptly lodge concerns regarding sexual harassment, discrimination, workplace bullying, privacy breaches and non-compliance with child protection processes as well as more general complaints that include areas such as:

- the school, its employees or students have done something wrong
- the school, its employees or students have failed to do something that they should have done
- the school, its employees or students have acted unfairly or impolitely
- issues of employee behaviour are contrary to the relevant code of conduct
- learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- Employee communication with students or parents or between employees
- School fees and payments
- General administrative issues

Student complaints may be brought by students or parents on their children's behalf, as appropriate.

ISSUES OUTSIDE OF THIS POLICY

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

1. Child protection concerns or risks of harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the law and the College's Student Protection Policy.
2. Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the Student Bullying Policy.
3. Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the Behaviour Education Policy.
4. Employee complaints related to their employment should be directed to their supervisor.
5. Student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the College Principal who will involve the Police as appropriate.
6. An Employee or Parent Complaint challenging the College about an alleged Human Right under the Qld Act can be directed to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION PRINCIPLES

Parklands Christian College is committed to managing disputes according to the following principles:

- When resolving a dispute consider the following scripture references: Romans 12:9-18; Ephesians 4:25-27; James 1:19,20; and 1 Peter 3:8-11
- Disputes will be taken seriously and not dismissed until appropriately heard and investigated.
- Disputes will be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible
- Anonymous complaints will be treated on their merits like any other dispute when possible
- Disputes will be responded to and processed fairly, objectively and in a timely manner
- Mediation, negotiation and informal resolution are preferred first options and alternatives to investigation
- Procedural fairness will be ensured wherever practicable
- Natural justice principles will be observed wherever practicable
- Confidentiality and privacy will be maintained in accordance with the Parklands Christian College Privacy policy. 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 because of lodging the dispute nor will they suffer any other reprisals
- The school will keep confidential records of disputes for 7 years in accordance with Corporations Act 2001

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. School

The school has the following role and responsibilities:

- Develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the school's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures
- Appropriately communicate the school's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures to students, parents and employees
- Upon receipt of a dispute, manage the dispute in accordance with the Dispute Resolution model prescribed in the procedures
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided to all parties to a dispute
- Take appropriate action to prevent victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them
- Appropriately implement remedies
- Appropriately train relevant employees
- Monitor and report on disputes
- Keep appropriate records in accordance with the Parklands Christian College Privacy policy.
- Refer to the school's governing body immediately any claim for legal redress arises

2. All Parties to a Dispute

The complainant and respondent have the following role and responsibilities:

- Apply and comply with the school's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures
- Lodge disputes promptly as soon as possible after the issue occurs or as otherwise appropriate
- Expect that the dispute will be dealt with fairly and objectively; in a timely manner, and with procedural fairness wherever practicable; that natural justice principles will be observed wherever practicable; that confidentiality and privacy will be maintained in accordance with the Parklands Christian College Privacy policy
- Provide complete any 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 point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame
- Act in a non-threatening manner
- 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

3. Employees Receiving Disputes/ Complaints

Employees receiving disputes have the following role and responsibilities:

- Act in accordance with the school's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures
- Inform the complainant of how 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
- Provide the complainant with a copy of the school's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures
- Maintain confidentiality in accordance with the Parklands Christian College Privacy Policy.
- Keep appropriate records in accordance with the Parklands Christian College Privacy Policy.
- To forward complaints to more senior employees, including the Principal, as appropriate
- To be appropriately supported
- Not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them

IMPLEMENTATION

Parklands Christian College is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving disputes at the school, including by continually reviewing, developing and implementing this policy and related procedures, and via the clear support and promotion of the policy and procedures.

Parklands Christian College is also committed to appropriately training relevant employees (especially senior staff) on effective dispute resolution in line with this policy and the related procedures.

Parklands Christian College will keep appropriate records of disputes, will monitor disputes and their resolution and will report College Board regularly on dispute resolution at the school.

Parklands Christian College will act to encourage students, parents and employees to contribute to a healthy school culture where disputes are resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.

Category	☐	Business excellence and governance	BEG
	☒	People, health & well-being	PHW
	☐	Students	STU
	☐	Infrastructure, material resources & environment	INF
	☐	Staff	STA
	☐	Learning	LEA
	☐	School community	COM
	☐	Emergency response	EMR

Related procedures		Dispute resolution procedure
Related forms		Workplace grievance prevention form
Legislation and other requirements		

Policy owner	College Board	**Authorised by** **Signature**	Board Chair
Date	27.03.2025	**Next review date**	March 2026

Distribution	☒	Board members	☒	Teaching staff
	☒	Administration staff	☒	Student services

Risk category	**HIGH**	MEDIUM	LOW
Revision cycle	**1 year**	2 years	3 years

Revision history	Version number	Date	Version number	Date
	0.1	February 2024	3.0	
	1.0	March 2025	4.0	
	2.0		5.0	