AIM

To provide a Biblical process for effective and cordial relationships between students, staff and parents, as well as provide a protective environment in which children can develop holy relationships with one another.

As we live in a fallen world, problems can and do arise. As a Christ-centred community we have wonderful opportunities to see conflicts worked through where truth and honesty are paramount with a desire to see relationships restored and reconciled.

We are a community moulding and shaping young people. Children grow into adults – adults are setting standards and should be guided by Biblical principles. The student-teacher relationship is fundamental and foundational.

We ought to be a place where relationships are crucial to our mandate. Indeed, without healthy relationships it will be difficult to see how we could fulfil our mission.

Education includes learning to live in community. If we claim to be caring, we will care about resolving conflict for all: student – student, teacher – teacher, parent – parent etc. This should be an environment where there is the culture for growth, forgiveness and love.

VISION STATEMENT

“Excellence in Christ-Centred Education”

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

This policy is based upon the Biblical principles. Some key references include – Matthew 18:15–35; Romans 12:9-21; 1 Corinthians 13:1-8; Ephesians 4:1-4 and 5:21 and Philippians 2:1-5. The policy should also be understood and implemented within the context of the love for one another that should characterize a Christian community (John 13: 34-35).

"If your brother sins against you go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church;” (Matthew 18:15-17 NIV).

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:2-3 NIV).
DEFINITIONS

Grievance: A wrong, real or imagined, considered as grounds for complaint
PWG: The person with the grievance
PSG: The person subject to the grievance
Victimisation: To single out for punishment or unfair treatment
Procedural Fairness: The right to be heard

- The right to know the purpose of the process, that the process will be followed, and that the procedures and its consequences will be undertaken with integrity.
- The right to be fully informed of the allegations and to have an opportunity to respond.
- The right to appeal.

PRINCIPLES

1 Grievances should be treated seriously and sensitively, having due regard to procedural fairness. In the first instance of a grievance, the person with the grievance (PWG) should always attempt to meet with the person subject to the grievance (PSG) as outlined in Matthew 18 ‘One on One’.

2 The person(s) subject to the grievance (PSG) is entitled to know the details of the grievance against them in a timely manner, including the name of the person with grievance (PWG), the specific details of the grievance, and be given the opportunity to respond prior to any action being taken in response to the grievance.

3 In cases of alleged reportable conduct where the Police and/or DoCS or other Children’s Services are involved, the Principal shall refer to the Child Protection Policy and follow the advice of the agencies and the legislation in respect to timing etc. of the grievance with the person involved.

4 Where there are meetings of the person(s) subject to the grievance (PSG), that person should be told in advance:
   i. The purpose of the meeting;
   ii. Who will be attending (appropriate staff, parents and students).

5 Other than the “one on one” discussion you may take a support person with you. The person(s) subject to the grievance (PSG) must be given the opportunity to be accompanied by a support person (for example, student friend, staff liaison officer or IEU representative).

6 The person(s) subject to the grievance (PSG) should be involved in discussions about the resolution of the concern or any actions arising from the grievance.

7 Any person present at a meeting is free to take notes. The person(s) subject to the grievance (PSG) is not required to sign a record of interview.

8 Where the meeting concludes with an agreed action plan (including instructions, any strategies to overcome the problem and the period of time in which those strategies are expected to lead to a resolution of the problem) it will be confirmed in writing to the person(s) subject to the grievance (PSG) and a copy placed in their file at the school.

9 Where a warning, censure or reprimand is issued by the Executive Principal, this will be confirmed in writing, and a copy placed in the file of the person(s) subject to the grievance (PSG).
10 In relation to staff, if the matter is serious enough for the employer to consider disciplinary action that may result in a demotion, or dismissal, the staff member will be told of the possibility of this course of action and given an opportunity to respond.

11 Where the grievance is found to be vexatious or based on misinformation etc., any records pertaining to the grievance will be kept as follows: PSG – all records placed in a sealed envelope in the persons file to ensure that the reports are not relied on in future, PWG – all records relating to the grievance will be kept on file.

12 If there is any conflict between this policy and the provisions of the Award, the provisions of the Award will prevail.

13 All endeavours will be made by all parties to keep the issue confidential. This means confidential not only within the school where the matter arose, but the wider Christian community. This is primarily to ensure that the dignity of the staff member, staff at the school, participants in an investigation, and of any person making a grievance or raising a concern, is maintained at all times.

14 Plans of action are to be written and given to both parties stating a clear time-line given for the agreed plan of action, which will include how and by whom regular support will be given and review undertaken. (For staff see document within the Staff Handbook titled Staff Employment Policy)

15 Victimisation of a person for making a grievance or allegation (be they a member of staff, a student, a parent or a member of the public) is unacceptable.

16 All staff are expected to live in unity and act professionally so there is a safe environment where grievances can be heard sensitively and compassionately.

► GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1 The attached flowcharts provide guidance for the process to be followed according to the status of the person with the grievance (eg staff, student or parent). Those to whom a grievance is brought should:

i. Listen to the person with grievance (PWG) – what is their grievance, how do they want it resolved?

ii. Continually and honestly ask yourself – Am I the appropriate person to handle this grievance?

iii. If at any stage of the process you are not the appropriate person, explain why and take the PWG to the appropriate person.

iv. Subject to the situation ask the PWG to remain where they are while you obtain the other person’s perceptions of events. Were there any witnesses to the events (record their names, record other relevant information).

v. Decision time: Do I need to talk to witnesses?

   Is the grievance genuine?
   Should it be proceeded with?
   Can it be resolved in accordance with the PWG’s desires?

vi. Decide how the grievance may best be resolved and discuss your solution with the PWG.
vii. The PWG may come to a personal crossroad at this point; forcing them to go on or they may wish to withdraw their grievance.

viii. It is essential you point out the possible outcomes.

ix. If you believe the grievance must be resolved you will continue to resolution.

x. Act on your decision, advise all parties involved as to your intentions and course of action and most importantly, why? Advise them also of any other avenues that may be open to them internal/external.

xi. Present your decision regarding the resolution to the appropriate party and the time frame you expect action to occur.

xii. Implement your decision and monitor the outcome.

xiii. If the situation is not resolved to the satisfaction of the parties concerned, move to the next stage in the process.

xiv. Document your involvement in the outcome.

GPCC acknowledges the assistance of other policies namely:

- Grievance Policy – Taree Christian Community College
- Home School Communication 2003 – Maitland Christian School
- Responding to Suggestions, Complaints and Allegations April 2001 – NSW Department of Education
- Staff Relations Policy – Diocese of Wollongong Catholic Education Office
- Handling of Complaints Against Staff – Victorian Independent Education Union VIEU
Have a concern?  
Unresolved issue?  
Grievance?  
PRAY

Check you have all the facts. PWG (person with grievance) arranges a meeting with PSG (person subject to grievance) to discuss the concern/issue/grievance. Aim for resolution. Both parties document the issue. Communicate ongoing progress – if applicable.

Issue Resolved Satisfactorily
GIVE THANKS

Issue unresolved?
PRAY
PWG request meeting with PSG and Co-ordinator or Year Advisor. Document the issue. Co-ordinator or Year Advisor brief Head of School.

Issue Resolved Satisfactorily
GIVE THANKS

Issue unresolved?
PRAY
PWG requests meeting with PSG and Head of School. Head of School makes a decision and provides a written report to the Principal outlining perceptions, procedures followed to date and actions taken.

Issue Resolved Satisfactorily
GIVE THANKS

Issue unresolved?
PRAY
PWG requests meeting with PSG and Executive Principal. The Principal considers final action and reports back to all parties.

PRAY