St James School

St James School Grievance Policy

At St. James Primary we encourage conflict resolution strategies which promote the dignity of all.

Rationale:

Situations of conflict arise in the school community – we are human. Conflict is a necessary ingredient for growth and change in an individual and in a community or organization. Conflict is a sign of difference in a community. As Christians however we have an obligation to work at resolving conflicts peacefully, with due respect for the dignity of all people involved. We have an obligation also to restore relationships broken or affected by the conflict. We have an obligation also, through open, honest and respectful communication, to avoid initiating unnecessary conflict. Differences in opinion might lead to conflict if there is either no room for negotiation or little attempt from either person or group to listen to and respect the rights of another to express a point of view. As Christians we are compelled to broaden our understanding and acceptance of difference. In fact, we are called to celebrate difference.

Consequences for Staff:

1. Accepting and understanding differences, celebrating difference, negotiation, and respect are oft used words and phrases which underpin some of the units of work we teach in religious education and other KLA’s, but when it comes to real life community situations, we are regularly challenged to show genuine tolerance and open-mindedness. We are also challenged to be a forgiving and reconciling community which demonstrates maturity in the handling and resolution of conflict.

Principles / Procedure of Conflict Resolution:

a) Deal with the problem in a rational way as soon as possible.
b) Be clear about what the issue is. Writing it down can be helpful. Talk it out with a third party to clarify the issue(s) and to receive confirmation and feedback.
c) Separate the problem / issue from the person. If you feel that the ‘confrontation’
is shifting focus from issues to personal attack/abuse, you have a duty to bring this to the attention of the other person.
d) Identify and communicate your own feelings about the issue in a non-threatening way.
e) Listen sensitively to the other point of view and be open-minded.
f) Be prepared to negotiate and compromise when such is possible.
g) Be forgiving should there be admission of fault or neglect.
h) Be willing to be reconciled.
i) Seek mediation if the issue cannot be resolved amicably.
2. Personal conflicts and disagreements are matters to be worked through by the parties concerned and cannot be allowed to interfere with professionalism in the school environment.
3. Complaints regarding the professional integrity of another staff member need to be substantiated and presented in writing. Hearsay information and gossip can be damaging and will not be acted upon. The Principal will exercise discretion as to how matters are dealt with and this is expected to be maintained in all professional grievance procedures. Confidentiality is essential in dealing with such issues in the school setting.

**Consequences for Parents:**

Parents are concerned about the welfare, safety and the holistic education of their children at St James School. As co-educators of their children and vital members of the St James School community, parents have a right to be involved in their child’s learning, to be informed about their child’s progress and to voice concerns when issues arise. ‘Carpark gossip’ slanders the good name of staff, other parents and children. When issues arise, there are usually explainable, reasonable and understandable reasons behind them. With due respect for the dignity of all people involved, issues should be resolved through open, honest and respectful communication with concerned parties.

**Principles / Procedure of Conflict Resolution:**

1. Write down the issue / concern in note form to clarify what the problem is from a personal perspective and for personal reflection.
2. The initial point of contact will be the class teacher / specialist before or after school or by telephone to arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss the concerns or send a note asking for such an appointment.
3. Be calm and non-threatening when approaching / talking with staff.
4. Under no circumstances touch a child other than their own or approach another child to discuss their concerns. It is never appropriate for parents to clarify their
issues with children of other parents; nor should parents enter a classroom without the presence and permission of the classroom / specialist teacher.

5. Set up good communication processes with the class teacher / specialist

   KIT - 'Keep In Touch' note-book Phone (Ask the teacher to return your call at a convenient time. Let the teacher know when you will be available. It is not appropriate to ring/visit during class teaching time.) Read school newsletters and other notes sent home Attend parent / teacher nights and/or interviews as requested and be informed about the class routines and expectations

6. When an issue is raised with the classroom teacher / specialist, it should be followed through by the teacher. The parent should be contacted and given a report on what has been done to address the issue.

7. If parents are dissatisfied with the process, they should contact the school office and make an appointment with the School Principal or a member of the school executive. The School Principal or a member of the school executive must be informed about the reason for the appointment.

8. The School Principal or a member of the school executive will support the process outlined above. If a parent has not seen the classroom teacher about their concerns, the parent will be asked to do so.

9. The School Principal or a member of the school executive will offer to convene a meeting with the parents and the classroom teacher and other specialist staff if necessary. A process of mediation may be facilitated by the School Principal or a member of the school executive where deemed appropriate.

10. Should a parent have a concern of a serious nature about a teacher's professional behaviour e.g. physical or sexual abuse of a child, the parent must put the complaint in writing addressed to the Principal. This could happen before or after an appointment with the Principal or delegate.