



## Complaints Handling Procedure

### INTRODUCTION

St James Lutheran College is a complex organisation. It values each of its members and believes that a clear process for the resolution and monitoring of conflict, complaints and grievances is in the best interests of all.

- The purpose of this document is to provide employees and other community members with the opportunity to have a complaint dealt with formally through the most appropriate channels, speedily and flexibly.
- 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 within St James Lutheran College.
- 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, St James Lutheran College may be required to release confidential information under legal requirement and/or to ensure the safety or welfare of others.

#### ***Responsibility***

Principal

#### ***Point of Contact***

Principal

### SCOPE

These procedures extend to complaints brought by any St James Lutheran College employee or other St James Lutheran College community member.

Some grievances are better handled under other policies and procedures of Lutheran Education Queensland. Lutheran Education Queensland has specific policies and procedures in place for issues such as workplace discrimination and complaints against staff covered by the *Queensland Lutheran Schools Single Enterprise Agreement 2016* amongst others.



## Complaints Handling Procedure

### PROCEDURE

In the event of a complaint, any employee or other St James Lutheran College community member (Complainant) may seek resolution through following the steps below. As stated in 1.2 above, the objective (where appropriate) is to resolve the complaint at the lowest level possible.

#### **Level 1: Informal Discussions**

St James Lutheran College recognises that often complaints are simple misunderstandings that are easily resolved via effective communication.

- 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.
- 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.

#### **Level 2: Third Party to Assist Resolution**

At this level, the Complainant refers their complaint 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.

- A Complainant may refer the complaint 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 complaint, the Complainant shall refer the matter to any other member of the St James Lutheran College Executive Team to facilitate the negotiation.
- If the complaint 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.

#### **Level 3: Referral to Principal**

At this level, the Complainant refers their complaint, preferably in writing, to the Principal for resolution. Complaints in writing may be handed into the School Office marked confidential and or emailed to [StJamesPrincipal@stjameslc.qld.edu.au](mailto:StJamesPrincipal@stjameslc.qld.edu.au). However, should the complaint involve the Principal, it shall be referred to the Chair of the St James Lutheran College Council.

Referral to the Principal should resolve most, if not all complaints. However, if the complaint is still not resolved at this level, then the Complainant may properly refer a matter in writing to the Chair of the St James Lutheran College Council and marked confidential or emailed to [SchoolCouncilChair@stjameslc.qld.edu.au](mailto:SchoolCouncilChair@stjameslc.qld.edu.au).



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### GENERAL GUIDELINES

Complaints should be assessed as soon as possible.

Complaints will be addressed in accordance with principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.

Investigations (where deemed appropriate) will be conducted thoroughly, with care, and with sensitivity to the privacy of individuals.

### EMPLOYEES

During discussions, an employee can have their union representative or other support person present.

While the Complaints Handling Procedure is being followed, normal work is to continue where appropriate.

For all parties, it is useful to make diary notes of dates and discussions.

### SENIOR STAFF AND THE PRINCIPAL

St James Lutheran College acknowledges that Complainants are entitled to raise a complaint in good faith.

A complaint shall be assessed and (if deemed appropriate) investigated in a thorough, fair and impartial manner.

If a member of the Executive Team is unable to resolve the issue, they are to advise the Complainant to take the complaint to the next step of the process.

The Principal should advise the parties directly concerned, in writing, at Level 3 of:

- The decision taken by St James Lutheran College;
- A summary of the reasons for the decision made;
- What and when follow up action, if any, is to be taken.



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### PROCEDURE RELEASE DETAILS

***Date of Procedure***

May 2018

***Approved by***

Principal

***Review Date***

Biennial

### RELATED DOCUMENT

St James Lutheran College Complaints Handling Policy.