



Policy Statement

Grievance Policy & Procedure - Parents

Principles and Scriptural Context

Lutheran Schools are Christ-centred where **individuals** should feel safe to express their points of view openly, honestly, constructively and in a spirit of love. St Paul's analogy of the church as a human body (1 Cor 12:12-27) serves well as a picture of all members actively working together for the common good.

From time to time concerns regarding educational, behavioural or school environment issues may arise. For this reason Maitland Lutheran School has developed a set of procedures to work through unresolved situations, or where an action or decision is considered to be unfair or inappropriate. This is the reality of sin and our inability to live in perfect harmony with one another. However, through God's grace and forgiveness, and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we strive to reconcile differences and resolve all conflict amicably.

Therefore it is important to us that issues or concerns that you, as parents may have regarding your child's education are discussed and a positive resolution reached by all parties concerned.

1. Rationale

Issues or concerns that you, as parents, may have regarding your child's education are most effectively dealt with if they are raised in the following ways.

All personal matters such as concerns regarding student, parent or staff relationships should be realised **directly with the school** through the class teacher or Principal in a **confidential manner**.

2. Procedure

The following guidelines may assist you if you have a concern:-

- a) **Make an appointment** to talk to the person with whom you have a concern. This may be the classroom teacher, principal or other school staff. Let him/her know what subject you wish to discuss as this will facilitate the process. This makes the most productive use of the time available - when the teacher is free to give you his/her full attention. We do ask you to respect the fact that staff are not always able to deal with a problem immediately due to our commitment to the students and their learning.
- b) **Meet with the staff member** and use appropriate problem solving and/or conflict resolution strategies to formulate positive action for the future.
 1. Identify the facts
 2. Explore why the facts present a problem
 3. Share feelings
 4. Jointly commit to some future action and goals within the guidelines of school policy, procedure and importantly, by observing school values.

If you consider that the issue you have raised is still unresolved, it is important that you state this to the person at the conclusion of the meeting.

- c) If the issues are not resolved, **make an appointment with the Principal**. Let him/her know what subject you wish to discuss as this will facilitate the process.
- d) **Meet with the Principal**. Results of this meeting may include the following:
 - the situation is monitored;
 - further discussions with the people involved (eg Principal and teacher);
 - outside support for the child or family may be sought.
- e) If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome of the meeting, phone or **write to the Principal** again to air your concerns. If the school does not receive further information it is reasonable to assume that the issue has been resolved.
- f) If after steps a) - e) you are still dissatisfied **approach the Chairperson** who will try to resolve the situation further. The expectation of the Chairperson of School Council will be that the above steps have been followed.

Steps a) - e) are considered appropriate toward the resolution of all grievances. If there is the case where a parent feels uncomfortable meeting with the appropriate school staff member, then an agreed mediator should be sought. Example: another staff member, council member, pastor, school chaplain or agreed professional.

It is noted that neither the Minister for Education nor the Department for Education has any power to directly intervene in any complaints relating to the operations of a non-government school.

It is important that these grievances are kept confidential, and although at times you may wish to seek support from friends or an advocate, it is very important to do this with discretion.

When the matter is discussed in the student's hearing, it is important that the student understands that you have **confidence** that the issue will be resolved **confidentially** at the school level.

Whilst constructive criticism, appropriately shared and in line with this policy is welcomed, denigration or defamation of the school, teacher or principal does not support the child's education as it undermines **trust and confidence**. The school can only deal with issues that are raised in the ways outlined above. If we do not receive information then we assume that all is well.

In the event that a parent persists in airing grievances in an inappropriate manner, the parent(s) will be required to attend a meeting with the principal and/or chair of council. Consultation by the principal and/or chairperson for the benefit of maintaining confidence, trust and confidentiality, will occur and this policy will be highlighted as an expectation for all.

Due to the importance that Maitland Lutheran School places on the building and maintenance of positive community relationships, repeated deviation from policy may result in the termination of enrolment from Maitland Lutheran School.