



For Christ's Crown & Covenant

Complaints Policy

Operational

Version: 2.0

Approved by Council on 26 August 2019

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1 Purpose

1.1 Introduction

Covenant Christian School is committed to a process of continuous improvement. Grievances and complaints form part of the feedback which the school welcomes as important to its performance review. The school seeks to develop processes which are transparent, accountable and effective for building strong relationships with its stakeholders, and which support continued growth and development. The school prioritises complaints which affect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

The school aims to provide all members of the school community with a fair process of review in the event of a grievance. This opportunity is available to all staff, parents and students.

The grievance resolution must also comply with relevant industrial agreements and instruments, and shall encompass procedural fairness, privacy and a right of reply.

The school also has a Reportable Conduct Policy which may also be relevant.

1.2 Christian Rationale

The School affirms the dignity and value of all people as made in the image of God; and seeks to conduct all matters in a way that honours God and cares for people. The core business of the School is conducted through relationships, so a high value is placed on maintaining and protecting relationships within the School community.

In the event of a dispute or conflict within the School, the process shall follow the principles found in Matthew 18. It should start with discussion between the parties; be based upon a desire for resolution and reconciliation (as opposed to a desire for retribution); consider factual evidence rather than impressions or rumour; provide fair opportunity for review of all decisions; and be carried out in a manner that enables all parties to retain their dignity regardless of the outcome.

Conflict and misunderstanding is to be regarded as a natural occurrence when people work together. It has the potential to promote new ideas, strengthen personal relationships, stimulate individual growth and facilitate more effective solutions to problems. The guiding principle is: *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.* (Eph 4:2-3)

Covenant Christian School is committed to its Vision and Mission:

Vision:

In dependence on God's grace, Covenant Christian School will nurture and equip students with a heart to glorify God by serving Him and living according to His Word.

Mission:

Covenant Christian School is a safe, caring and loving community. In partnership with parents we cultivate Christian character in our students and equip them to serve God and contribute positively to society.

This will be achieved through a Christ-centred approach where the gospel is central. God's Word is applied to all areas of learning and experience. Students and staff are challenged, encouraged and supported to love learning and pursue excellence to the glory of God.

2 Organisational Scope

This policy is School-wide.

3 Who must comply

Responsibilities	Evidence of Compliance
Principal	
Maintain good procedures for handling grievances	This doc; Complaints Handling Procedure
Promote a school culture of continuous improvement	Policies; Strategic Plan;
Consultation, investigation, mediation, review	Complaint file; Complaint Log/ Complaint Register
Report on complaints and grievances to the school Council	Council reports
Protect whistleblowers from retribution as far as is reasonably possible	Post complaint review
School Council	
Receive complaints about the Principal (Council Chair)	Confidential files; Complaint Register
Review complaints/ grievances and trends	Council reports and minutes
Protect whistleblowers from retribution as far as is reasonably possible	Post complaint review
Business Manager	
Financial & business complaints	Account file; Complaint Log/ Complaint Register
Maintain Complaints Register	Filed in lockable cabinet
Directors of Studies	
Consultation, mediation, investigation, action as required	Personal records; student issues noted in PCSchool; Complaint Log/ Complaint Register
Maintain Complaints Log	Filed in confidential covenantsystems.org
Teachers	
Grievance handling, action as required	Personal records; student issues noted in PCSchool behaviour notes
Report grievances to Coordinators	Personal records; student issues noted in PCSchool; Complaint Log/ Complaint Register
Front Office staff	
Reception and appropriate direction of complaints	Complaints Form
Students/ Parents	
Raise issues of concern with appropriate teacher/ staff	PCSchool behavior notes; Complaint file

member

Participate in resolution process

Complaint Log/ Complaint Register

School community

Raise issues of concern with appropriate teacher/ staff member

Complaint file; Complaint Log/ Complaint Register

4 Definitions

Categories of Complaints/ Grievances:	Description
Level 1	simple; resolved at first point of contact
Level 2	more complex; requires consultation/ further inquiry
Level 3	serious matters; significant or legal implications
Whistleblower	A person, whether a staff member, Council member, volunteer, student, parent or carer, who exposes any kind of information or activity that is deemed illegal, unethical, or not correct within an organisation.

5 Policy Content and Guidelines

The School will maintain its policies and procedures with respect for personal dignity of all people including students; and with regard for the requirements of relevant territory and federal legislation.

- (a) The School prioritises complaints which affect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- (b) The School is committed to grievance-prevention-based strategies, which aim to develop an environment and culture that thrives on diversity; promotes compassion and understanding; and reinforces the practice of respectful behaviour towards all people.
- (c) The School supports protections for whistleblowers, whether these are students, parents or staff.
- (d) Procedures will be maintained for the fair and equitable review of grievances.
- (e) Any investigations will be carried out with regards for the principles of procedural fairness.
- (f) The process of review is available for all members of staff, parents and students.
- (g) The grievance review process will be carried out to ensure, as far as possible, a speedy and effective resolution.
- (h) A person who presents a grievance will not be penalised or victimised in any way for doing so.
- (i) Confidentiality shall be maintained by those handling grievances and complaints.
- (j) Records will be maintained of matters which require investigation or greater consultation, or which are deemed as requiring action by the school. (Complaints Handling Procedure)
- (k) Significant complaints shall be recorded in a register.
- (l) The Principal shall report significant complaints, and trends to the School Council.

6 Whistleblower Protections

6.1 Protections

The School supports the inclusion of whistleblower protections for complaints and grievances. These protections are:

- confidentiality and anonymity for the whistleblower
- the provision of a supportive environment
- protection from harassment, retaliation and victimisation, and
- not subjecting whistleblowers to disciplinary action for “blowing the whistle”.

6.2 False Statements

A person who has knowingly and maliciously made a false statement will be dealt with under either:

Clause 3.5 of the Parent Handbook Part A

Staff Discipline Policy, or the

Student Pastoral Management (Discipline) Policy.

7 Legislative Compliance

The School is required to manage its policy documentation within a legislative framework. The legislation directing this policy is the:

Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)
Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)
ACT Ombudsman Act 1989
Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing
Whistleblower Protections) Act 2019

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (ACT)
Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (ACT)
Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

8 References

Covenant Christian School Complaint Handling Procedures

Disability Standards for Education 2005

AS/NZS 10002:2014 Quality Management - Customer Satisfaction: Guidelines for Complaints Handling

Covenant Christian School Reportable Conduct Policy

9 Approval Agency

The School Council.

10 Policy Sponsor

Principal

11 Contact Person

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this policy:

Principal, Ext 102