

# Grievance Policy



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This policy is reviewed and approved by the Navigator College Governing Board.

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## Aim

To hear and deal with grievances/conflicts in the most timely, open, helpful and honest way with the intention, as much as possible, to restore relationships.

## Rationale

Navigator College values strong relationships, Christian values, respect, trust and care.

Conflicts/grievances will occur from time to time between a variety of people within the Navigator College community and impact relationships.

There are many resources that acknowledge and guide the resolution of grievances/conflict including many biblical passages, Restorative Practices, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and other grievance procedures.

The best people to be involved in restoring a relationship are those most closely involved. The best time for people to be involved in restoring a relationship is as soon as possible. The best way for people to restore a relationship is by being open, honest and when they come with the intention, as much as possible, to restore the relationship.

In any matters involving (sexual) harassment and/or sexual abuse refer to Child Safe Policy and the Harassment Policy.

## Definition

"A general definition may simply be that a grievance is an unresolved problem." Source: University of Edinburgh Staff Administration Manual

"Where an action or decision is considered to be unfair or inappropriate, there is the right to raise a complaint and have it considered seriously – such a complaint is known as a grievance." Source: Brisbane Montessori School

## Implementation

- Effectively communicate the grievance/conflict policy and procedures.
- Share in a timely and targeted way, the resources available to assist with any grievance/conflict.
- Regularly review the procedures to ensure they align with best practice.
- Confidentially record the necessary aspects of any grievance/conflict.
- When a grievance/conflict is more complex and time consuming, those involved are to be kept informed of the progress of the process.

## GRIEVANCE POLICY PROCEDURES

### General Statements

- The grievance procedure provides guidelines for raising an unresolved issue or complaint and having it considered seriously. It is essential, therefore, that before the process begins all parties participating are familiar with the process and with the rationale with which we approach resolving conflict.
- It is recognized that individuals in the College community are at different stages in their faith journeys and that this could affect their readiness and/or willingness to engage in prayer throughout the procedural steps.
- Informal resolution of a grievance is encouraged and is always the preferred option. This is reached when the outcome is satisfactory to all. The formal process is set in motion where the informal process reaches an unsatisfactory outcome.
- A restorative approach, utilising the Restorative Practices framework, will be followed whenever a grievance is submitted.

The grievance procedure may not result in a change to, or reversal of, a decision or action. In some instances the only achievable outcome may be the enactment of forgiveness. Sometimes it may be an understanding to follow or improve guidelines or procedures in the future.

### General Guidelines

- Restorative Practices suggest that the best people to settle an issue are the people directly involved.
- Communication should be open and honest, focusing on the issue and not the person. This includes listening carefully and respectfully while the other person is talking, and exercising responsibility and mutual respect: respect by staff for parents/caregivers special relationships with their children; respect by parents/caregivers for staff as professionals.
- When an issue is discussed within the student's hearing, it is important that the student understands that you have confidence that the issue will be resolved confidentially at the College level. Criticism of the College or teachers does not support the child's education as it undermines trust and confidence.
- Confidentiality must be maintained through all stages of the process.

Constructive conflict helps everyone learn, grow and change for the better. Where both parties agree to seek a positive resolution, positive outcomes are likely to result.

## Confidentiality

- Grievances should be kept as confidential as possible.
- Support in principle may be sought from the Chairperson of the College Board on the basis of the consultative role that this can play.
- However, it should be recognized that the involvement of such bodies or of others, such as the Executive Director of Lutheran Education South Australia, Northern Territory and Western Australia (LESNW) as mediators, can compromise confidentiality.

## Documentation

- Before disputes are referred to the Executive Director of Lutheran Education South Australia, Northern Territory and Western Australia (LESNW) or persons outside the school, the concerns should be documented and covered by a letter which confirms that each of the steps outlined in this set of procedures has been followed.
- Any party to a dispute has the right to be accompanied by another person, in a support role, at any meetings convened to discuss resolution of that dispute.
- Accurate records of all disputes and proceedings should be maintained and current copies held by all parties involved (Appendix A).
- It is extremely difficult for the LESNW Director, the Principal or the College Board Chairperson to act on anonymous complaints, although they may be obliged to listen to the complaint as indicative of an issue requiring attention.

## Complaints Register:

The College maintains a Complaints Register, recording all formal complaints received by the College. The complaints register is maintained and reviewed annually by the Principal to ensure continuous compliance with our record keeping obligations.

The Complaints Register is a regular item on the Administrative Leadership Team's (ALT) agenda. If a complaint is received in a formal letter to the Principal, Head of School or Business Manager it will be submitted to the register and brought to the College Board for awareness.

A formal complaint is a complaint that is put in writing to the College, this could be received electronically but not just as an email.

## Timeframe

It is the obligation of all parties to deal with a concern as promptly and amicably as possible. In most cases, a reasonable time for resolution might be one month. In some cases where external personnel or factors are involved, resolution might take longer.

## Use of External Authorities

Complaints against Navigator College may be raised with the Executive Director of LESNW. Normally, the Director will not accept a complaint until College grievance procedures have been completed. If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the grievance procedures, the Executive Director, Lutheran Education Australia may be asked to review the school and LESNW process. 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.

## 1. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE – PARENTS OR CAREGIVERS

Positive relationships within College communities give children greater opportunities to succeed. It is natural that parents/caregivers or community members at one time or another may have concerns about what happens at school. To maintain positive relationships, grievances or conflicts should be resolved so that all parties achieve satisfactory results.

The welfare of children in the school is paramount. Open criticism of any parties in a dispute does not support children's education. To this end fair and open communication conducted within the procedure's framework outlined here, ensures that the rights and responsibilities of all parties are respected and consensus achieved.

All personal matters, such as concerns regarding student, parent/caregivers or staff relationships should be raised directly with the College through the class teacher or Principal in a confidential manner.

### 1.1 Guidelines for parents/caregivers

#### 1.1.1 Parents/caregivers make an appointment to talk to the relevant teacher.

This may be the Class Teacher (JS), Home Group or Subject Teacher (MS/SS).

Let the teacher know what subject they wish to discuss since this will facilitate the process. (This makes the most productive use of the time available - when the teacher is free to give parents/caregivers their full attention). If parents/caregivers consider that the issue which they have raised is still unresolved, it is important that they state this to the teacher at the conclusion of the meeting.

If the issue is unable to be resolved, then a Year Level/Pastoral Coordinator may help facilitate a restorative conversation with the parties involved.

If the issues are not resolved, parents/caregivers should make an appointment with the relevant Head of School and let him / her know what subject they wish to discuss as this will facilitate the process.

If the issues are still not resolved, parents/caregivers should make an appointment with the Principal and let him/her know what subject they wish to discuss as this will facilitate the process.

### 1.1.2 Parent/Caregiver meeting with the Principal

Results of this meeting may include the following:

- the situation is monitored.
- further discussions with the people involved (e.g. Principal and teacher).
- outside support for the child or family may be sought.
- if parents/caregivers are still dissatisfied with the outcome of the meeting, they should telephone or write to the Principal again to air their concerns. If the college does not receive further information, it is reasonable for the issue to be considered resolved.

### 1.1.3 Ongoing dissatisfaction

If after the steps outlined in 1.1.1. and 1.1.2. have taken place, and parents/caregivers are still dissatisfied they should approach the Executive Director of LESNW who will try to resolve the situation further. The expectation of the Director of LESNW will be that the above steps have been followed.

### 1.1.4 General principles

It is important that all grievances are kept confidential, and although at times parents/caregivers may wish to seek support from friends or an advocate, it is very important to do this wisely. When the matter is discussed within the student's hearing, it is important that the student understands that parents/caregivers have confidence that the issue will be resolved confidentially at the school level. Criticism of the school or teacher does not support the child's education as it undermines trust and confidence. The college can only deal with issues that are raised in the ways outlined above. If staff do not receive information then they assume that all is well.

## 2. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE - STUDENTS

### 2.1 Guidelines for Students

At Navigator College we seek to build a safe, caring, and positive community. We use an approach called Restorative Practices that acknowledges that healthy relationships are essential for our lives, our learning, and our community.

Please see the Appendices following this policy for resources that may assist with successful resolution of a grievance.

#### 2.1.1 Talk with the person concerned (Student or teacher). You may need a '3rd Party' (e.g., a teacher) to facilitate this discussion.

##### Restorative Practices:

What happened?

What were you thinking/feeling?

What have you thought since?  
Who has been affected by what happened?  
What needs to happen to make things right?  
What will happen if this happens again?

### 2.1.2 Listen

Students should listen to the other's side of the story.

### 2.1.3 Reflection

Students should think seriously about whether there is any wrong on their side.

### 2.1.4 Agreement

Students should try to reach an agreement with the other person where they both feel OK about the outcome. This may be written down and/or noted on SEQTA.

## 2.2 Further Concerns

If the issue is not resolved, students should seek the assistance of a Year Level/Pastoral Coordinator for further Restorative conversations.

## 2.3 Some Helpful Hints for Students

- Don't talk about the person to others – talk directly to the person.
- It is better not to talk while you are angry or in public.
- Praying for the right words to say, for understanding and for the issue to be resolved can be helpful.

All students have the right to question the assessment that the teacher has made of their work in assignments and tests. If they are not satisfied that the assessment was correct and accurate, they should:

- approach the teacher and ask for clarification
- ask for a reassessment of the work by the teacher
- ask the teacher to have the teacher in charge of that Learning Area Leader (LAL) – or another teacher reassess the work
- accept the decision

## 3. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE – STAFF

In any organisation, conflict of a personal or professional nature may arise. Procedures to resolve conflict should reflect the Christian ethos of the College and be based on the principles in Matthew 18:15. Staff need at all times to seek to resolve conflict and not contribute to it by gossip. The following guidelines will assist those who have a grievance.

### 3.1 Guidelines for Staff

#### 3.1.1 Personal/Professional Conflict - Procedure

## Staff should utilise the 'Restorative Practices' procedure as outlined above in 2.2.1

Please see the Appendices following this policy for resources that may assist with successful resolution of a grievance.

- Seek God's guidance through prayer.
- Identify and clarify the issue, possibly discuss with another person.
- Discuss the issue with the person involved, stating the problem and seek a resolution offering or asking for forgiveness.
- If the problem is not resolved involve a third impartial person, acceptable to both parties.
- If the conflict is unresolved, discuss the issue with the Line Manager to establish a professional working relationship.
- If the conflict is still unresolved, discuss the issue with the Principal to establish a professional working relationship.
- Finally, if needed, the matter can be referred to the Executive Director of LESNW who will determine further action.

### 3.2 Special Notes

#### The Role of the College Pastor

Direct involvement of the College Pastor in the grievance process runs the possible risk of compromise of their pastoral work, i.e. as spiritual adviser/counsellor to all parties. Every effort must be made not to put in jeopardy this unique relationship.

#### The Role of College Board Members

As for the College Pastor, direct involvement of individual College Board Members in the grievance process runs the possible risk of compromise of their position. If College Board members are approached individually by individuals with a grievance, they should refer them to the Principal or speak to the Board Chairperson.

The Board may also consider matters associated with long range planning where a person considers the Principal has not followed the Grievance Policy in accordance with the College's principles.

#### Resource People

Where a College is seeking facilitators for involvement in the grievance process, it is recommended that they look to neighbouring Principals, Business Managers, Pastors, and Senior Staff, or to Professional Consultants, Counsellors, or the Executive Director of Lutheran Schools Association (South Australia) (LESNW) and personnel of the Lutheran Schools Association.

## 4. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE – COLLEGE BOARD MEMBERS

In principle, any conflict is capable of resolution if the parties involved work through the issues in a rational, logical, and prayerful manner.

Sadly, many conflicts are far from rational, and an outside mediator may need to be involved. This raises the question of the Executive Director of LESNW involvement. While it is appropriate that the Director be aware of the conflict, it is not always appropriate that the Director act as mediator, since to do so may place the Executive Director in a "no win" situation and jeopardise his/her neutrality. However, the Executive Director should be kept informed of all situations involving conflict where intervention may become necessary. The following guidelines should be followed to restore harmony between College Board Members and the Principal.

### 4.1 Guidelines for College Board Members

College Board Members should utilise the Restorative Practices procedure as outlined above in 2.2.1.

#### 4.1.1 Prayer

Those involved in a conflict come together as God's people in prayer. Prayer, repentance and forgiveness set a basis for further discussion.

#### 4.1.2 Representation

Ensure that the conflict is represented by the appropriate person. It is the responsibility of Christian community leaders to contain issues to the appropriate people, and to see that others understand this.

#### 4.1.3 Role clarity

Clarity as to the precise roles and responsibilities of the people involved must be established.

#### 4.1.4 Mediation

If the conflict remains unresolved, a neutral mediator shall be involved. The mediator, agreeable to all, shall be appointed in consultation with the Executive Director of LESNW.



- Appendix A: The Restorative Circle
- Appendix B: Mapping the Conflict
- Appendix C: Meeting Notes Proforma
- Appendix D: Biblical References
- Appendix E: Ambassadors of Reconciliation (a ministry of the Lutheran Church – American)

## Appendix A

### The Restorative Circle



**Appendix B**  
**MAPPING THE CONFLICT**

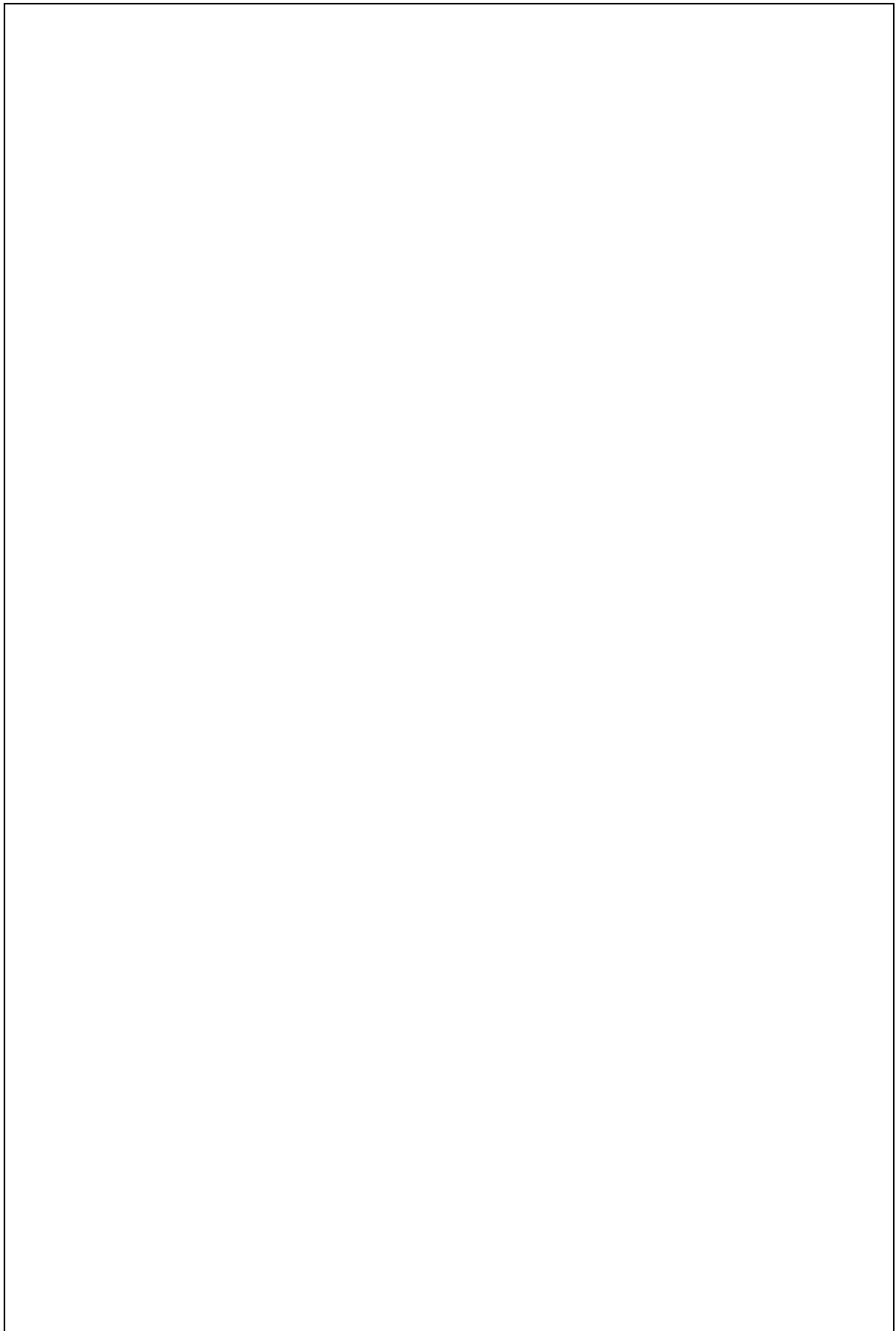
<b>MY DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM:</b>	<b>THEIR DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM:</b>
<p>What needs of mine are involved?</p>	<p>What needs of theirs are involved?</p>
<p>What major values do you feel are involved here (e.g. strongly held beliefs I am prepared to act on: co-operation, human rights, ideological or cultural beliefs)?</p>	<p>What major values do you feel are involved here (e.g. strongly held beliefs that they are prepared to act on: co-operation, human rights, ideological or cultural beliefs)?</p>
<p>What are my objectives and priorities?</p>	<p>What are their objectives and priorities?</p>
<p>What fears of mine need to be overcome?</p>	<p>What fears of theirs need to be overcome?</p>
<p>What life situation limits, or personal limitations, are relevant.?</p>	<p>What life situation limits, or personal limitations, are relevant.?</p>

**Appendix C  
MEETING NOTES PROFORMA**

**Date:**

**Persons Attending:**

**Grievance Issue Details:**



<b>Agreed Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>

<b>Prepared by:</b>	

Source: Brisbane Montessori School

# STEPS TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION...

Can you cope with this yourself?

If yes – Well done!

If no – see below...



Discuss your complaint with the person involved.

Action worked – Well done!

Action did not work – see below...

Talk it over with a parent, teacher or a responsible person you trust and ask for help.

Action worked – Well done!

Action did not work – see below...

Make an appointment to see the College Principal.

Action worked – Well done!

Action did not work...

The College Principal will now deal with it.

# If someone is bothering you...



1. Ignore the inappropriate behaviour

2. Tell them to stop.

3. Ask a friend for help

4. Ask a teacher, or another adult for help

5. Ask the Principal to help you



## Appendix D

Matthew 18:15-16 (NIV)

*15 “If your brother or sister[a] sins,[b] go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. 16 But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’[c]*

Ephesians 4:29, 32 (NIV)

*29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

*32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (NIV)

*12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by[a] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.*

*15 Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.*

*21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*

*27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

## Appendix E

Ambassadors of Reconciliation (a ministry of the Lutheran Church – American)

Main website [www.aorhope.org](http://www.aorhope.org)

Some articles that may be helpful

- [Conflict an opportunity? I hate conflict!](#) (The Four G's: gives definitions and examples)
- [Don't confuse conflict resolution, reconciliation](#)

Another resource (from the website Relational Wisdom - <https://rw360.org/> )

- [Staying on top of conflict](#) (explains the image below – scroll past the video clip)

