



LUTHERAN SCHOOL WAGGA WAGGA

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. General purpose and scope

As a School of the Lutheran Church of Australia, Lutheran School Wagga Wagga seeks to be a place of physical, social and psychological safety for all; where legal requirements are fulfilled and where caring, cooperative and respectful relationships contribute to a supportive community that reflects the values of the gospel of Jesus Christ and where there is a focus on love, justice, respect, compassion, forgiveness, service, humility, courage, hope, quality, appreciation and restoration. At times, given our humanity, issues and concerns arise that must be dealt with fairly, promptly and effectively.

This policy and procedure document applies to Lutheran School Wagga Wagga in handling complaints made in respect of services provided by the school or against staff members, which include employees, contractors and volunteers. This policy and procedure does not extend to personal grievances between parents, carers, guardians or other members of the Lutheran School community.

1.2. Whistleblowing complaints

This policy and procedure does not extend to complaints which are whistleblowing disclosures. The procedure for processing whistleblowing complaints are dealt with in the school's whistleblowing policy.

In summary a whistleblowing disclosure is a disclosure which:

- Is made by a Board member, staff member, a person who supplies goods or services to the school, including a volunteer, an employer of a supplier or a relative of any of these people;
- Involves alleged misconduct, an improper state of affairs or circumstances, or illegal activity, and
- Is made to a senior staff member or officer of the school, the school's auditor or a person who the school has authorised to collect such disclosures.

1.3. Related policies

Complaints about reportable conduct will be addressed in accordance with Lutheran School's Child Protection Policy.

Complaints regarding a grievance between staff members about work matters, including work relationships and decision made by other staff members which impact on their work, will be addressed in accordance with Lutheran School's Staff Grievance Policy.

Complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying between staff are generally addressed in accordance with Lutheran School's Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy.

1.4. Confidentiality

All parties involved in complaints handling are required to maintain appropriate confidentiality, including in relation to handling and sorting records.

It may be necessary in some circumstances for the person in receipt of the concern (or their delegate) to obtain advice and pastoral support from an external person (e.g. a legal advisor) to ensure that the complaint is appropriate and fairly handled.

2. COMPLAINTS

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the School about an educational and/or operational matter relating to services provided by Lutheran School or the behaviour or decisions of a staff member, contractor or volunteer, including misconduct.

If a parent or carer or student has a concern about the conduct of a staff member, they should raise their concern with the school in accordance with section 3. If a complaint that concerns the behaviour of a staff member may constitute reportable conduct, the matter will be addressed in accordance with the School's Child Protection Policy in accordance with section 6 of that policy. Please refer to the Child Protection Policy for information about reportable conduct. Complainants are not required to assess whether their concern meets the threshold of reportable conduct before making a complaint. Any concern about a child's wellbeing may be reported under the School's Child Protection Policy.

Complaints may be made by a student or parent or carer.

The School will seek to resolve complaints informally where possible but acknowledges that in some cases a person may wish to make a formal complaint.

3. RAISING A COMPLAINT

3.1. The complainant

Informal complaints may be raised by a complainant directly with the person involved. The following process might be followed:

- a) An appointment is made in advance with the person, letting them know in advance what is to be discussed
- b) The matter is identified
- c) The complainant describes the effect the matter has had on them
- d) A resolution is proposed

However, if the complainant does not feel comfortable doing so or the matter is one where it may not be appropriate to do so a complaint can be made to the Deputy Principal or Principal. Any complaint about the conduct of a staff member should be raised directly with the Principal in the first instance.

Should the matter not be resolved through informal processes, the complainant may raise the matter formally with the school. A formal complaint can be made in writing to the Principal, via email (principal@lpsww.nsw.edu.au).

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning the Principal, the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of the Board or their delegate, via email (chair@lpsww.nsw.edu.au). In this situation, the references in this policy relating to the role of the Principal or their delegate should be read as references to the Chair of the Board or their delegate.

Where the complaint is against a member of the School Board, a complaint should be lodged in writing to the Executive Director of Lutheran Education VIC, NSW & TAS (LEVNT) using the email address schools@levnt.edu.au. In circumstances where the complaint is made against a member of the School Board, the Executive Director of LEVNT will need to comply with the School's Constitution and any other relevant governance requirements.

Complaints should include clear details about the particular matter (e.g. *who, what, when, where*) and preferably be supported by evidence.

3.2 The school

The Principal or their delegate will generally acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing as soon as practicable.

4. HANDLING COMPLAINTS

4.1. Assessing a complaint

The Principal or their delegate generally will assess the complaint and determine:

- whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or is a staff grievance or reportable conduct matter which are dealt with by the relevant policies, see section 1.2; and
- the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised; and
- whether the school may be required to report the matter to the Office of the Children's Guardian, Police, Department of Communities and Justice or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

4.2 Managing a formal complaint

The Principal or their delegate generally will manage formal complaints by:

- a) advising the complainant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the School in relation to the complaint;
- b) if appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the complaint at the relevant time and providing them with an opportunity to respond;
- c) collecting any additional information the School considers necessary to assess the complaint;
- d) making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved ("resolution decision"); and
- e) advising the complainant in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision of the Principal or their delegate and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

There may be circumstances where some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the School will determine, on a case by case basis the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.

A complainant and the relevant parties that the complaint is about may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the School about the complaint. However, the School maintains the right to determine whether the person’s preferred support person is appropriate and may not approve the attendance of a support person where they are determined by the School to be inappropriate.

4 CONTACT

If you have any queries about this procedure, you should contact the Principal for advice.

Document Information

Title:	Child Protection Policy
Author:	Lutheran School Wagga Wagga
Approver:	School Board
Date of Effect:	2023
Next Review Date:	2024

Document History

Date	Resolution No.	Reason for Amendment
July 2022		No records on previous policy document approved
23 May 2023	19/09	Reflects the current NESA requirements for registration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarifying when complaints are referred to procedures related to whistleblowing, or Child Protection (mandatory reporting or reportable conduct) policies - Fewer specifics with regards to confidentiality as previous statements could be considered to be in conflict with other policies. - “Handling Complaints” section revised to reflect the wording suggested by AIS. - Formatting aligned with Child Protection Policy and other documents reviewed since January 2023.

Date	Previous Policies
2011	Child Safe Child Friendly Policy
2006	Child Protection Policy