



COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Redeemer Lutheran College, Biloela is a complex organisation. Redeemer Lutheran College, Biloela 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.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide parents, students, 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 in the Redeemer Lutheran College, Biloela.

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, Redeemer Lutheran College, Biloela may be required to release confidential information under legal requirement and/or to ensure the safety or welfare of others.

SCOPE

These procedures extend to grievances brought by any Redeemer Lutheran College, Biloela employee, parent, student or other Redeemer Lutheran College, Biloela community member.

Some grievances are better handled under other policies and procedures of Redeemer Lutheran College, Biloela. Redeemer Lutheran College, Biloela has specific policies and procedures in place for issues such as child protection, workplace bullying and harassment, discrimination, complaints by or against staff amongst others.

PROCEDURE

In the event of a grievance, any employee, parent, student or other Redeemer Lutheran College, Biloela community member (**Complainant**) may seek resolution through following the steps below. As stated above, the objective (where appropriate) is to resolve the grievance at the lowest level possible.

➤ LEVEL 1: INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS

Redeemer Lutheran College, Biloela recognises that often grievances 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 process to Level 2.

➤ **LEVEL 2: THIRD PARTY TO ASSIST RESOLUTION**

At this level, the Complainant refers their grievance 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 endeavor to reach a mutual agreement the parties are prepared to abide by.

A Complainant may refer the grievance 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 grievance, the Complainant shall refer the matter to any other member of Redeemer Lutheran College, Biloela Administration Team namely Deputy Principal or Curriculum Co-ordinator to facilitate the negotiation.

➤ **LEVEL 3: REFERRAL TO PRINCIPAL**

At this level, the Complainant refers their grievance, preferably in writing, to the Principal (or Principal's delegate) for resolution. However, should the grievance involve the Principal, it shall be referred to the Chair of Redeemer Lutheran College Council via the Principal.

Reference to the Principal (or Principal's delegate) should resolve most, if not all grievances. However, if the grievance is still not resolved at this level, then the Complainant may properly refer a matter to the Chair of Redeemer Lutheran College, Biloela Council.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

GENERAL

- Grievances should be assessed as soon as possible.
- Grievances 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.
- If you have a concern about someone's (colleague, parent, councilor) work or behaviour, or if you have a grievance against someone go to the person concerned. Where possible and appropriate explain to them your concern, your hurt etc. Aired grievances usually heal, though the way may be rough. Stored grievances destroy relationships.
 - Remember to use "I messages". I felt afraid when you raised your voice....
 - Avoid blaming or labelling statements.
 - Focus on the behaviour, not the person.
 - Aim for a win/win situation where both people go away satisfied at the conclusion of the conversation.
- If someone comes to you with a grievance against you or a concern about your work or behaviour.
 - Listen till the person gives a sign that they feel understood. (This is a skill to be learnt. * See "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephen Covey pp 235 - 260.)
 - Try not to defend yourself too quickly. Remember the healing power of saying "Sorry" - even if you can only say "I'm sorry this happened" or "I'm sorry you've been hurt".
 - If you need to defend your position or to say how you feel, do it with "I messages". Alternatively, let the person know you have something to say in reply, but you need some time to think about it. Come back to it at a later date.
- If someone comes to you with a grievance against or concern about another:-
 - Listen until the person feels understood.
 - Suggest that he/she goes to the person against whom there is a grievance, and tries to sort it out.
 - If you share the concern, listen, then suggest that you go together to see the person against whom you both have the grievance or about whom you have a concern. Alternatively, suggest you go separately if you feel it will be less threatening.

N.B. Remember that to be loyal to those not in your presence (that is, to speak kindly of them) is to build up trust with those who are in your presence. It also helps to preserve reputations.

EMPLOYEES

- During discussions an employee can have their union representative or other support person present.
- While the Complaints/Grievance 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.

PARENTS

- During discussions an individual can have a support person present.

STUDENTS

- During discussions a student can have a support person present.
- If students take a grievance to Level 2 of the Grievance Procedure, parents will be advised.

SENIOR STAFF AND THE PRINCIPAL

- Redeemer Lutheran College, Biloela acknowledges that Complainants are entitled to raise a grievance in good faith.
- A grievance/s shall be assessed and (if deemed appropriate) investigated in a thorough, fair and impartial manner.
- A senior staff member/ Principal can have a support person present during discussions.
- If a member of Senior Staff or the Principal is unable to resolve the issue, they are to advise the Complainant to take the grievance to the next step of the process.
- The Principal (or delegate) should advise the parties directly concerned, in writing, at Level 3 of:
 - ❖ The decision taken by Redeemer Lutheran College, Biloela;
 - ❖ A summary of the reasons for the decision made;
 - ❖ What and when follow up action, if any, is to be taken.

Developed and Reviewed	College Chairman	Principal	Review Due
May 2015	Gavin Lotz	Jenni Krenske	May 2016
May 2016	Gavin Lotz	Jenni Krenske	May 2017
May 2017	Gavin Lotz	Jenni Krenske	May 2018
May 2018	Gavin Lotz	Jenni Krenske	May 2019