

Telopea Park School P&C Association Grievance Policy

The Telopea Park School ('TPS') Parents and Citizens Association ('P&C Association') is committed to providing an environment where concerns or grievances raised by P&C Association members, volunteers or employees¹ (collectively, 'Members') relating to any P&C Association engagement, communication or activity, including under any other P&C Association policy, are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

A grievance may be received by the P&C Association in relation to the conduct or behaviour of a Member in connection with the performance or conduct of any P&C Association role or activity (including the operation of the TPS Outside School Hours Care). Where a complaint relates to an officer of the Australian Capital Territory Education and Training Directorate ('Directorate') or a TPS staff member or student, it should be lodged directly with the Directorate or the TPS Principal (as the case may be) in accordance with the relevant complaints procedure².

For the purposes of this policy, 'a **Grievance**' is a complaint about any situation, issue or interaction which is considered by the complainant ('**the Complainant**') to be wrong, mistaken, unjust or discriminatory.

Principles

- Complainants should not instigate Grievances pursuant to this policy that are frivolous, vexatious or malicious.
- The subject matter of a Grievance, and any documents and information arising from the lodgement, review, investigation and resolution of the Grievance, must be treated by the relevant parties confidentially.
- A Grievance should be raised as early as possible after the relevant incident has occurred or the relevant matter has come to light.
- The principles of natural justice will be observed throughout the Grievance process. This means that, before a resolution of the Grievance is made, any Member who has been named or implicated in the Grievance shall have the right to be informed of the nature and substance of the Grievance, to be heard by an unbiased decision maker and to have a witness present at all relevant times.

Procedures

- If reasonably practicable, and having regard to (amongst other things) the P&C Association *Code of Conduct*, a Complainant should endeavour, in the first instance, to resolve any Grievance by face-to-face discussion with the Member(s) involved.

¹ This includes staff of Telopea Park School Outside School Hours Care.

² See http://www.det.act.gov.au/childrens_policy_and_regulation/complaints-and-concerns or [TPS complaints procedure document/link]



- Where it is not appropriate for a Grievance to be resolved informally through face-to-face discussion, or the Grievance is not able to be resolved informally by such a discussion, the Complainant should provide complete written details of his/her concerns and the grounds for the Grievance, together with copies of any other relevant or supporting documents or information, to:
 - the President of the P&C Association, in the case of Complainants who are P&C Association members or volunteers;
 - a Vice President or other executive officer of the P&C Association³, in the case of Complainants who are P&C Association members or volunteers and where the Grievance relates to the President; and
 - the immediate supervisor⁴, in the case of any Complainant who is an employee of the P&C Association where the Grievance relates to an employment or workplace issue, situation or interaction.
- Where the Grievance is about the P&C Association executive generally, it may be raised with the Directorate, along with a copy of this and any other relevant P&C Association policies, pursuant to the Directorate's *Complaints Policy*⁵.
- The supervisor, President or other person responsible for receiving a Grievance (**'the Recipient'**) will provide written acknowledgement to the Complainant of the Grievance being lodged within seven (7) days of receiving written notice of the Grievance.
- A copy of the Grievance shall be retained by the P&C Association Secretary for record-keeping purposes and, save where inappropriate for reasons of genuine confidentiality, sensitivity or personal privacy, communicated to the P&C Association executive officers for noting.
- If the Grievance pertains to another Member, that person will also be informed of the fact and substance of the Grievance, in writing, within seven (7) days of the Grievance being lodged. (Any Member who is named or implicated in the Grievance will not receive a full copy of the Grievance lodged by the Complainant unless written permission is expressly given by the Complainant to share the document.)
- The Recipient of a Grievance will initiate an informal meeting with the Complainant to discuss the Grievance and, following such meeting, may (without limitation):
 - request further information which is reasonably required from the Complainant (which the Complainant must provide);
 - request a meeting with any Member(s) named or implicated in a Grievance in order to obtain their account of the relevant situation, issue or interaction and copies of any relevant information or documents in the possession of such Member(s);

³ Pursuant to the TPS P&C Association's Constitution and practice, the executive office bearers are: (i) the President; (ii) the Vice President(s); (iii) the Treasurer; (iv) the Secretary; (v) the Public Officer; and (vi) the P&C Council Delegate.

⁴ For the purposes of this *Grievance Policy* and in respect of employees of TPS Outside School Hours Care service, **'immediate supervisor'** shall mean the Director of TPS Outside School Hours Care or the Chair of the Before and After School Care sub-committee of the P&C Association.

⁵ See http://www.det.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/486309/Complaints-Policy-ETD-Website-edition-2014.pdf



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- on a strictly confidential basis, meet with any third-party witnesses to the relevant situation, issue or interaction to obtain their account and copies of any relevant information or documents in the possession of such witnesses; or
- suggest that the Complainant and any Member(s) named or implicated in a Grievance meet, in the presence of the Recipient, to discuss the subject of the Grievance and possible options for resolution.
- The Complainant and any Member(s) named or implicated in a Grievance may each have an independent witness accompany them to any meetings or interviews relating to the Grievance which the Complainant and/or Member(s) are asked by the Recipient to attend.
- The Recipient shall use best endeavours to resolve the grievance within six (6) weeks after the Grievance is lodged.
- The outcomes of the Grievance procedure may include (but are not limited to):
 - recommendation to amend P&C Association policies;
 - recommendation to alter P&C Association practices;
 - agreement by the Complainant and any other relevant Member(s) regarding future interactions with each other and/or the P&C Association;
 - exclusion from participation in future P&C Association activities;
 - exclusion from participating in P&C Association services such as the TPS Outside School Hours Care service;
 - access to training and development;
 - referral of the Grievance to alternative dispute resolution (such as mediation with the ACT Conflict Resolution Service⁶);
 - restriction on P&C Association membership pursuant to the powers conferred by the P&C Association's Constitution; or
 - in the case of employees of the P&C Association, disciplinary action or formal employment review (as permitted by applicable employment agreements and any relevant awards).
- Where a Complainant disagrees with the outcome of a Grievance review, he/she may lodge an appeal or further grievance with any relevant government agency or other body with jurisdiction over the matters the subject of the Grievance.

As endorsed by the P&C Association Executive and adopted by the TPS P&C Association at the General Meeting on 21 October 2015.

Signed President: _____ NAME: _____

⁶ See <http://www.crs.org.au/> for more information.