

BORDER RIVERS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

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Dispute Resolution Policy

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that student, parent and employee disputes are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair way	
Scope:	Students, parents and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements	
Status:	Active	Supersedes: N/A
Authorised by:	Board Chair	Date of Authorisation: August 2016
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2017 • Fair Work Act 2009 • Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld) • Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) • Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld) • Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth) • Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) • Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth) • Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) • Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) • Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2022, NEQ) • Employer Services – Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020 • Employer Services – Educational Services (Schools) General Staff Award 2020 • Border Rivers Christian College Child Protection Policy • Border Rivers Christian College Child Protection Procedure • Border Rivers Christian College Work Health and Safety Policy • Border Rivers Christian College Disability Discrimination Policy • Border Rivers Christian College Privacy Policy • Border Rivers Christian College Anti-Discrimination Policy • Border Rivers Christian College Behaviour Management Policy 	
Review Date:	Annually	Next Review Date: September 2026
Policy Owner:	College Governing Body – BRCC Board of Directors	

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	August 2016	Accepted
1.1	May 2019	Amended and Accepted
1.2	November 2019	Amended and Accepted
1.2	November 2020	Ratified
1.2	November 2021	Ratified
1.3	March 2024	Amended and Accepted
1.4	September 2025	Amended and Accepted

Policy Statement

Border Rivers Christian College acknowledges the rights of students, parents/guardians, staff and others to complain when dissatisfied with the College's services, including an action, inaction or decision of the College. The College encourages constructive criticism and complaints. Border Rivers Christian College is committed to ensuring that disputes are handled in a responsive, efficient, consistent, effective, transparent and fair way.

Border Rivers Christian College will ensure employees can recognise, receive, and appropriately refer complaints to the informal or formal complaints procedure.

Border Rivers Christian College recognises that time spent on handling complaints can be an investment in better service to students and parents/guardians and a better culture for employees, and views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process.

The Importance of Fostering Respect and Inclusion

Cultural safety is a fundamental component of Border Rivers Christian College's Dispute Resolution Policy, ensuring that all students, staff, and families feel respected and valued regardless of their cultural background. Embedding cultural safety into dispute resolution means recognising, understanding, and actively addressing the diverse perspectives and experiences that individuals bring to the table.

This approach calls for sensitivity to cultural beliefs, traditions, and communication styles, with a commitment to eliminating biases or barriers that might disadvantage any party. By prioritising cultural safety, Border Rivers Christian College affirms their dedication to inclusion and equity, creating an environment where conflicts are resolved fairly and empathetically. Such a policy not only helps to prevent misunderstandings that may arise from cultural differences but also empowers all members of the school community to voice their concerns confidently, knowing their unique identities and values will be honoured throughout the resolution process.

Definitions

Complaint – An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the school, related to the school's services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly or legally required.

Informal Complaint – a complaint about a matter that is likely to be simple, straightforward, easily manageable, or minor, where a simple or quick resolution is appropriate such as discussion of the matter with a relevant staff member.

Formal Complaint – A complaint about a matter that is serious, complex or may pose a threat to the health and safety of any person. Examples include serious allegations or breaches of policy, complaints against a senior staff member, including the principal or an informal complaint that could not be resolved informally.

Complainant – The person, organisation or their representative making a complaint.

Respondent – The person who is referred to in a complaint by a complainant as the person responsible for their concerns or who can best respond to their concern.

Types of Disputes that may be Resolved under this Policy

Border Rivers Christian College encourage students, parents and employees to promptly lodge concerns regarding sexual harassment, discrimination, workplace bullying, privacy breaches and non-compliance with child protection processes as well as more general complaints that include areas such as:

- the College, its employees or students have done something wrong
- the College, its employees or students have failed to do something that they should have done
- the College, its employees or students have acted unfairly or impolitely
- issues of student or employee behaviour that are contrary to the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate staff conduct as reported by a student.
- issues of student or employee behaviour that are contrary to their relevant codes of conduct
- issues relating to learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- issues relating to communication with students or parents or between employees
- issues relating to College fees and payments
- general administrative issues
- issues relating to non-compliance with a process outlined in College policies or procedures, for example the child protection policy, discrimination policy, or privacy policy.

Student complaints may be brought by students or by parents on behalf of their children, as appropriate in the circumstances.

Issues Outside of this Policy

The following matters are outside of the scope of this policy and should be managed as follows:

- Child protection concerns or risks of harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the law and the College's Child Protection Policy.
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the Border Rivers Christian College Student Bullying Policy.
- Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the Border Rivers Christian College Behaviour Management Policy
- Employee complaints related to their employment should be directed to their supervisor
- Student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the Principal who will involve the Police as appropriate
- Formal legal proceedings should be managed as appropriate in the circumstances.

Dispute Resolution Principles

Border Rivers Christian College is committed to managing disputes according to the following principles:

- Disputes will be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible
- Disputes will be taken seriously
- anonymous complaints will be treated on their merits complaints will be dealt with fairly and objectively and in a timely manner
- Border Rivers Christian College will determine the appropriate person to deal with the complaint in the first instance. Complaints should be resolved with as little formality and disputation as possible
- Mediation, negotiation and informal resolution are optional alternatives to investigation
- Procedural fairness will be ensured wherever practicable

- Natural justice principles will be observed wherever practicable; including the right of the interested parties to the complaint to be heard.
- Confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- All parties to the dispute will be appropriately supported
- BRCC will give reasonable progress updates
- Appropriate remedies will be offered and implemented
- A review mechanism will be offered
- Complainants, respondents and people associated with them will not be victimised as a result of lodging the dispute nor will they suffer any other reprisals
- The College will keep confidential records of disputes
- The College's insurer will be informed if a complaint could be connected to an insurance risk.
- The decision of the Principal is final

Responsibilities

College

The College has the following role and responsibilities:

- Develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the College's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures
- Appropriately communicate the College's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures to students, parents and employees
- Ensure that the Dispute Resolution procedures are readily accessible by staff, students and parents
- Upon receipt of a dispute, manage the dispute in accordance with the Dispute Resolution model prescribed in the procedures
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided to all parties to a dispute
- Take appropriate action to prevent the victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them
- Appropriately implement remedies
- Appropriately train relevant employees
- Keep appropriate records
- Conduct a review/audit of the Dispute Register in regular intervalsReport to the College's insurer when that is relevant
- Refer to the College's governing body immediately any claim for legal redress

All Parties to a Dispute

The complainant and respondent have the following role and responsibilities:

- Apply and comply with the College's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures
- Lodge disputes promptly as soon as possible after the issue occurs or as otherwise appropriate
- Expect that the dispute will be dealt with fairly and objectively; in a timely manner; with procedural fairness wherever practicable; that natural justice principles will be observed wherever practicable; that confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- Provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
- Not provide deliberately false or misleading information
- Not make frivolous or vexatious complaints or retaliatory complaints
- Show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame

- Acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced
- Maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- Not victimise or act in reprisal against any party to the dispute or any person associated with them

Employees Receiving Disputes and/or Managing Complaints

Employees receiving and/or managing disputes have the following role and responsibilities:

- Act in accordance with the College's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures
- Inform the party lodging the dispute of how disputes can be lodged, when they should be lodged and what information is required
- Provide the complainant with information about any support or assistance available to assist them in lodging their complainant
- Maintain confidentiality
- Keep appropriate records
- To forward complaints to more senior employees, including the Principal, as appropriate
- Not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them

Implementation

Border Rivers Christian College is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints at the College, including by the development and implementation of this policy and via the clear support and promotion of the policy.

Border Rivers Christian College is also committed to regular training of employees on the implementation of this policy.

Complaints Management Procedure

Complaint received from Student/Parent
(Prefer written)



Investigation into accusation conducted by the Principal

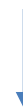


Validity determined. Staff advised of requirements.
Possible outcomes:

- Retraining
- Mediation
- Review of processes
- No actions required



Outcome of investigation



Further complaints, seek legal advice