



## PINNACLE ACADEMIC COLLEGE – COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY 2022

<b>Purpose:</b>	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	
<b>Scope:</b>	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	
<b>Status:</b>	Approved	<b>Supersedes:</b> V1.1
<b>Authorised by:</b>	Akademeia Ltd Board Chair	<b>Date of Authorisation:</b> 29/01/19
<b>References:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)</i></li> <li>• <i>Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017.</i></li> <li>• <a href="#">Australian Education Regulations 2013</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Fair Work Act 2009</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• Pinnacle Academic College Dispute Resolution Procedure</li> <li>• Pinnacle Academic College Work Health and Safety Policy (to be completed)</li> <li>• Pinnacle Academic College Anti-Discrimination Policy (to be completed)</li> <li>• Pinnacle Academic College Sexual Harassment Policy (to be completed)</li> <li>• Pinnacle Academic College Disability Policy</li> <li>• Pinnacle Academic College Workplace Bullying Policy (to be completed)</li> <li>• Pinnacle Academic College Privacy Policy (to be completed)</li> </ul>	
<b>Review Date:</b>	Annually	<b>Next Review Date:</b> 10/01/2023
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Akademeia Ltd	
<b>Note:</b>	This Policy may be reviewed at any time at the discretion of the Akademeia Ltd Board	

## VERSION HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	NOTES
Draft	23/01/19	Initial Draft Document
1.0	29/01/19	Approved
1.1	27/04/19	Approved
1.1	10/01/2020	Reviewed and Approved without change
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## Complaints Procedure

Complaints come to principals and other school staff in many forms. Complaints can be from parents/carers, community, staff or students.

Complaints MUST be in writing and need to be emailed to the following email address [complaints@pac.qld.edu.au](mailto:complaints@pac.qld.edu.au)

This document outlines the procedures undertaken at this school to manage complaints.

All complaints are handled in a positive and open way.

### 1. Documentation

The school documents all complaints.

Complaints are recorded and reported to the principal as soon as practicable after receiving the complaint.

Complaints can be made directly to the principal.

The record of the complaint:

- uses objective language clearly stating the facts
- contains information in chronological order as practically possible
- uses quotation marks, where appropriate and necessary
- is neatly and legibly written in biro/pen or in print in clear unambiguous language
- includes, where necessary, initialled and dated corrections
- includes signature, designation of the author, and time and date of the incident/complaint.

If the complaint is not resolved at the first point of contact, the complaint is acknowledged within five working days by telephone, in person, by email, or in writing.

Documents related to the complaint are kept and stored in accordance with the relevant departmental policies and procedures.

### 2. Complaints Management Phases

There are four key phases in handling a complaint, with the option of a fifth phase for review of a complaint outcome:

- Phase 1. Receiving and clarifying the complaint
- Phase 2. Deciding how to handle the complaint
- Phase 3. Finding out about the complaint
- Phase 4. Making a decision about the complaint
- Phase 5. Review

#### Phase 1 - Receiving and clarifying the complaint

Any member of staff can receive a complaint.

All complaints are received in the following manner:

- being respectful and helpful
- giving the person your undivided attention
- not being defensive, apportioning blame
- remaining positive

- not perceiving anger as a personal attack.

When a staff member receives a verbal complaint they:

- listen carefully to the issues being raised
- summarise the issues to clarify and check that they understand what the complainant is telling you
- empathise and acknowledge the complainant's feelings
- find out what the complainant wants to happen as a result of the complaint
- tell the complainant that they may use the support of a third party in progressing the complaint, if they feel this is needed
- resolve the complaint if possible, or assure the complainant that an appropriate staff member will address their complaint
- advise the complainant what will happen with their complaint
- thank them for their complaint.

Complaints are sometimes made with the assistance of an advocate, interpreter or by a third party (as agreed between the complainant and the principal). In this case staff will receive and clarify a complaint from more than one person.

Many complaints are resolved at the first point of contact with information and/or an explanation, together with an apology and recognition of the effect the situation has had on the person. Some complainants may also want an undertaking that action will be taken to prevent the problem recurring.

When the complaint is not resolved immediately, the complaint is referred to the principal as soon as is practicable.

A member of staff who receives a verbal complaint that is not resolved informs the complainant of the further options of:

- putting their complaint in writing, or
- assisting the member of staff to record, in writing, the particulars of their complaint.

In general, if the complainant agrees to put the complaint in writing, the member of staff takes no further action unless or until a written complaint is received.

Once the complainant indicates that they would like to register a formal complaint verbally, the member of staff makes a written outline of the issues concerned. The record is read to the complainant, with opportunity for appropriate amendments and the complainant is asked to sign, where possible, the written version of the complaint. The staff member also signs (indicating their personal designation, for example, 'Year 7 Teacher') and dates the complaint.

No signature is required for verbal complaints taken over the phone, but the complainant is asked to provide verbal confirmation of the issues that have been recorded.

If a complainant refuses to sign or confirm a written recording of a verbal complaint, the staff member notes the refusal on the written complaint. The complainant is told that this refusal will be noted and that the process will be reliant on the staff member's interpretation and notes only. The complainant may not, at a later date, make another complaint based on a lack of satisfaction with this record of complaint.

### **Receiving a written complaint**

When a written complaint is received it is date-stamped and forwarded to the principal.

### **Receiving an anonymous complaint**

When an anonymous complaint is received, the complainant is told of the possible limitations associated with making an anonymous complaint.

## **Phase 2 - Deciding how to handle the complaint**

When a staff member receives a complaint, they:

- begin the process of making an assessment about a complaint from the moment the complaint is received
- make an assessment in the first instance about whether the issue can be dealt with as a concern or a complaint
- if they are not the principal, refer the complainant or the complaint to the principal for addressing.

The principal decides whether to:

- take no further action
- attempt to resolve the complaint through resolution strategies such as mediation
- refer the complaint to the relevant internal or external agency if required
- initiate an investigation of the complaint, within the school, if further information is required.

## **Co-ordination of complaints**

The principal has the final responsibility for the management of all complaints that relate to school management issues under his/her jurisdiction. The complaint can be referred to another staff member in the school for action (for example, the deputy principal, business services manager or nominated staff member).

## **Record of complaint**

The principal ensures that records of a complaint and any referral of a complaint are kept for either internal or external review.

## **Phase 3 - Finding out about the complaint**

The principal or delegate gathers all the necessary facts about the complaint while keeping in mind the principles of natural justice of all parties concerned.

The principal or delegate investigates complaints by:

- collecting and analysing information relevant to the matter
- working collaboratively with all people involved
- finding the facts relating to the matter
- identifying any contributing factors to the matter
- documenting the investigation report or outcome.

## **Phase 4 - Making a decision about the complaint**

Based on the facts gathered in Phase 3 about the complaint, the principal or delegate makes a decision on the complaint.

## **Notifying the complainant of the decision**

Within 28 College Business days of the receipt of the complaint, the principal provides the complainant with either:

- a written response, including reasons for the decision, or
- a written notification that their complaint has been referred to an internal or external agency.

## **Phase 5 - Review Phase**

If the complainant is not satisfied with this response, they are encouraged to discuss it further with the school principal and/or advised to contact the principal's supervisor, the School Board

# PINNACLE ACADEMIC COLLEGE – DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY 2022

<b>Purpose:</b>	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	
<b>Scope:</b>	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	
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## **Policy Statement**

Pinnacle Academic College is committed to ensuring that student, parent and employee disputes are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, and effective and fair way.

Pinnacle Academic College views complaints and disputes as part of an important feedback and accountability process. Pinnacle Academic College acknowledges the right of students, parents and employees to complain when dissatisfied with an action, inaction or decision of the school and the school encourages such feedback. Pinnacle Academic College recognises that time spent on handling disputes can be an investment in better service to students, parents and employees.

## **Types of Disputes that may be Resolved under this Policy**

Pinnacle Academic College encourage students, parents and employees to promptly lodge concerns regarding sexual harassment, discrimination, workplace bullying and privacy breaches as well as more general complaints that include areas such as:

- the school, its employees or students have done something wrong
- the school, its employees or students have failed to do something that they should have done
- the school, its employees or students have acted unfairly or impolitely
- issues of student or employee behaviour that are contrary to their relevant code of conduct
- learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- communication with students or parents or between employees
- school fees and payments
- general administrative issues.

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 school's Child Protection Policy.
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the Positive Behaviour Management Policy.
- Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the Discipline 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.

## **Dispute Resolution Principles**

Pinnacle Academic 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 like any other dispute when possible
- disputes will be dealt with fairly and objectively and in a timely manner
- 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
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- all parties to the dispute will be appropriately supported
- all parties are entitled to 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 school will keep confidential records of disputes.

## **Responsibilities**

### **School**

The school has the following role and responsibilities:

- develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the school's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures
- appropriately communicate the school's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures to students, parents and employees
- 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
- monitor and report on disputes.

### **All Parties to a Dispute**

The complainant and respondent both have the following role and responsibilities:

- apply and comply with the school'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
- act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner

- show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame
- act in a non-threatening manner
- to be appropriately supported
- 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**

Employees receiving disputes have the following role and responsibilities:

- act in accordance with the school'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
- provide the complainant with a copy of the school's Dispute Resolution Policy and procedures
- maintain confidentiality
- keep appropriate records
- to forward complaints to more senior employees, including the Principal, as appropriate
- to be appropriately supported
- not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

## **Implementation**

Pinnacle Academic College is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving disputes at the school, including by the development and implementation of this policy and related procedures, and via the clear support and promotion of the policy and procedures.

Pinnacle Academic College is also committed to appropriately training relevant employees (especially senior staff) on how to resolve disputes in line with this policy and the related procedures.

Pinnacle Academic College will keep appropriate records of disputes, will monitor disputes and their resolution and will report on a high-level basis to the school Board on dispute resolution at the school.

Pinnacle Academic College will act to encourage students, parents and employees to contribute to a healthy school culture where disputes are resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.

Pinnacle Academic College will appoint an appropriate employee as an Equity Contact Officer to provide confidential and impartial information about the school's relevant policies and processes.

# APPENDIX 1

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**Phase 5 - Review Phase**

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