



# St Brigid's College

## Dispute and Complaints Resolution

### **Introduction**

Dignity, safety and wellbeing of people are central to the Church's teaching. Mercy Education Ltd is committed to justice, respect for others, and all who are associated with Mercy Education act with compassion and courage.

St Brigid's College is committed to ensuring that members of the college community are provided an effective and acceptable means to bring disputes and complaints concerning education to the attention of the College in accordance with the School Education Act (WA) 1999.

St Brigid's College is committed to ensuring that disputes and complaints are dealt with fairly, objectively and in a timely manner.

### **Role of the Director General**

*"The Director General of the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the school observes the registration standards, including the standard about its complaints handling system. Any student, parent or community member is entitled to contact the Director General with concerns about how the school has dealt with a complaint. Information is available on the Department of Education website. While the Director General may consider whether the school has breached the registration standards, she does not have power to intervene in a complaint or override the school's decision."* (Guide to the registration standards and other requirements for non-government schools, Non-Government School Regulation).

### **Definitions**

Complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction with St Brigid's College policies, procedures, decisions, omissions, quality of service, staff or student behaviour.

Dispute means a conflict regarding a right, claim, or demand on one side, met by contrary claims or allegations on the other.

Students are defined as children and young people enrolled in schools and early learning and care services.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all St Brigid's College community members.

## **Principles**

1. All decisions will reflect the paramount important of the student(s).
2. The aim is to resolve all disputes and complaints informally at the lowest possible level.
3. Complainants are personally responsible and liable for the content of their complaints.
4. Complaints and disputes will be managed confidentially, fairly, objectively and in an unbiased manner, according to the rules of procedural fairness, both for complainants and any individual mentioned in the dispute or complaint raised.
5. Any person may complain orally or in writing about any matter arising from the operations of St Brigid's College.
6. Processes will be guided by compassion in seeking reconciliation. The aim is to reach an acceptable outcome that minimises any potential detriment to ongoing relationships.
7. It is preferable that the complaint is verifiable. However, if a complaint or any other information of unknown origin (i.e. Anonymous) provides information that would cause the Principal concern, it will be considered by the Principal so that they can determine the appropriate course of action.
8. All conflict of interests must be declared by any person who receives or is asked to respond to a complaint.
9. Information in a complaint will only be disclosed to those parties who have a need to know in order to investigate and resolve the complaint.
10. As may be required by law, complaints, concerns and disclosures will be reported to the relevant authorities or law-enforcement agencies.
11. Once a decision has been made, parties may request a review of the decision in accordance with Procedures, including escalating the dispute or complaint to the Chief Executive Officer of Mercy Education Ltd.
12. Where there is a relevant procedure in legislation, enterprise agreement, St Brigid's College or Mercy Education policy that provides a specific mechanism for addressing the dispute or complaint, that procedure will be followed.

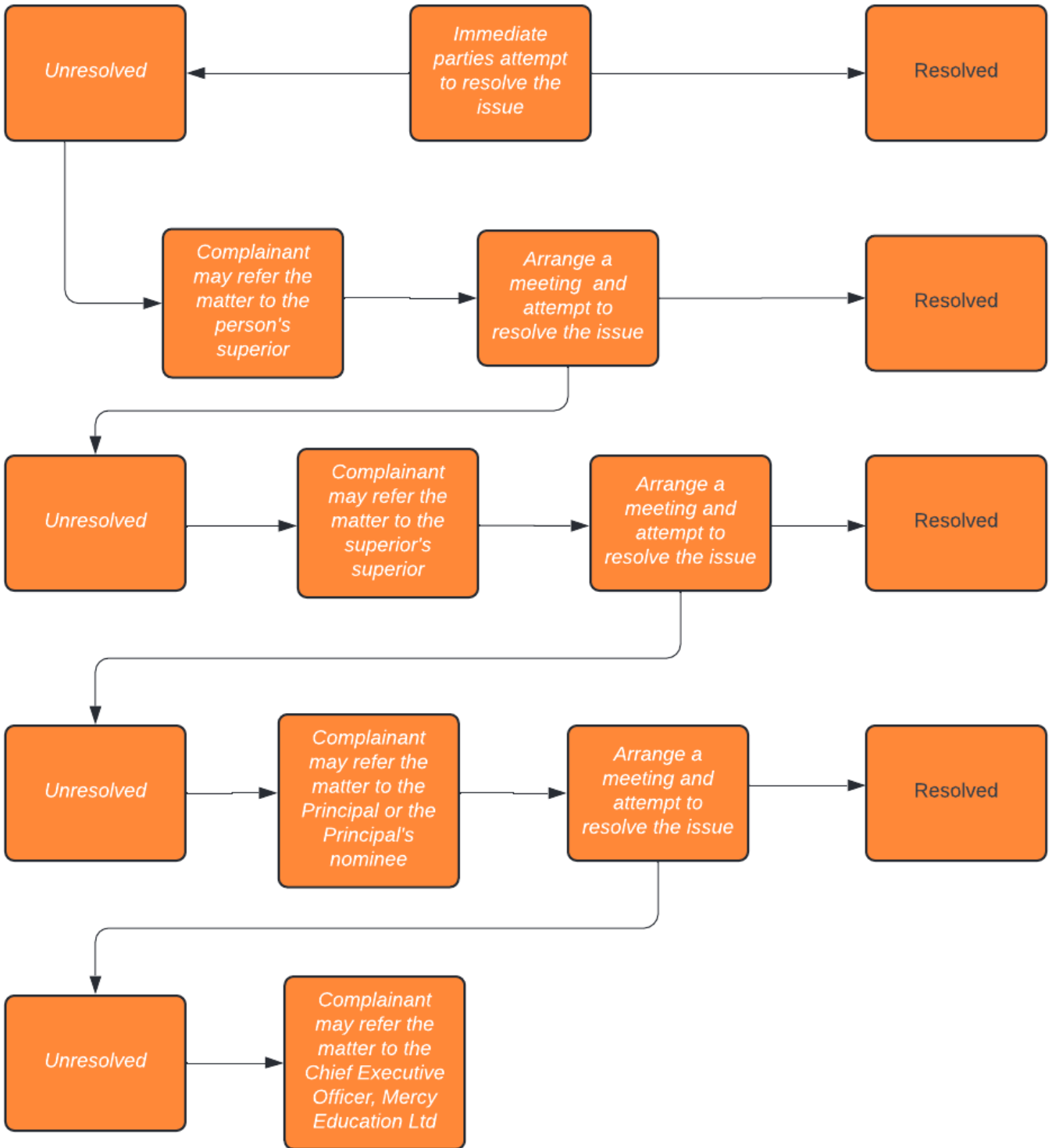
## **Procedures**

1. This Policy and Procedure will be made readily available to parents, students and staff.
2. A dispute or complaint can be made by any person regarding the provision of education or related matter to the person most able to investigate or resolve the dispute or complaint. Depending on the nature and level of the complaint, it should be made in writing.
3. Where an immediate party cannot be identified, such as if it is anonymous or from an unverifiable source, the information will be assessed and duly considered.
4. When a dispute or complaint arises, the immediate parties involved should attempt to resolve the issue in the first instance. For example, the employee will

discuss the matter with the complainant and attempt to find a satisfactory solution. If the dispute or complaint cannot be resolved at this level, the complainant may refer the matter to the person's superior and an attempt made to find a satisfactory solution.

5. Parties may involve a support person to assist them in resolving the dispute or complaint.
6. If not resolved, the matter will be referred to and be discussed with the relevant superior's superior and an attempt made to find a satisfactory solution.
7. If the dispute or complaint is still not resolved, it may be referred by the complainant to the Principal or the Principal's nominee.
8. Where individuals are confronted by inappropriate behaviour, they are entitled to discontinue the conversation and remove themselves from the situation. (Inappropriate behaviour occurs when anyone feels threatened or intimidated, or when insulting or abusive language is used.)
9. Where a dispute or complaint is about the Principal and there is no likelihood that it can be resolved directly with the Principal, the immediate parties may refer the dispute or complaint to the Chief Executive Officer of Mercy Education Ltd.
10. The Principal may request external assistance and expertise (including mediation) to assist in the resolution of a dispute or complaint.
11. The principal or line manager is responsible for the resolution of disputes or complaints within the school referred to them by the immediate parties, in accordance with the rules of procedural fairness.
12. The Principal or line manager will inform the complainant (unless anonymous) and relevant parties of the outcome of their decision.
13. Appropriate records will be maintained.

## Flowchart for Dealing with Disputes and Complaints



## Review History

Version	Date Released	Next Review	Author	Approved
1.0	2013	2016		
2.0	2016	2018	K Evans	SLT
3.0	2021	2023	K Evans	SLT
4.0	2022	2023	N Luckman	SLT