

Grievance Policy and Procedures

Purpose:

- To provide a process for the effective management and resolution of concerns, disagreements or complaints, that may arise between members of the Tamar Valley Steiner School and its associated stakeholders.
- To facilitate a school climate where all stakeholders feel they can voice concerns and those concerns will be heard and dealt with fairly and expeditiously using a transparent and consistent process.

Scope:

This policy applies to:

- The Northern Tasmania Steiner Association Inc., trading as Tamar Valley Steiner School, and its members,
- All staff of the Tamar Valley Steiner School,
- All Clients of the Tamar Valley Steiner School i.e. Parents, caregivers and children of the Tamar Valley Steiner School, and
- Community stakeholders.

Advice in relation to these policies is available from the College Chair, School Council, or Northern Tasmania Steiner Association Inc.

Application:

Key Principles:

- Grievances shall be received in an open and positive manner: parents, staff and children can expect their concerns to be acknowledged and taken seriously
- Grievances shall be dealt with expeditiously
- Grievances are usually best resolved in an informal manner with active and timely discussion between all parties in a spirit of goodwill and with a positive intention to resolve the conflict to a point of mutual satisfaction.
- Mediation will be allowed at any stage of the grievance process.
- The aggrieved party shall be kept informed about the progress of the process.

- Parties to the grievance and those involved in the resolution process are expected to respect the confidentiality of the process

Action prior to lodging a formal grievance

1. The aggrieved party is encouraged to voice their concern appropriately and quickly so a timely resolution can be achieved
2. Where appropriate, the aggrieved party should seek to resolve a difficulty themselves, by communicating with any other involved persons (excluding children) and attempting to negotiate a mutually agreeable outcome.
3. If the aggrieved party is not satisfied with the outcome of informal and direct attempts to resolve the issue, or they feel that the issue cannot be resolved without assistance, they should proceed to the formal grievance procedure.

Lodging a Formal Grievance

A formal grievance should be lodged if a party has an honest belief, based on reasonable grounds, that they or their children, have been adversely affected by a decision or action and that decision or action was unfair and unreasonable.

1. To lodge a formal grievance parties must write to or phone or make an appointment with the College Chair, Teacher or Administration. If there is no College Chair, address your concerns to the School Council Chair. The written grievance should contain information regarding:
 - The nature of the concern
 - The grounds for the belief of unfair or unreasonable treatment
 - What would resolve the grievance from the aggrieved parties point of view
2. The Chair will promptly acknowledge the receipt of the grievance within 48hours of receipt by the school office.
3. The Chair will take further steps to enable resolution to be reached. They will promptly initiate appropriate action possibly including, but not limited to:
 - a. Making enquiries
 - b. Informing all other involved persons or parties that a grievance has been lodged
 - c. Reviewing reasons for the action or decision central to the grievance
 - d. Referring the grievance to an appropriate person
 - e. Conducting an investigation
 - f. Arranging mediation
4. The Chair will contact the aggrieved party to inform them of the action taken. If the aggrieved party chooses to meet with the Chair, a report will be written with her/his help and signed by the aggrieved.

5. If the grievance concerns a teacher or teacher support staff or volunteers, the Chair will notify College that there is a grievance and that a meeting is being convened between the teacher and a support person and the aggrieved party and a support person. Details of the grievance and aggrieved parties will be kept confidential.
6. The Chair will ensure that:
 - a. Any investigation done will be done in a thorough, fair and impartial manner
 - b. All parties to the grievance have an opportunity to be heard and an opportunity to present all aspects of the grievance.
 - c. Comprehensive written records are kept of the process and the outcomes including: the original grievance lodged, record of any response made, records of all action taken, details of any investigation including the methods used and the findings and outcomes.
 - d. The aggrieved party suffers no reprisal from any person employed by or in the service of the school for lodging a grievance.
7. The Chair will inform the staff members involved (if applicable) of their right to seek support from a Colleague or a Union Representative.
8. The Chair will inform the aggrieved party of their right to be supported by any other parent, staff member or person of their choice.
9. Each party is entitled to only one support person at conflict resolution meetings. Chairs will not meet with large groups of people during the resolution process, unless the Chair feels comfortable and consents to do so.
10. The content of a grievance is kept confidential by all parties involved in the grievance or the resolution process. Any person with direct or indirect knowledge of the grievance may not discuss the matter with any other persons without formal permission.
11. A resolution should be reached within 30 days of the lodgement of the grievance. If this has not been achieved the Chair shall contact the aggrieved party in writing describing why a resolution has not been reached and the action that is to be taken to reach a resolution and the expected time frame for the matter to be resolved.
12. Records of all grievances are held by Administration in a central, secure register.
13. If the aggrieved party believes that due process has not been followed in a fair, unbiased and expeditious manner, then they have the right to lodge a further grievance with the School Council.

14. If the aggrieved party believes that due process has still not been followed in a fair, unbiased and expeditious manner, then they have the right to ultimate recourse to resolution through legal processes.

Document created/reviewed	Endorsed by
July 2015, May 2016	Schools Registration Board