



Creativity

Duality

Empowerment

Hope

Sustainability

## **Grievance Protocol Version 1.0**

### **Vision**

To redesign schooling to be genuinely equitable, culturally informed and authentically child-centred.

### **Mission**

Ngutu College will be a model for the seamless integration of Aboriginal knowledges and formal curriculum in experiential learning environments. Ngutu College will be a socially-just, non-denominational, independent redesign of schooling. It will provide a holistic, child-centred and experiential educational environment. Learning programs will acknowledge and engage the individuality of all children. A diversity of opportunities for K-12 children and young people will create options and strengthened pathways for achieving academic, vocational and community outcomes. Ngutu College will achieve this in collaboration with Kurna Elders and community leaders.

### **Introduction**

If a situation arises where a member of the Ngutu College community isn't perceived by another to have held up the principles and beliefs of the college, the Grievance Protocol is in place to support an effective resolution.

An effective resolution is most likely when there is clear communication, an opportunity for all involved to express their views and a shared commitment to a positive outcome. To support clear communication, accurate record-keeping during the process is important for documenting the grievance (complaint) whilst maintaining respect for the confidentiality of those involved. As expressed in the POP, the college expects all members of the college community to handle the protocol in a respectful manner in the best interests of the culture of the college and all those this affects.

In line with the belief of positive intent, many grievances arise from genuine misunderstandings, inadequate communication or unintended mistakes. In the majority of cases, such grievances ought to be satisfactorily resolved quickly and informally through a meeting or telephone call between those involved. Given the Ngutu College POP is based on a belief in the worth of all, there need not be any concerns about power imbalances in any such informal resolution.

The college expects that more formal procedures should only be necessary when matters are of a serious nature and/or have not been resolved by those involved through informal means between them.

## Lodging a Grievance (Complaint) – Principles

The following principles will apply to the lodging of a formal grievance in addition to the principles and beliefs of the POP:

- The safety and wellbeing of all members of the college community is of the highest priority.
- Any member of the college community who is aggrieved is entitled to being heard, being taken seriously and having this addressed in a mutually effective way.
- Grievances should be lodged with positive intent, without malicious or vexatious intent.
- Different perspectives will be acknowledged and valued, and all involved should be protected from victimisation.
- Each grievance is to be dealt with on its own particular circumstances and any resolutions reached or determinations made will not necessarily constitute a future precedent.
- All involved should participate towards effective, realistic and fair resolutions.
- All involved have a right to seek external advice and support.

## Procedure

^ Please note that neither the Minister for Education nor the Department for Education has any power to directly intervene in any grievances/complaints relating to the operations of an independent college.

Except in a situation where a child or young person may seek the support of a non-executive member of staff to support the resolution of a grievance, a member/s of the executive leadership team should be involved in hearing a grievance and the follow up investigations.

An aggrieved member of the community will be given an opportunity to share their grievance with an agreed level of confidentiality\*. There will be an explanation of the principles of this protocol and the broader encompassing POP, as guiding the processes. There will be an opportunity to clarify what the aggrieved would like to achieve as a resolution. The meeting discussing the grievance will have a written record kept and this record may need to be approved as accurate by all those involved in it.

As soon as practicable after a grievance has been heard, the college representative (in most cases, a member of the executive leadership) will actively investigate the grievance, without prejudice and providing the opportunity for relevant persons involved to put forward their perspectives of a situation.

Ultimately, the intention is to reach a mutually agreeable resolution to any grievance, one that will value and maintain the wellbeing and dignity of all involved such that relationships will not only be repaired but strengthened through the process.

If the grievance cannot be resolved in a mutually agreeable way, a determination will be made by the relevant executive leadership member of the college, based on thorough investigation as to whether or not to uphold the grievance or not. All involved will be notified formally of a determination and follow-up actions will be implemented as the college deems necessary in the situation.

If the aggrieved person who had lodged the formal grievance is not satisfied with the resolution, they may escalate the grievance to the Head of College who will investigate and seek to resolve the grievance.

If the grievance is not resolved by the head of College, to the satisfaction of the aggrieved, they may lodge a grievance with the Chair of the Ngutu College Board. The Chair of the Board will have discretion as to how to deal with the grievance, including referring it back to a member of staff.

At any point, the aggrieved person has a right to lodge their grievance with an external agency^.

\* Ngutu College reserves the right to disclose details of matters to other persons who the college deems need to know in order to reach an effective resolution. If grievances are made where an alleged crime may have been committed or the issue falls under mandated reporting of abuse or neglect provisions, the Police and /or agencies such as the Department for Child Protection, will be formally before will not receive or consider any referral of a grievance relating to the college. Likewise, the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA) will not act as a mediator between members of the community, however they may provide general information and guidance.

#### Version Control and Modification History Table

| Date      | Version | Updates            | Approved by       | Signed | Approval Date |
|-----------|---------|--------------------|-------------------|--------|---------------|
| 22-9-2020 | 1.0     | Protocol Developed | Catherine Baldwin |        |               |
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