

INABURRA SCHOOL POLICY DOCUMENT

GRIEVANCE POLICY – PARENTS AND STUDENTS



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1. DESCRIPTION

This policy applies to the handling of grievances relating to the school, its policies, procedures or employees, where students and/or their parents have raised such grievances.

2. PERSONS AFFECTED

- Inaburra students
- Inaburra parents
- Inaburra employees.

3. POLICY

Inaburra School is committed to seeking a resolution to grievances raised by students and parents according to principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.

Grievances shall be handled sensitively, impartially, and within an appropriate timeframe. Insofar as it is possible, given the nature of the grievance, privacy and confidentiality shall be observed by all parties to the grievance and its resolution.

Resolution of the grievance shall be as close as possible to the source, unless it is inappropriate, serious, unlawful or not practical.

The procedures referred to in this policy are not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive. This policy contains guidelines, which may be appropriate depending upon the circumstances applicable to the kinds of matters that may fall within the scope of this policy.

Grievances are often complex, personal, require flexibility and cannot be solved through standardised procedures. Executive members may use their discretion to vary these procedures if they deem it more effective in resolving the problem.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 The parent who holds the grievance

If a parent wishes to raise a concern or grievance, they are encouraged to follow the steps outlined in the flowchart provided below. A copy of this flowchart is also included in the *Parent Handbook*.

JUNIOR SCHOOL COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS

ENQUIRY TYPE	FIRST CONTACT	NEXT CONTACT	IF UNRESOLVED
Academic Learning Needs <i>Eg: John has been struggling with reading for several weeks and needs help</i>	Relevant Class Teacher	→ Stage Coordinator	→ Deputy Head of Junior School
Welfare, Social and Emotional Issues <i>Eg: Peter is feeling lonely at school and has become withdrawn at home</i>	Relevant Class Teacher	→ Stage Coordinator	→ Deputy Head of Junior School
Diagnostic Testing Concerns	Relevant Class Teacher	→ Stage Coordinator	→ K-6 Learning Support Coordinator

SENIOR SCHOOL COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS

ENQUIRY TYPE	CONTACT FIRST	IF UNRESOLVED
Academic learning needs <i>Eg: John has been struggling with Mathematics for several weeks and needs help</i>	→ Subject Class Teacher <i>eg: John's Mathematics Teacher</i>	→ Learning Support Teacher
Holistic learning needs <i>Eg: Abbie is having trouble concentrating in most of her subjects</i>	→ Year Advisor Year Group Girls Advisor Year Group Boys Advisor	→ Stage 4 Director
Welfare, social and emotional issues <i>Eg: Julie is feeling lonely at school and has become withdrawn at home</i>	→ Year Advisor Year Group Girls Advisor Year Group Boys Advisor	→ Stage Director
Diagnostic testing concerns	Director of Student Services (K-12)	
Subject choice for Year 9 and 11, changing subjects and assessment tasks	Academic Dean (K-12)	
Technology use and Managed Devices	ICT Support Team ictsupport@inaburra.nsw.edu.au	

If the flowchart or this policy does not address the specific nature of the concern or grievance, parents should contact a member of the School Executive for further guidance on how best to proceed.

Grievances may hinge upon the competing interests of staff, student, other students and/or the parent/s themselves. It is often not clear where the appropriate balance point lies between all those interests. In some instances, parents may make demands which cannot be fully met, or which seem unreasonable given the need to also balance the interests of staff or other students. Parents must be open to compromise, and open to the possibility that their needs cannot be fully met within the school setting.

4.2 The student who has a grievance

Students may raise grievances with any teacher with whom they feel comfortable. In bringing a grievance to a staff member, the student recognises that the staff member may be obliged to begin a process directed towards the resolution of the grievance.

4.3 The staff member who initially receives the grievance

When a grievance is brought to a staff member, the staff member must take into account the principles outlined in this policy. Taking into consideration the particulars of the situation, the staff member is to decide whether to respond directly to the grievance or to pass the grievance to an appropriate supervisory staff member, such as a team leader or member of the School Executive.

4.4 Supervisory staff who manage the grievance

When a grievance is brought to a supervisory staff member, the staff member is to manage the School's response to the grievance, taking into account the principles outlined in this policy.

Staff must recognise that parents and students are entitled to raise concerns about actions or decisions which have consequences for them or their children. Similarly, staff should recognise and protect the rights of teachers and staff members relating to any grievance. Staff must endeavour to find outcomes that appropriately balance the interests of the parties and are based on the principles of natural justice.

Where grievances relate to Reportable Conduct, complaints will be addressed in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy. Staff should report the matter directly to the Principal. If the Principal is the subject of such an allegation, the staff member should report the matter to the Chair of Inaburra School Limited (ISL). Complaints about any other kind of illegal activity will be referred to the relevant authorities.

5. DEFINITIONS

5.1 Student

Student is anyone who is enrolled as a student at Inaburra School.

5.2 Parent

Parent is the parent or current caregiver of an Inaburra student.

5.3 Supervisory staff member

Supervisor/ Supervisory staff member is the member of staff at Inaburra to whom another member of staff reports and to whom that member of staff is accountable. For example: a Learning Leader is the supervisor of a classroom teacher; the Sports Administrator is the supervisor of a sports coach.

5.4 Natural Justice

- Fully informing a person of any allegation/s made against them;

- Giving the person subject to the allegation the opportunity to state their case, provide an explanation or put forward a defence;
- Ensuring that proper investigation of the allegations occurs, that all parties are heard, and relevant submissions considered; and
- Ensuring that the decision-maker acts fairly and without bias.

5.5 Informal processes

Informal processes are those wherein individuals who have a grievance agree to resolve the grievance without reference to formal processes. Ideally, informal processes should only involve the parties who are directly involved in the issue, although an independent third party may become involved by mutual consent. The parties may choose to keep a written record of their discussions.

6. PROCEDURES

6.1 General principles for grievances raised by parents/caregivers

If appropriate, and the parent feels comfortable doing so, parents may approach the staff member involved. Grievances at this level will normally be resolved by discussion and clarification of the needs or wishes of the parent/student or by clarification by the staff member of the school's procedures or policies.

It may be appropriate to set a time where the matter can be discussed appropriately, and in some instances it may be appropriate to raise or confirm a grievance in writing (such as by email).

If the parent does not wish to speak with the staff-member involved in the first instance, then they should approach the supervisor of that staff-member. With the parent's consent, this staff member may then approach the original person and endeavour to have the grievance resolved according to the principles identified in this policy.

Staff involved in a grievance, either directly or in a supervisory capacity, are required to keep a record of the process of grievance resolution.

In the event of a matter not being resolved to the satisfaction of the aggrieved person, and if the aggrieved person wishes to pursue the matter, the aggrieved person is to bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate supervisor at the next level of seniority. If the grievance is not resolved through these steps, the aggrieved party may ultimately bring the grievance to the Principal.

Both the aggrieved and those who are the subject of a complaint should avoid discussing matters with third parties who are not related to the issue.

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning the Principal the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of ISL. The Executive Assistant to the Principal will provide contact details for the Chair of ISL upon request.

6.2 General principles for students

Grievances with other students – Students should approach their Home Group teacher/classroom teacher or their Year Advisor/Stage Director for advice and support.

This person will then use their discretion to determine the best way forward. The staff member who is approached should record actions taken in most instances.

Grievances with teachers – students should approach the teacher with whom they have the grievance first. It may be appropriate for the student to first speak with a teacher they trust, such as a Home Group teacher. This teacher may then either direct the student to a member of staff (e.g. Year Advisor, Learning Leaders, Stage Director) or speak to the staff member directly on the student's behalf. Record of the student complaint should be kept, including actions taken. A record should also be made even if the complaint is ultimately determined to be unreasonable or vexatious.

6.3 Assessing a grievance

The staff member who receives the complaint will generally assess the grievance and determine:

- whether the grievance is one to be addressed under this policy or is a staff grievance matter or a reportable conduct matter which are dealt with under separate policies (Grievance Policy – Staff; and, Child Protection Policy);
- the priority of the grievance in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised;
- whether to respond directly to the grievance or refer the grievance to a more appropriate supervisory staff member or a member of the Executive; and
- whether the school may be required to report the matter to the Police, Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) or other relevant authorities should the grievance relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

6.4 Formal Process

If a grievance cannot be resolved in the first instance through direct consultation between the parties involved, then the aggrieved party may ultimately bring the grievance to an Executive Member or the Principal.

The aggrieved person should inform the Principal or their delegate in writing of the nature and substance of the grievance, with a written request that a formal grievance procedure be instituted.

The Principal or their delegate will generally manage a formal complaint by:

- advising the aggrieved person of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the School in relation to the grievance;
- if appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the grievance at the relevant time and providing them with an opportunity to respond;
- collecting any additional information the School considers necessary to assess the grievance;
- making a decision about how the grievance will be resolved (“resolution decision”); and
- advising the aggrieved in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision of the Principal or their delegate and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

There may be circumstances where some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the school will determine, on a case-by-case basis, the most appropriate method of managing the complaint.

An aggrieved person and the relevant parties that the grievance is about may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the School about the grievance. However, the School maintains the right to determine whether the person's preferred support person is appropriate and may not approve the attendance of a support person where they are determined by the School to be inappropriate.

7. DOCUMENT CONTROL

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Document Owner James Pietsch

Policy last reviewed March 2024

Policy approved by James Pietsch

Policy review cycle Biennially

Date for next review March 2026

CHANGE HISTORY

<i>Date</i>	<i>Change Number</i>	<i>Details and reason for the change</i>
12/3/2011	1	Newly created document
5/4/2011	2	Checked by M Easton for ICL
8/5/2014	3	Reviewed and updated by T Bowden
4/5/2016	4	Reviewed and updated by T Bowden
12/4/2018	5	Reviewed and updated by J Pietsch
20/12/2019	6	Reformatted to new style guide G Powell
20/04/2020	7	Biennial Review minor edits
27/02/2022	8	Addition of 5.4, 5.5, 6.3, 6.4, additional paragraph 6.1 G Powell
8/03/2024	9	Biennial Review minor edits and added statement that other kinds of illegal activity will be reported.
27/06/2025	10	Addition of communication pathway diagram in 4.1 in compliance with B8.1 (RANGS manual)