



*Taking the challenge ...Inspiring hope*

Policy Document

# Complaints Handling Policy

<b>Complaints Handling Policy</b>		<b>Policy Reference No.: BUS00051</b>
<b>Policy Implementation Date:</b> 22/01/2019	<b>Review Date and Frequency:</b> 19/03/2024 Annually	<b>Responsible for Review:</b> School Governing Body



# Complaints Handling Policy

## Burnett Youth Learning Centre

<b>Purpose:</b>	The purpose of this policy is to provide written processes about receiving, assessing, investigating and otherwise dealing with complaints. <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Scope:</b>	Any person directly affected by the subject of a complaint. Examples may include staff, students or a student’s parent or guardian, contractors, or community members.	
<b>Status:</b>	Review	<b>Supersedes:</b> Previous
<b>Authorised by:</b>	School Governing Body	<b>Date of Authorisation:</b> 26/03/2024
<b>References:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2022, NEQ)</li> <li>• Burnett Youth Learning Centre Enrolment Contract</li> <li>• Burnett Youth Learning Centre Complaints Handling Policy</li> <li>• Burnett Youth Learning Centre Child Protection Policy and Procedures</li> <li>• Burnett Youth Learning Centre Work Health and Safety Policy</li> <li>• Burnett Youth Learning Centre Student/Parent Handbook</li> <li>• Burnett Youth Learning Centre Student Bullying Policy</li> <li>• Burnett Youth Learning Centre Staff Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Burnett Youth Learning Centre Anti-Discrimination Policy</li> <li>• Burnett Youth Learning Centre Sexual Harassment Policy</li> <li>• Burnett Youth Learning Centre Disability Discrimination Policy</li> <li>• Burnett Youth Learning Centre Workplace Bullying Policy</li> <li>• Burnett Youth Learning Centre Privacy Policy</li> <li>• Burnett Youth Learning Centre Constitution</li> </ul>	
<b>Review Date:</b>	Annually	<b>Next Review Date:</b> 26/03/2025
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	School Governing Body	

<sup>1</sup> Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2017, s.7



# Complaints Handling Policy

## Burnett Youth Learning Centre

### Policy Statement

Burnett Youth Learning Centre (BYLC) acknowledges the right of students, parents/guardians, staff and others to complain when dissatisfied with the school's services, including an action, inaction or decision of the school. The school encourages constructive criticism and complaints. BYLC is committed to ensuring that complaints received are handled in a responsive, efficient, consistent, effective, transparent and fair way.

BYLC will ensure employees can recognise, receive, and appropriately refer complaints to the informal or formal complaints procedure.

BYLC recognises that time spent on handling complaints can be an investment in better service to students and parents/guardians and a better culture for employees, and views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process.

### Definitions

Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the school, related to the school's services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required <sup>2</sup> .
Informal Complaint	A complaint about a matter that is likely to be simple, straight forward, easily manageable, or minor, where a simple or quick resolution is appropriate such as discussion of the matter with a relevant staff member.
Formal Complaint	A complaint about a matter that is serious, complex or may pose a threat to the health and safety of any person. Examples include serious allegations or breaches of policy, complaints against a senior staff member, including the principal or an informal complaint that could not be resolved informally. Assessment of the complaint is required by the Complaints Officer, in consultation with the Principal.
Complainant	The person, organisation or their representative making a complaint <sup>3</sup> .
Respondent	The person who is referred to in a complaint by a complainant as the person responsible for their concerns or who can best respond to their concern.

<sup>2</sup> Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organisations (ISO 10002:2018 NEQ), s.4.3

<sup>3</sup> Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organisations (ISO 10002:2018 NEQ), s.4.2



# Complaints Handling Policy

## Burnett Youth Learning Centre

### Complaints Handling Principles

BYLC will manage complaints according to the following (which include principles of procedural fairness):

- complaints will be taken seriously, dealt with fairly and objectively, without judgement and addressed in a reasonable timeframe;
- complaints should be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible, having regard to the nature of the complaint;
- interested parties to the complaint (for example, the complainant and any respondent) will be heard and/or may provide relevant information in relation to the complaint;
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible;
- the complainant and any respondent will be offered support as appropriate;
- victimising behaviour towards a complainant, respondent or other people associated with the complaint, will not be tolerated;
- complainants who lodge a complaint on reasonable grounds will not suffer any other reprisals on the basis of lodging the complaint.

### Complaints that may be Resolved under this Policy

BYLC encourages anyone who feels impacted by an issue involving the school to file a complaint. Complaints can address matters such as:

- the school, its employees or students having done something wrong;
- the school, its employees or students having failed to do something they should have done;
- the school, its employees or students having acted unfairly or impolitely;
- issues of student or employee behaviour that are contrary to the Student/Parent Handbook, including inappropriate staff conduct as reported by a student<sup>4</sup>;
- issues related to learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning;
- issues related to communication with students or parents or between employees;
- issues related to school fees and payments;
- general administrative issues;

---

<sup>4</sup> Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 s.16(2)(a)



# Complaints Handling Policy

## Burnett Youth Learning Centre

- issues relating to non-compliance with a process outlined in school policies or procedures, for example the Child Protection Policy, Discrimination Policy, or Privacy Policy<sup>5</sup>.

Student complaints may be brought by students or by parents/guardians on behalf of their children, as appropriate in the circumstances.

### Issues Outside this Policy

The following matters are outside the scope of this policy and should be managed as follows:

- Child protection concerns including allegations of sexual abuse, likely sexual abuse or harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the school's Student Bullying Policy.
- Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the agreement outlined in the Student/Parent Handbook.
- Student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to Jenny Lang (Principal), who will involve the police as appropriate.
- Disputes between board directors and members of the school community should be dealt with in accordance with the Constitution or Board Charter.
- Formal legal proceedings should be managed as appropriate in the circumstances.
- Complaints relating to the education and training services provided by the school to an overseas student should be dealt with in accordance with the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* and National Code and the school's Overseas Student's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Process.

### Responsibilities

#### School

The school has the following roles and responsibilities:

- develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the school's Complaints Handling Policy;
- appropriately communicate the school's Complaints Handling Policy to students,

---

<sup>5</sup> Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 s.16(5)



## **Complaints Handling Policy**

### **Burnett Youth Learning Centre**

parents and employees;

- ensure that the Complaints Handling Policy is readily accessible by staff, students and parents;
- upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy;
- ensure that appropriate support is made available to all parties to a complaint;
- take appropriate action to prevent victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them;
- appropriately implement remedies;
- appropriately train relevant employees;
- keep records;
- conduct a review/audit of the Complaints Register at regular intervals;
- report to the school's insurer when that is relevant.

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

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

- comply with the school's Complaints Handling Policy;
- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner;
- not provide deliberately false or misleading information;
- not making frivolous or vexatious complaints, or retaliatory complaints;
- act in good faith and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship of trust and cooperation;
- act in a calm, courteous, and non-threatening manner;
- 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.



# Complaints Handling Policy

## Burnett Youth Learning Centre

### Employees Receiving and/or Managing Complaints

Employees receiving and/or managing complaints have the following roles and responsibilities:

- act in accordance with the school's Complaints Handling Policy;
- refer the complainant to the school's Complaints Handling Policy and provide additional information as necessary;
- maintain confidentiality as far as possible;
- keep appropriate records;
- forward complaints to more senior employees, including the Principal, if the complaint cannot be resolved at the initial level or if it involves serious issues that require the involvement of more senior employees;
- not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

### Implementation

BYLC is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints at the school, including by the development and implementation of this policy and via the clear support and promotion of the policy. This policy and awareness of the Complaints Officer is:

- placed on the school website and available through the school administration;
- introduced to students during student induction and enrolment interviews;
- disseminated to students through pastoral care avenues including small group Connect Coaches; individual support staff sessions; and visually around the school on posters.
- introduced to new staff during induction.

BYLC is also committed to regular training of employees on the implementation of this policy through staff meetings, professional development opportunities and through an annual review.

### Complaint Register

BYLC will maintain a complaint register with details such as the date, source, and description of complaints, the employee managing the complaint, the actions taken, the outcome, and the date the complaint was closed.

The complaint register will be stored securely.

All complaints shall be entered into the complaint register as soon as practicable after the



# Complaints Handling Policy

## Burnett Youth Learning Centre

complaint is received. The complaint register will not contain complaints about the Principal. Records of complaints about the Principal will be maintained by the Board with access restricted to the Board.

To safeguard confidentiality and maintain the integrity of the complaint process, access to the entire complaint register will be limited to the Principal and Operations Manager.

The Principal may authorise the sharing of specific, relevant entries from the complaint register with other designated staff members (such as the senior leadership team), provided measures are taken to protect the confidentiality of all parties involved, particularly ensuring that respondents to a complaint do not gain inappropriate access to information about the allegations against them.

## Complaint Handling Procedure

### 1. Lodging a Complaint

- a) Complaints can be lodged with the most appropriate staff member at the local level, for example, the initial contact point for many complaints is the student's relevant classroom teacher or Connect Coach.
- b) Complaints can be lodged through various methods, including:
  - i. Phone – Office (4159 7579) or School Mobile (0490 779 281)
  - ii. Email – [office@bylc.qld.edu.au](mailto:office@bylc.qld.edu.au)
  - iii. In-person (by appointment through the school office to the Complaints Officer)
- c) If the complainant is unsure where to direct their complaint, they can contact the school administration for guidance. Posters identifying the Complaints Officer are displayed onsite.
- d) If the complainant is uncomfortable directing the complaint to the most appropriate member at the local level, or wants to make a formal complaint, they can submit a complaint by:
  - i. Completing the online complaint form (available on the school website); however, assistance to do this is available through the support team
  - ii. Using the anonymous reporting system
  - iii. Reporting the complaint to a member of the school leadership team
- e) Where an anonymous complaint is lodged, the school will follow the Complaints Handling Policy, when there is sufficient information to do so.





# Complaints Handling Policy

## Burnett Youth Learning Centre

### 2. Acknowledgement, Assessment and Referral

- a) The staff member receiving the complaint will:
  - i. acknowledge the complaint within two (2) business days, outlining the next steps and where possible the estimated timeframes.
  - ii. assess the complaint, using the definitions of informal and formal complaints in this policy, and refer the complaint to the informal or formal complaints process.

### 3. Registration and Support

- a) The recipient of the complaint will promptly enter it into the complaints register, regardless of whether it proceeds through the informal or formal process.
- b) The recipient of the complaint will offer support to the complainant as appropriate, which may include assistance with completing forms or understanding procedures.
- c) If a student is a complainant, respondent or victim, or the child of a complainant, respondent or victim of a matter being managed through this policy, the school may offer the student support where appropriate e.g., discussing suitable adjustments with parents/caregivers.

### 4. Informal Complaints Handling Process

- a) The informal process is designed to resolve issues promptly and collaboratively at the local level.
- b) It may involve constructive discussion and negotiation between the complainant and the relevant staff member(s).
- c) If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, it will be escalated to the formal process.

### 5. Formal Complaints Handling Process

- a) The formal process begins with the assessment of the complaint by a designated staff member (e.g., Complaints Officer, a member of the senior leadership team, or the Board Chairperson for complaints against the Principal).
- b) The staff member may gather additional information through investigation, interviews, or evidence review.
- c) The staff member will determine appropriate action, which may include:
  - i. Mediation;
  - ii. Disciplinary measures;
  - iii. Implementation of policy changes;



# Complaints Handling Policy

## Burnett Youth Learning Centre

- iv. Referral to external agencies (e.g., police);
- v. Provision of written updates to the complainant throughout the process;
- vi. Other actions the Principal or Operations Manager determines as appropriate in the circumstances.

### 6. Complaint Closure

- a) The complaint register will be updated with the date the complaint is closed and a brief summary of the outcome.
- b) The complainant will receive written notification of the outcome and any actions taken where appropriate.

### 7. Appeals Process

- a) Complainants may appeal the outcome of a complaint by writing to:
  - i. the Principal (for complaints not previously managed by the Principal); or
  - ii. the Board Chairperson (for complaints previously managed by the Principal).

# Formal Complaint Notification Form



(This form is to be completed by the Complainant)

<b>Full Name:</b>			
Daytime Phone:		After Hours / Mobile Phone:	
Have you personally taken steps to try to resolve the issue before proceeding to lodgement of a Formal Complaint? Circle: YES or NO			
If "YES": Please provide details and attach any supporting documentation:			
Nature / Description of the complaint (please attach additional page/s if required):			
Name/s of any witnesses or support person/s (if applicable):			
Declaration: I maintain that the above is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.			
<b>Complainant's Signature:</b>			
<b>Date:</b>			
Where the complainant is a student, a parent/carer will be contacted to support the student in the process.			
<b>Date parent/carer advised of the complaint:</b>			
<b>Employee name who contacted parent/carer:</b>			
<b>Parent/Carer Verbal Acknowledgement OR Parent/Carer Signature:</b>			
OFFICE USE:			
<b>Complaint Closed:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Initial:</b>	<b>Complaint Register Updated:</b>
			<b>Date:</b>
			<b>Initial:</b>

**Child Protection and Complaints Officers Poster** is located in the Office foyer, at the Hospitality tables where students gather daily, and at the Office Annexe.



## Child Protection:

- Keeping our young people safe from harm is a team effort
- If you or someone you know is at risk of harm, reach out to one of the school's Child Protection Officers
- If you feel that making a complaint is the best course of action, please speak with Ian



**Sharon Mason**  
*RTO Coordinator – VET Trainer*



**Nerine Simpson**  
*Student Support Coordinator*



**Jenny Lang**  
*Principal*



**Ian Purkis**  
*Complaints Officer*