



*Learning for life*

# **GEMS Complaints Handling**



# GEMS COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

<b>Audience:</b>	This <b>GEMS Christian Education Limited (GEMS)</b> procedure applies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emerald Christian College</li> <li>• ECC Little Gems</li> <li>• Ontrack College</li> </ul>		
<b>Purpose:</b>	The purpose of this procedure is to provide written guidance about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) how to make a complaint; and</li> <li>b) how GEMS will respond to a complaint.</li> </ul>		
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<b>GEMS Christian Education Limited</b>  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <b>ATTENTION:</b> Executive Principal  6373 Gregory Highway  EMERALD QLD 4720   07 4982 0977  <a href="mailto:r.davis@ecc.qld.edu">r.davis@ecc.qld.edu</a> </div> <div> <b>ATTENTION:</b> GEMS Board Chair  6373 Gregory Highway  EMERALD QLD 4720   07 4982 0977  <a href="mailto:t.harrold@ecc.qld.edu.au">t.harrold@ecc.qld.edu.au</a> </div> </div>		
<b>Privacy:</b>	GEMS will only use your information to process your request. GEMS will manage your personal information in line with the <a href="#">Information Privacy Act 2009</a>		
<b>Status:</b>	Approved		
<b>Related Policy:</b>	GEMS Complaints Handling Policy		
<b>Related Documents:</b>	<a href="#">Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld), Part 2</a>		
<b>Appendix:</b>	Customer Complaint Form		
<b>Authorised by:</b>	Executive Principal	<b>Date of Authorisation:</b>	October 2024
<b>Review Period:</b>	5 Years	<b>Next Review Date:</b>	October 2029

## UNDERPINNING FOUNDATION

GEMS Christian Education Ltd. bases its governance and operations on Biblical truths and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

GEMS Christian Education Ltd. pursues the following strategic intentions towards its core purpose so that:

- Students will embrace the GEMS values of God, Excellence, Members and Service; discover who they are as individuals and pursue God's purpose for their lives.
- Employees will embrace the Core Values and personally display Christ to students by utilising stimulating, creative, innovative curriculum and teaching practices.
- Resource sustainability will continue to provide and maintain an outstanding and inspiring place of teaching and learning within an environment of seeking partnerships with the wider community.
- Culture is Christ-centred, driven by GEMS values and demonstrated by GEMS FACETS of Friendly, Appreciative, Compassionate, Encouraging, Truthful and Self-Controlled

# Information for Parents and Carers for making a complaint

## 1. **What is a customer complaint?**

As a parent or carer, you can express dissatisfaction with the service or action of the College or its staff, including decisions made or actions taken at the College.

## 2. **How does the College manage my customer complaint?**

- 2.1 The College is committed to responding to customer complaints in an accountable, transparent, timely and fair way that is compatible with human rights. For information about how the College manages customer complaints you should refer to the Complaints Handling Policy which is available on the website or can be requested from the College Office.
- 2.2 For customer complaints about college matters, you are encouraged to use the following three step approach:
  - 2.2.1 **Early resolution:** The best place to raise any concerns is at the point where the problem or issue arose. You are can lodge your complaint by telephone, in person, by email, or in writing.
  - 2.2.2 **Dissatisfaction with outcome:** If, after taking the early resolution step, you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint or how the complaint was handled, you can ask the Executive Principal to investigate the matter. Where the Executive Principal is the subject of the complaint you may raise your concern with the College Board Chair.
  - 2.2.3 **Request a review:** If, you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint or how the complaint was handled, you can ask the College Board to conduct a review. You need to submit a written request to the College Board within 28 days of receiving the complaint outcome.
- 2.3 Some matters need to be handled in a different way to college matters and will be referred to other areas in the College. These include:
  - Issues about harm, or risk of harm, to a student attending the school, which must be managed in accordance with the Child Protection Policy.
  - Complaints about corrupt conduct, public interest disclosures; or certain decisions made under legislation.
- 2.4 You can make an anonymous complaint and the matter will be investigated. Please understand that an anonymous complaint may limit how your complaint can be assessed and resolved. If no contact information is provided, the College cannot reply back to you.

## 3. **What are my responsibilities when lodging a customer complaint?**

You have a right to make a complaint to the College, however, you also have responsibilities as a complainant to:

- a) be respectful and understand that unreasonable conduct will not be tolerated by school, college staff;
- b) clearly outline what the problem is, what you are unhappy about and your desired outcome;
- c) provide all relevant information when making a customer complaint and inform the College of any changes impacting on your complaint; and
- d) understand that if the complaint is complex, it can take time to assess, manage and resolve.

## 4. **What happens after I make my complaint?**

- 4.1 If your complaint is not resolved during your initial contact, we will aim to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible, taking into consideration the complexity and timing of your complaint. As a general guide, complaints requiring inquiry or some investigation may take longer to resolve. School holidays may also impact the time it will take to resolve a complaint.
- 4.2 Once your customer complaint has been resolved, you will be contacted and informed of the outcome of your complaint, any recommendations, and any review options available to you.
- 4.3 For information privacy reasons, the College is unable to provide you with information about other people involved in your complaint.

## 5. **What is not a customer complaint?**

Our parents contact us for many reasons and most of the time our parents do not have a complaint.

It is not a complaint when our parents:

- a) request more information;
- b) request a change in services or request a new service;
- c) make a suggestion for improving our services;
- d) express a concern about a situation;
- e) provide feedback on the school's performance;
- f) are not directly affected by the decision or action of the college; or
- g) provide information (e.g. reporting an incident).

## 6. Receiving a Complaint and Record in Register

- 6.1 The complainant will raise an issue with the college, either in writing, over the phone, or in person.
- 6.2 The Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will decide if the issue is a customer complaint.
- 6.3 It will be a customer complaint if the complainant is dissatisfied with the service or action of the school or its staff, the complainant is directly affected by the service or action, and some outcome is sought.
- 6.4 It will not be a customer complaint if the parent is:
  - a) requesting more information;
  - b) requesting a change in services or requesting a new service;
  - c) making a suggestion for improving the school's services;
  - d) expressing a concern about a situation;
  - e) providing feedback on the school's performance;
  - f) not directly affected by the decision or action of the school; or
  - g) providing information (for example, reporting an incident).
- 6.5 If the issue is a customer complaint, the Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will record the parents complaint in the register. Protected information will not be entered into the register.
- 6.6 If the issue is not a customer complaint, it will still be actioned, but it will be dealt with as standard correspondence.
- 6.7 The Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will provide acknowledgement to the complainant that their customer complaint has been received. Acknowledgement can be provided in writing or verbally.
- 6.8 The Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will consider if any health, safety, well-being or resourcing issues are raised by the complaint or the complainant's conduct, and if they are concerned, they will escalate to a manager to determine any action to take.

## 7. Assess, Investigate and Resolve

- 7.1 The Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will consider if the customer complaint is frivolous or vexatious.
  - 7.1.1 If not frivolous or vexatious, proceed to assess and resolve the complaint.
  - 7.1.2 If the complaint is frivolous or vexatious, the Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will advise the complainant that the complaint will not be examined. This will be recorded in the register. The remainder of this procedure does not need to be followed, and the complaint is closed.
- 7.2 The Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will also decide if the complaint engages or limits human rights contained in *Part 2 of the Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)* by considering the following questions:
  - a) Are any human rights engaged or impacted by the decision or action complained about?
    - i) If so, did the decision or action being complained about limit those human rights?
    - ii) If so, was the limitation lawful, justified and reasonable in the circumstances?
  - b) The Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will document their assessment and decision-making process for human rights complaints.

- 7.3 Customer complaints will be assessed and resolved at the point of receipt, where possible. The Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will assess the customer complaint and determine the best way to resolve it by:
- a) identifying each complaint issue;
  - b) identifying relevant benchmarks, standards or criteria to assess the complaint against (for example, legislation, policies, or procedures); and
  - c) gathering relevant information or documentation, including from the complainant.
- 7.4 The complainant will be contacted by the Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative if additional information is required to confirm the complaint issues or the outcome sought or to provide information about the customer complaints management process, such as timeframes and complainant responsibilities.
- 7.5 Subject to the complexity and nature of the customer complaint and when the complaint is received (for example, in school holidays), the Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will aim to resolve the customer complaint within the following framework timeframes:
- a) simple complaint: up to 20 business days;
  - b) complaints requiring some inquiry: up to 45 business days;
  - c) complaints requiring investigation and referral: up to 90 business days, or longer in some cases; and
  - d) complaints involving human rights issues: up to 45 business days.
- 7.6 The Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will keep the complainant informed of any changes or emergent issues that impact the resolution of their customer complaint.
- 7.7 Options for resolving the customer complaint that may apply include:
- a) providing an explanation to the complainant about the decision, action, etc. and reasons if not previously provided;
  - b) dismissing the customer complaint (for example, if the decision complies with legislation, or policies or procedures of the government or school);
  - c) concluding that the customer complaint has been substantially resolved;
  - d) reaching a compromise solution;
  - e) upholding the customer complaint and implementing specific action, such as overturning a decision, giving an apology or providing a service not previously provided
  - f) addressing or referring the issue for system improvement.
- 7.8 The Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will record appropriate notes in the register throughout the assessment and resolution phase.
- 7.9 Procedural fairness will be afforded to a person who is the subject of the customer complaint and the complainant.

## **8. Communicate outcome**

- 8.1 The Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will advise the complainant of the outcome of the assessment and resolution process. This will include
- a) a clear explanation of the final decision;
  - b) any recommendations; and
  - c) any review options available to the complainant, including internal or external review.
- 8.2 The Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will ensure they keep appropriate records about the information provided to the complainant. This will be stored in the register.

## **9. Close complaint**

- 9.1 The Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will close the complaint and record information in the register about the complaint outcome and any further activities that need to occur.
- 9.2 If further activities are recommended, the Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative is responsible for implementing and monitoring the recommended action or referring the matter to the responsible area for attention.

## **10. Internal Review**

- 10.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their customer complaint and/or the way the customer complaint was handled by the College, the complainant can request an internal review. This request will be submitted to the GEMS Board Chair within 28 days of receiving the complaint outcome.
- 10.2 The internal review will be completed in accordance with the Internal review procedure.

## **11. External Review**

- 11.1 If an internal review is completed and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they can seek an external review.
- 11.2 The Executive Principal or Executive Principal's representative will provide the complainant with details of external review agencies (such as the Queensland Human Rights Commission) to assist the complainant in seeking an external review.
- 11.3 If an external review agency accepts the request and requests information from the school to enable an external review to be conducted, the complaints or internal review officer will record the external review request in the register.

---

***End of Procedure***



**GEMS**  
CHRISTIAN  
EDUCATION

**Customer Complaint Form**  
*Submit this form to the Executive Principal*

#### THE INCIDENT

Date of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of incident (attach additional pages if necessary)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What outcome are you expecting?

---

---

---

---

If we need more information, can we contact you?

- ☐ Yes, you can contact me  
☐ I don't want to provide any more information

#### PERSON FILING REPORT

I declare that the information provided is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Name and Surname: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

#### OFFICE USE ONLY

Report received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

