



## **GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION POLICY**

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Prepared by	Head of School
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1.0	31 March 2017	Proposed policy
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2.1	28 March 2018	Final
2.2	29 March 2019	Final
2.3	6 March 2023	Update to include Secondary

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process for addressing grievances raised by:

- employees of The Nature School Inc. (TNS); and
- parents / caregivers of students at TNS.

For grievances relating to discrimination, harassment or bullying, reference should be made to the TNS Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy.

## 2. Context

TNS is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, productive and harmonious working and educational environment for students and employees. It is acknowledged that grievances may arise from time to time. Where grievances do occur, TNS is committed to prompt, impartial, fair and confidential resolution.

TNS employees and contractors are responsible for complying with the TNS Staff Code of Conduct, relevant legislation, and TNS policies and procedures.

Relevant legislation	Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 Fair Work Act 2009
Related TNS policies	TNS Staff Code of Conduct TNS Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy TNS Communication Policy TNS Safe and Supportive Environment Policy TNS Disability Inclusion Policy

### **3. Policy**

TNS will work with its employees, students and parents / caregivers to resolve grievances at the School level where possible, using a professional and prompt approach. TNS will provide both informal and formal grievance resolution procedures to assist the resolution of issues using an approach which is appropriate to the situation.

TNS is committed to:

- ensuring confidentiality and protection of the rights of all parties
- treating each grievance seriously and with sensitivity
- addressing grievances in a professional manner
- ensuring prompt resolution of issues

### **4. Definitions**

**Grievance** – a clear statement of a problem, concern or complaint. This may include:

- a concern in relation to the interpretation and application of policies and procedures
- a communication or interpersonal conflict
- a health and safety issue
- a question, dispute or difficulty concerning the interpretation, application, or operation of an award/enterprise agreement or other agreement
- a concern in relation to a decision made

**Grievant** – a person lodging a grievance

## **5. Procedures**

TNS recognises that different resolution approaches may be required, depending on the grievance. Informal and formal grievance resolution procedures are available as follows.

### **5.1 Grievances from parents or students regarding TNS employees, practices or policies**

#### **5.1.1 Informal grievance resolution**

The parent or student should discuss the grievance with the person involved, outlining the issue and the outcome sought.

#### **5.1.2 Formal grievance resolution**

For grievances that cannot be resolved directly with the person involved, the following steps should be followed:

1. In the first instance, raise the grievance with the class teacher in writing, outlining the issue and the outcome sought.
2. If it is not appropriate that the grievance be raised with the class teacher, it should be raised in writing with the Head of School.

TNS will determine the most appropriate method of dealing with the grievance. This could include (among other things):

- requesting further information from the grievant;
- requesting information from other co-workers or third parties;
- meeting with the grievant or others involved in the grievance;
- reviewing and responding to the grievance or arranging for an appropriate person to review and respond to the grievance; or
- facilitating a meeting between the grievant and the person(s) that the grievance is about.

On receipt of a grievance TNS will generally take the following steps:

- determine the best method of handling the grievance;
- advise the grievant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by TNS in relation to the grievance;

- advise the person(s) that the grievance is about of the nature of the grievance and seek their response;
- collect any additional information TNS considers necessary to properly review the grievance; and
- advise both the grievant and the person(s) that the grievance is about of TNS's response to the grievance and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

However, there may be circumstances in which some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the School will determine, in its absolute discretion, on a case by case basis, the most appropriate method of handling the grievance.

## **5.2 Grievances from TNS employees regarding workplace issues**

### **5.2.1 Informal grievance resolution**

The employee should discuss the grievance with the employee involved or with their own supervisor, as appropriate, outlining the issue and the outcome sought.

### **5.2.2 Formal grievance resolution**

For grievances that cannot be resolved directly with the person involved, the following steps should be followed:

1. In the first instance, the employee should raise the grievance with their direct supervisor in writing, outlining the issue and the outcome sought.
2. If it is not appropriate that the grievance be raised with the direct supervisor, it should be raised with the Head of School.

TNS will determine the most appropriate method of dealing with the grievance. This could include (among other things):

- requesting further information from the grievant;
- requesting information from other co-workers or third parties;
- meeting with the grievant or others involved in the grievance;
- reviewing and responding to the grievance or arranging for an appropriate person to review and respond to the grievance; or

- facilitating a meeting between the grievant and the person(s) that the grievance is about.

On receipt of a grievance, TNS will generally take the following steps:

- determine the best method of handling the grievance;
- advise the grievant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by TNS in relation to the grievance;
- advise the person(s) that the grievance is about of the nature of the grievance and seek their response;
- collect any additional information TNS considers necessary to properly review the grievance; and
- advise both the grievant and the person(s) that the grievance is about of TNS's response to the grievance and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

However, there may be circumstances in which some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the School will determine, in its absolute discretion, on a case by case basis the most appropriate method of handling the grievance.

While the grievance resolution procedure is being conducted, as far as practicable work should continue as usual.

Employees are entitled to have a support person present at any stage in the grievance resolution process, which may include a representative of their union. TNS may be represented by an association at any stage in the grievance resolution process.

### **5.2.3 Grievances which cannot be resolved at the School level**

If the formal grievance procedures outlined above have been followed, but have not provided a satisfactory outcome, the grievant may provide their complaint and the outcome they seek to the Board of Directors, in writing to the Board Chair. TNS Board Chair, or another Director nominated by the Board Chair, may respond in writing or convene a meeting with the grievant to address the issue.

Where resolution cannot be reached, external assistance may be sought, for example, NSW Ombudsman, Fair Work Australia.