



Primary Only	Secondary Only	Combined Policy
<i>Policy Type: Welfare</i>		

RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a student or parent with the opportunity to access procedures to facilitate the resolution of a dispute or complaint. These internal procedures are a conciliatory and non-legal process. This policy is to be used in conjunction with the *Procedural Fairness Policy*.

IMPLEMENTATION

Definitions

1. A complaint or complaint is a notification provided by a college community member, that they have suffered some form of offence, detriment, impairment or loss as a result of a decision at the college.
2. For the purpose of this policy 'parent' includes 'legal guardians'.

Overview

3. The scope of this policy includes all members of the college community including students, parents, staff + volunteers, and anyone on campus in an official capacity, such as contractors.
4. In the first instance, an attempt to informally resolve the issue will be undertaken. If this is unsatisfactory or does not result in a resolution of the matter, the formal internal complaints handling procedure of the college will be followed.
5. The handling of complaints is confidential, and any complaints are a matter between the parties concerned and those directly involved in the complaints handling process. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
6. If the student or parent remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they will be advised of a further review through the appeals process.
7. Complaints brought by a student against another student will be dealt with under the *Gilson College Code of Conduct*.

Cultural safety and Accessibility

8. It is acknowledged at Gilson College that all students, staff, visitors, families and other community members need a culturally safe and accessible complaints process. This may be achieved through a variety of the following:
 - The recognition and regular acknowledgment of the Gilson College community's diversity,
 - Cultural training for staff,
 - Clear communication,
 - Provision of information in multiple formats,
 - Emotional support,
 - Translation services,
 - Objective investigation,
 - Community involvement.

Process for Students

9. Students should contact the level leader/class teacher or wellbeing team/deputy principal in the first instance to attempt mediation/informal resolution of the complaint.
10. If the matter cannot be resolved through mediation, the matter will be referred to the principal.
11. At this point, the student should notify the school in writing of the nature and details of the complaint.
12. Each complainant has the opportunity to present their case to the principal. Students may be accompanied by a support person.
13. The formal complaints process will commence within 10 working days (term time) of the lodgment of the complaint with the principal/other.
14. Once the principal has come to a decision regarding the complaint, the student will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome.
15. If the complaints procedure finds in favour of the student, the college leadership will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventive action required.
16. If the complaints procedure does not find in favour of the student or the student is dissatisfied with the result of the complaints procedure, they will be informed of the complaints and appeals process available to them.
17. The college leadership undertakes to finalise all complaint procedures within 10 working days (during term time) where possible.

Process for Parents and Contractors

18. Parents should contact the class teacher/level leader/deputy principal/deputy in the first instance to attempt informal resolution of the complaint.
19. If the matter cannot be resolved through informal processes, it will be referred to the principal or his representative for mediation/formal processes.
20. At this point, parents must notify the school in writing of the nature and details of the complaint.
21. Each complainant has the opportunity to present their case to the principal or his representative. Parents may be accompanied by a support person.
22. The college's internal formal complaints process will commence within 10 working days of the lodgment of the complaint with the principal or his representative.
23. Once the principal has come to a decision regarding the complaint, the parent(s)/legal guardian will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome.
24. If the complaints procedure finds in favour of the parent, the college leadership will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventative action required.
25. If the complaints procedure does not find in favour of the parent or the parent is dissatisfied with the result of the complaints procedure, they will be informed of the complaints and appeals process available to them.
26. The college leadership undertakes to attempt to finalise all complaint procedures within 10 working days within a term.
27. Please Note: If the matter is of a very serious or illegal nature. Adventist Schools Victoria and the appropriate legal authorities will be involved.

Informal Procedure

28. Firstly, the issue must be clarified. This is done by the parent.
29. Before approaching a staff member, the parent should:
 - a) be clear about the topic or issue they wish to discuss,
 - b) focus on the things that are genuinely affecting their child,
 - c) always remain calm and remember they probably do not have all the facts,
 - d) think about what an acceptable outcome for them and their child would be,
 - e) be informed; check the relevant college's policies or guidelines.

30. Once the issue has been clarified the parent should contact the college.
31. There are a number of ways a parent can informally raise concerns they have about their child and their education. They can:
 - a) write a note to their child's teacher outlining their concerns,
 - b) make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with their class teacher, the year level co-ordinator or home-group teacher; ensuring that they inform them about the issue,
 - c) consider speaking with the college's student welfare co-ordinator if they feel this would be appropriate,
 - d) arrange any meeting times or phone calls through the college office.
32. The class teacher or year level co-ordinator, together with any others who may be involved, should be given a reasonable amount of time (no more than 5 working days) to take the steps required to resolve or address your concerns. A written response will be given at each step (if the matter is not solved informally). Remember, it may not always be possible to resolve an issue to everyone's complete satisfaction. If parents are unhappy with the outcome they can:

Formal Procedure

33. The principal is the appeals officer for all formal complaints.
34. Most concerns are resolved by following the steps above. However, if the issue remains unresolved after they have approached their child's teacher, they can then ask to see the deputy principal or principal.
35. To do this, they will need to request an appointment through the office. Note that:
 - a) the principal may ask another senior staff member to speak with the parent on their behalf,
 - b) If a teacher is going to be present at the meeting it is more likely to occur outside of classroom hours,
 - c) A parent may choose to deal with this informally, or they may put the matter in writing to commence a formal process.
36. If a parental concern is related to issues of college policy, as outlined in the *College Handbook*, or are in relation to the VRQA Minimum Standards, these should be raised more formally (in writing) with the principal or the college council. If the matter is addressed formally, a written response to the decision will be provided.

Responsibilities

37. The following table identifies the responsibilities of staff at Gilson College and the level at which particular complaints should be addressed:

Level of Complaint	Whose Responsibility	What they do
A classroom or specific learning concern	Class Teacher	Receive complaint, investigate and resolve according to relevant college policies and procedures, communicate resolution
A wellbeing or general learning concern	Homeroom Teacher	Receive complaint, liaise with class teacher to investigate and resolve according to relevant college policies and procedures, communicate resolution
If the concern is not resolved by the homeroom teacher	Level Leader	Receive complaint, liaise with homeroom teacher to investigate and communicate with relevant parties and resolve according to relevant college

		policies and procedures, communicate resolution
If the concern is not resolved by the level leader	Member of (Primary or Secondary) School Leadership Team	Receive complaint, liaise with level leader to investigate and communicate with relevant parties and resolve according to relevant college policies and procedures, communicate resolution
If the concern is not resolved by the school leadership team	Deputy Principal	Receive complaint, liaise with school leadership to investigate and communicate with relevant parties and resolve according to relevant college policies and procedures, communicate resolution
If the concern is not resolved by the deputy principal	Principal	Receive complaint, liaise with school leadership to investigate and communicate with relevant parties and resolve according to relevant college policies and procedures, communicate resolution
If the concern is not resolved at the school level	Adventist Schools Victoria	Receive complaint, liaise with principal to investigate and communicate with relevant parties and resolve according to relevant ASV policies and procedures

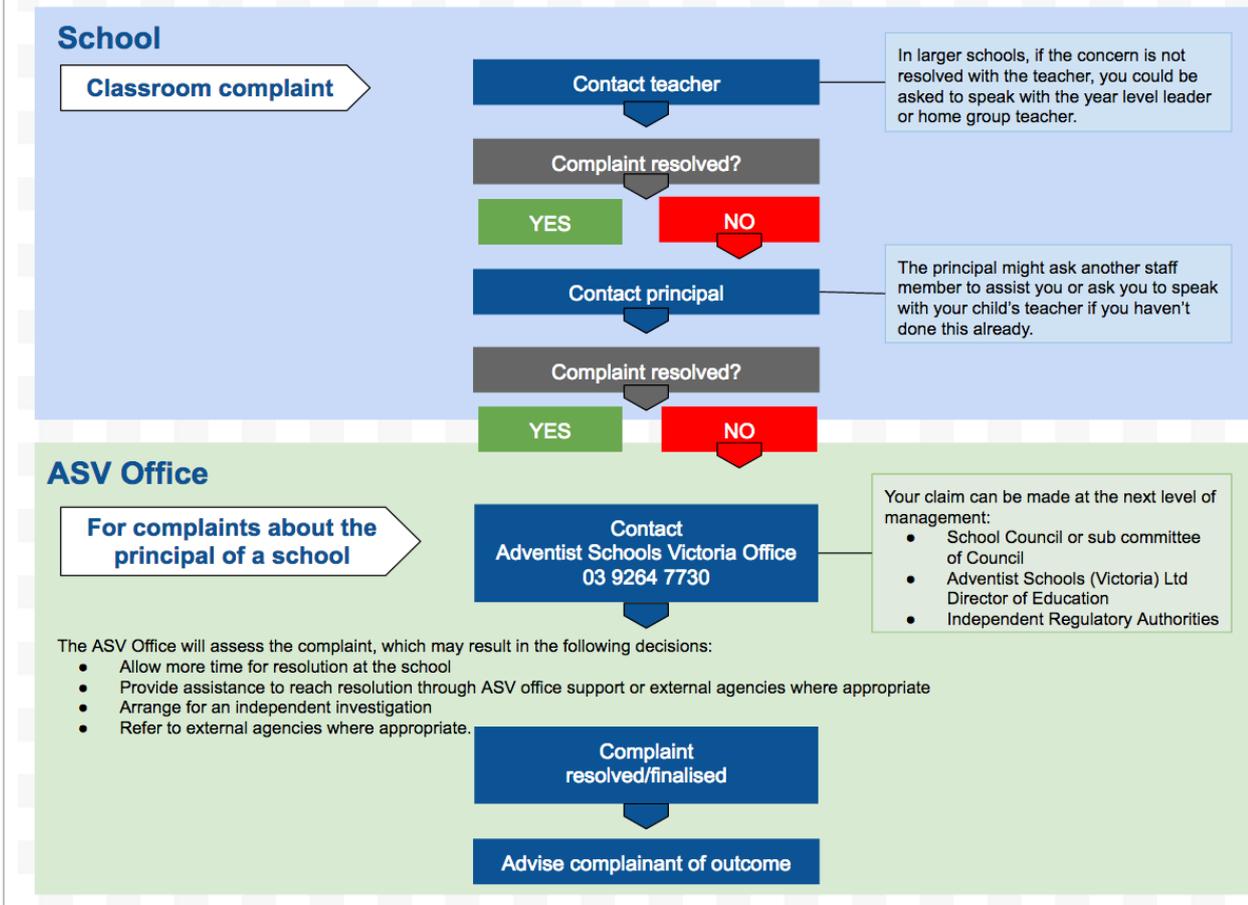
Appeals Procedure

38. If the parent still feels that their complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily after speaking to the teacher and the deputy principal, head of campus and principal, they can then ask the college council to review the decision.
39. A written response will be forwarded to them.
40. Contact with the *Adventist Schools Victoria (ASV)* office should only take place if all other steps have not led to a satisfactory resolution. All contact should be in writing to the Education Director educationdirector@adventist.org.au. A written response will be provided to you within 10 working days.
41. The complainant has the right to seek further resolution through relevant independent authorities, such as *Independent Schools Victoria (ISV)* and the *Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)*.
42. At each level of formal and appeals process within the college, the complaints officer will provide written acknowledgement of complaint to all parties, including:
 - a) An outline of the process and expected time frame for the complaint to be reviewed.
 - b) Consideration of all relevant information including the views of all parties in line with school policy.
 - c) Ensuring an impartial decision is made based on appropriate evidence and proper investigation of the facts and inform all parties of the reason for the decision.
 - d) Once an agreement between the parties has been reached, provide a written response.
 - e) Provide all parties with details of the appeal process if a resolution is not reached at each level.

Supporting Documents

- Complaints Guidelines for Parents
- Complaints Log (see below)

Appeals Process Flow Chart



This policy was shared with staff in Oct 2021

This policy was checked by ADCOM Jun 2024

This policy was ratified by the College Council Oct 2021

This policy was updated Mar 2025

This policy is due for review in 2027

