



Complaints and Appeals Policy

Rationale

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a student or parent(s)/legal guardian 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*.

Definition

A grievance or complaint is a notification provided by a school community member, that they have suffered some form of offence, detriment, impairment or loss as a result of a decision by the school.

Aims

- In the first instance, the School will attempt to informally resolve the issue. If this is unsatisfactory or does not result in a resolution of the matter, the
- School's internal formal complaints handling procedure will be followed.
- 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.
- If the student or parent(s)/legal guardian remain dissatisfied with the outcome, the
- School will advise of a further review through the Appeals process.
- Grievances brought by a student against another student will be dealt with under the
- School Code of Conduct.

Procedure

(a) Students

- Students should contact the student's teacher or Pastoral Care Adviser/Head of School in the first instance to attempt mediation/informal resolution of the complaint.
- If the matter cannot be resolved through mediation, the matter will be referred to the Principal/Head of Campus.
- At this point, the student should notify the school in writing of the nature and details of the complaint (See School Grievance Appeal Form below).
- Each complainant has the opportunity to present his/her case to the Principal/other. Students may be accompanied by a support person.
- The formal complaints process will commence within 10 working days (term time) of the lodgement of the complaint with the Principal/other.
- 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.
- If the complaints procedure finds in favour of the student, the SCHOOL will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventative action required.
- If the complaints procedure does not find in favour of the student or the student is dissatisfied with the result of the complaints procedure, he/she will be informed of the complaints and appeals process available to them.
- The school undertakes to finalise all grievance procedures within 10 working days (during term time) where possible.

(b) Parent(s)/Legal guardians

- Parent(s)/legal guardians should contact the Class teacher/Head of School/Deputy in the first instance to attempt informal resolution of the complaint.
- If the matter cannot be resolved through informal processes, it will be referred to the Principal/other



for mediation/formal processes.

- At this point, parent(s)/legal guardians must notify the school in writing of the nature and details of the complaint.
- Each complainant has the opportunity to present their case to the Principal/other. Parent(s)/legal guardians may be accompanied by a support person.
- The schools' internal formal complaints process will commence within 10 working days of the lodgement of the complaint with the Principal/other.
- 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.
- If the complaints procedure finds in favour of the parent(s)/legal guardian the School will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventative action required.
- If the complaints procedure does not find in favour of the parent(s)/legal guardian or the parent(s)/legal guardian is dissatisfied with the result of the complaints procedure, the School will be informed of the complaints and appeals process available to them.
- The school undertakes to attempt to finalise all grievance procedures within 10 working days within a term.

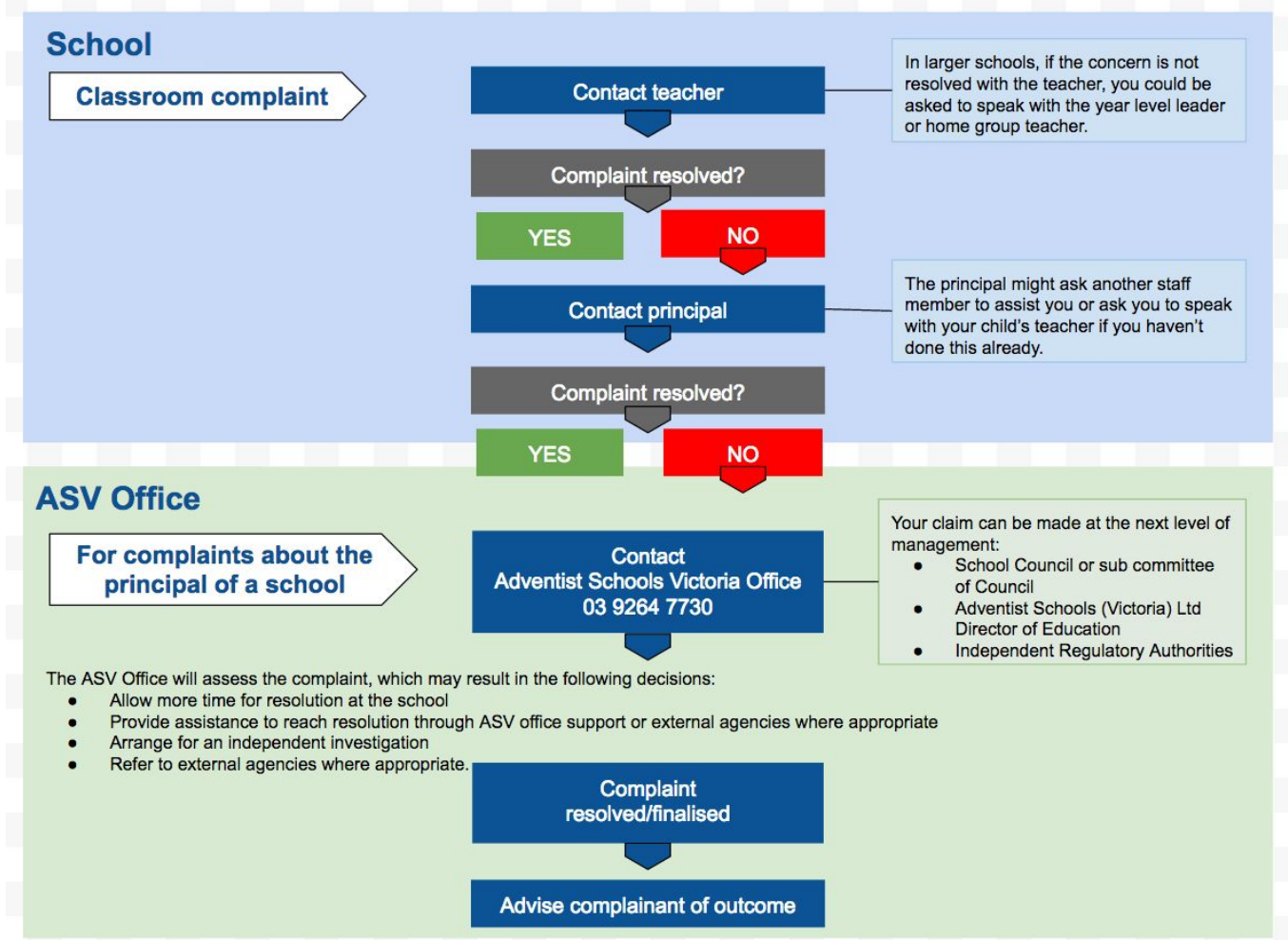
Please Note: If the matter is of a very serious or illegal nature. Adventist Schools Victoria and the appropriate legal authorities will be involved.

Implementation:

1. The Principal or his representative is the agreed complaints officer where the Principal is not the subject of complaint – this is to be referred to the School Council.
2. A school based policy is developed that incorporates the following process:
 - a. Complainant is encouraged by relevant school leader to seek a resolution at the level at which the complaint is made.
 - b. If a resolution cannot be reached at the initial level, the claim can then be submitted to the next level of management as follows:
 - i. Head of School or Deputy
 - ii. Principal
 - iii. School Council or sub-committee of Council
 - iv. Adventist Schools (Victoria) Ltd - Director of Education
 - v. Independent Regulatory Authorities
 - c. Provide written acknowledgement of complaint to both parties including an outline of the process and expected time frame for the complaint to be reviewed.
 - d. Consider all relevant information including the views of all parties in line with school policy.
 - e. Ensure 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.
 - f. Once an agreement between the parties has been reached, provide a written response.
 - g. Provide all parties with details of the appeal process if a resolution is not reached at each level.



Flow Chart of Appeals Process



Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the Board of Directors policy review cycle.

Ratified by Heritage College School Council February 2017