



Primary Only	Secondary Only	Combined Policy
Both Campuses	<i>Taylor's Hill Only</i>	<i>Mernda only</i>
Policy Type: Welfare		

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.

IMPLEMENTATION

Definition

1. A grievance 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 by the College.

Overview

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. If the student or parent/legal guardian remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they will be advised of a further review through the appeals process.
4. Grievances brought by a student against another student will be dealt with under the College Code of Conduct.

Students

1. Students should contact the Level Leader/Class **teacher/Deputy Head of School or Wellbeing Team/Head of School** in the first instance to attempt mediation/informal resolution of the complaint.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved through mediation, the matter will be referred to the **Head of Campus/Principal**.
3. At this point, the student should notify the school in writing of the nature and details of the complaint (See College Grievance Appeal Form below).
4. Each complainant has the opportunity to present his/her case to the Principal/other. Students may be accompanied by a support person.
5. The formal complaints process will commence within 10 working days (term time) of the lodgment of the complaint with the Principal/other.
6. 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.
7. If the complaints procedure finds in favour of the student, the COLLEGE will immediately

- implement the decision and any corrective and preventive action required.
8. 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.
 9. The College undertakes to finalise all grievance procedures within 10 working days (during term time) where possible.

Parent(s)/Legal guardians

1. Parent(s)/legal guardians should contact the Class teacher/**Level leader**/Head of School/Deputy in the first instance to attempt informal resolution of the complaint.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved through informal processes, it will be referred to the Principal or his representative for mediation/formal processes.
3. At this point, parent(s)/legal guardians must notify the school in writing of the nature and details of the complaint.
4. Each complainant has the opportunity to present their case to the Principal or his representative. Parent(s)/legal guardians may be accompanied by a support person.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. If the complaints procedure finds in favour of the parent(s)/legal guardian, the College will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventative action required.
8. 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 College will be informed of the complaints and appeals process available to them.
9. The College undertakes to attempt to finalise all grievance procedures within 10 working days within a term.
10. Please Note: If the matter is of a very serious or illegal nature. Adventist Schools Victoria and the appropriate legal authorities will be involved.

Procedures:

Informal procedure

Clarify the Issue

Before you approach the College or your child's teacher:

- be clear about the topic or issue you want to discuss;
- focus on the things that are genuinely affecting your child;
- always remain calm and remember you may not have all the facts;
- think about what an acceptable outcome for you and your child would be;
- be informed; check the relevant College's policies or guidelines.

Contact the College

There are a number of ways you can informally raise concerns you have about your child and their education. You can:

- write a note to your child's teacher outlining your concerns;
- make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with their class teacher, the year level coordinator or home-group teacher; ensuring that you inform the College about the issue you wish to discuss;
- consider speaking with the College's student welfare coordinator if you feel that this would be appropriate;
- arrange any meeting times or phone calls through the College office (this is more convenient for both you and your child's teacher and does not interrupt teachers during the time they need to be with their students).

The class teacher or year level coordinator, 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 your complete satisfaction. If you are unhappy with the outcome you can:

1. Formal procedure

Contact the Head of School/Head of Campus/Principal

Most concerns are resolved by following the first two steps above. However, if the issue remains unresolved after you have approached your child's teacher you can then ask to see the head of school, head of campus or principal.

To do this, you will need to request an appointment through the College office. Please note that:

- the Principal may ask another senior staff member to speak with you on their behalf. If a teacher is going to be present at the meeting it is more likely to occur outside of classroom hours;
- you may choose to deal with this informally, or you may put the matter in writing to commence a formal process.

If your 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 head of campus, principal or the College council. If the matter is addressed formally, a written response for the decision will be provided.

2. Appeals procedure

The Principal or his/her representative is the agreed complaints officer - where the Principal is not the subject of complaint – and an appeal is to be referred to the College Council.

Ask for a Review by the College Council

If you still feel that your complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily after speaking to the teacher and the head of school, head of campus and principal, you can then ask the School Council to review the decision.

A written response will be forwarded to you.

Contact Seventh-day Adventist Schools (Victoria) Limited Head Office

Contact with the School's head 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.

Contact Relevant Independent Regulatory Authorities

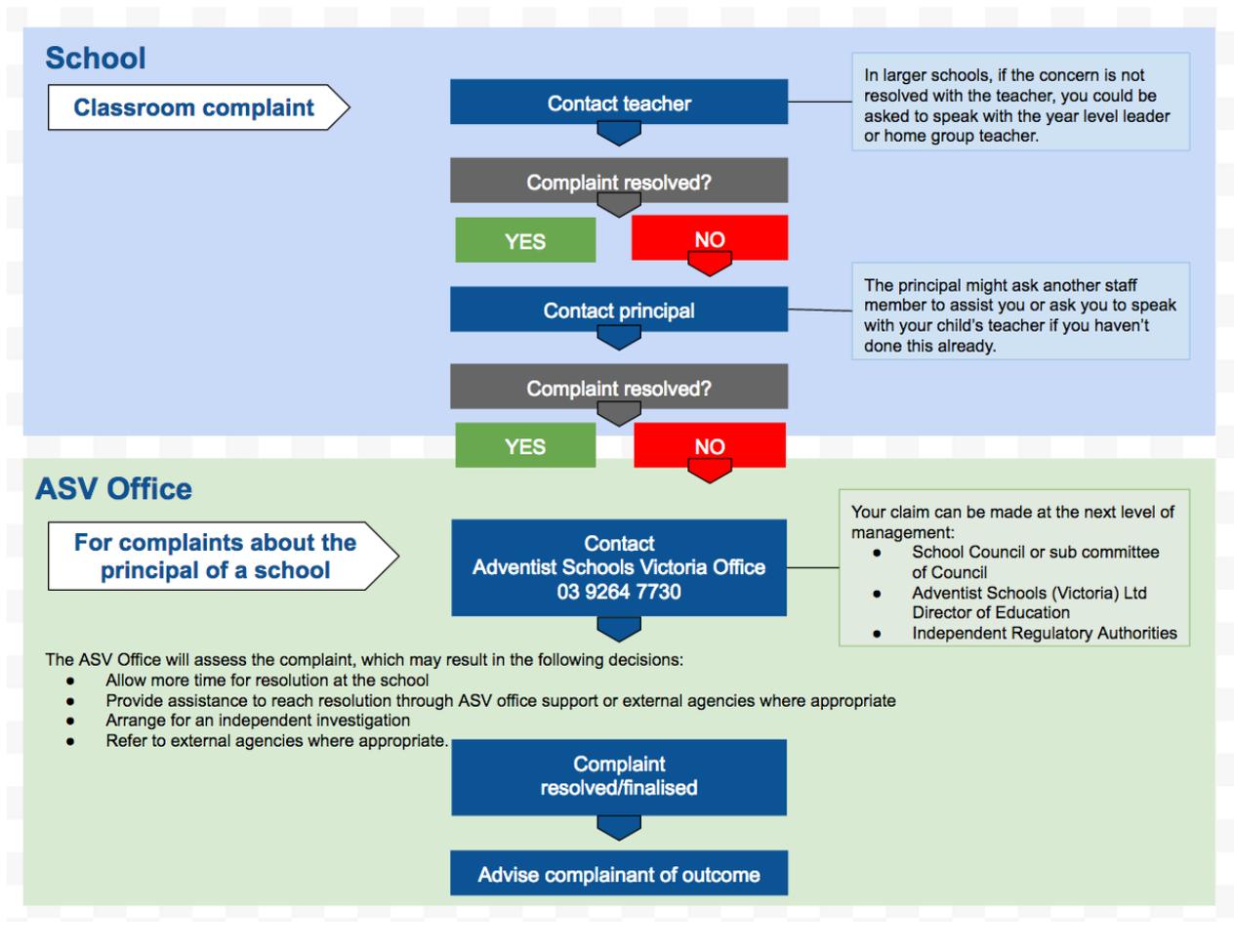
The complainant has the right to seek further resolution through relevant independent authorities, such as Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

At each level of formal and appeals process within the College, the complaints officer will provide written acknowledgement of complaint to all parties including:

- An outline of the process and expected time frame for the complaint to be reviewed.
- Consideration of all relevant information including the views of all parties in line with school policy.
- 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.

- Once an agreement between the parties has been reached, provide a written response.
- Provide all parties with details of the appeal process if a resolution is not reached at each level.

Appeals process flow chart



This policy was shared with Taylors Hill staff in Oct 2021

This policy was shared with Mernda staff in Oct 2021

This policy was checked by ADCOM Aug 2021

This policy was ratified by the College Council Oct 2021

This policy was updated Aug 2021

This policy is due for review in 2023