

## Complaints Guidelines

---

### Introduction

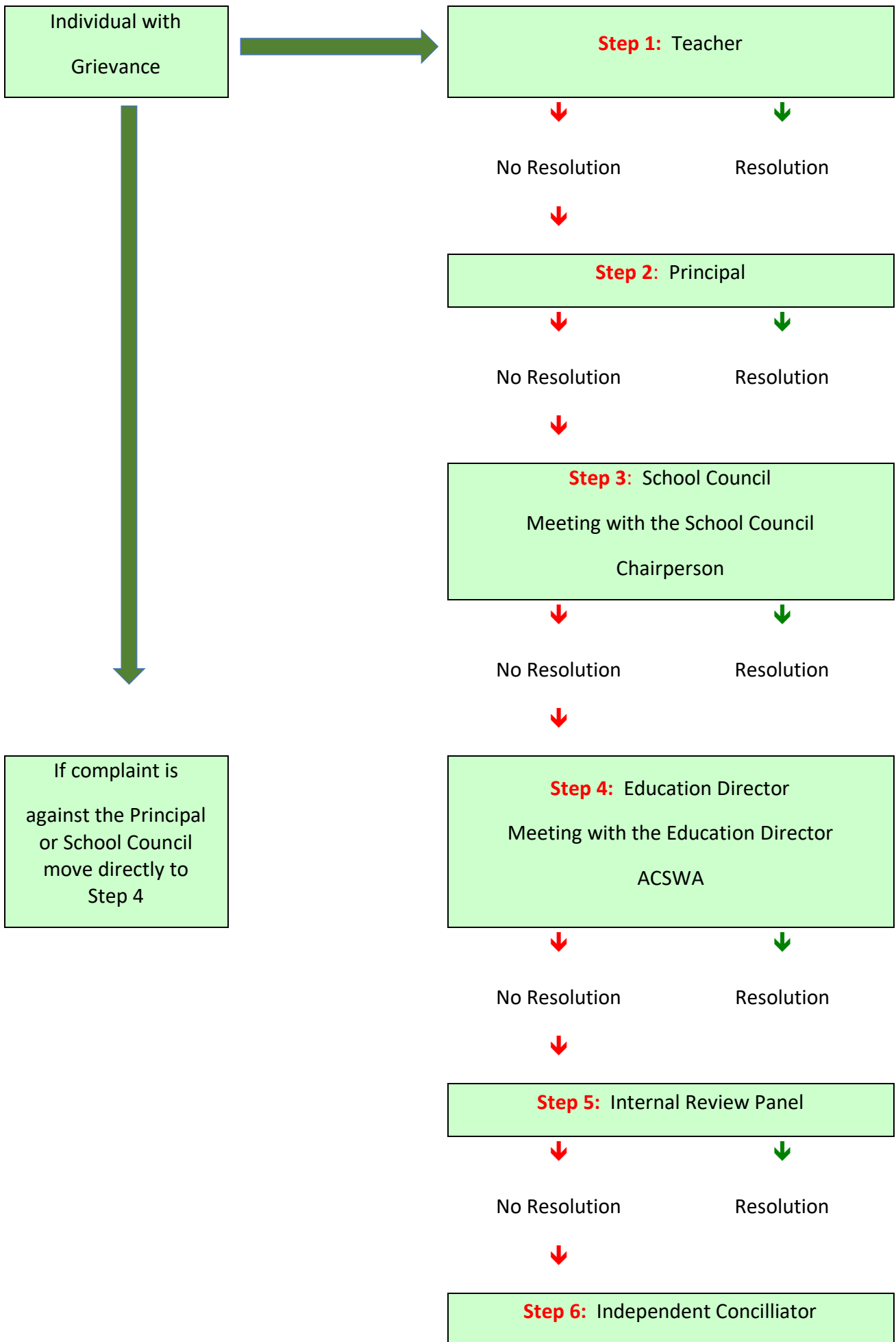
We recognise that grievances can and do arise, however as a Christian school we recognise the Biblical principle for resolving such issues to facilitate resolution, without undermining or damaging relationships. While we would hope that such issues do not arise, it is important that when they do, there is an understood procedure to guide staff, students and parents in addressing such issues.

### Rationale

Positive relationships between all members of the school's community form the basis of the school's ministry. The modeling by teachers, parents and other school community members of unity and their ability to constructively resolve issues is of great importance to students. Implementation of the Christian responsibility to care for others reflects the positive relationship between God and us. When issues of conflict do arise, all attempts should be made to preserve and enhance human relations and through appropriate action bring glory to God.

The Christian approach to grievance and dispute resolution obligates an individual to solve issues as close to the source of the problem as possible, and only involve those relevant to the situation. Only when resolution is not possible should others be involved and these should be those next in the line of command or influence.

It is therefore expected that members of the school community will follow the recommended procedure shown below to address concerns and resolve issues.



# GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

## Parental Procedure for Grievance Disputes with the School Staff:

Please note that the process must begin within 10 days of the original complaint being made to the Principal or Principals delegate.

Complaints should be dealt with in the current school year whenever reasonable to do so. Serious breaches involving matters such as abuse may require legal action and the law will dictate the time limits for making such complaints.

**STEP 1 - *Go to the teacher with whom you have the dispute.*** [You have the right to be accompanied by a person of your choice.]

- a. Make an appointment to meet with the teacher. If you call, and the teacher is busy (for example, they are teaching), you may need to leave a message for the teacher to return your call.
- b. It may be helpful, when making the appointment, to inform the teacher of the reason why you need to meet with them. This may allow the teacher to prepare for the meeting.
- c. If the matter is resolved the process should conclude at the end of the meeting. If not, then proceed to Step 2.

**STEP 2 - *Involve the Principal*** [You have the right to be accompanied by a person of your choice.]

- a. You should make an appointment to meet together with the teacher and the school principal. You should meet together.
- b. If the matter is resolved the process should conclude at the end of the meeting. If not, then proceed to Step 3.
- c. Written feedback will be given if the matter needs to proceed, or if it needs further attention from the Principal.

**STEP 3 - *Involve the School Council.***

- a. You should ask the principal to make an appointment to meet with the Chairperson of the School Council. If resolution is not found at this level, the Chairperson may refer the matter to the School Council Management Committee.
- b. If the matter is resolved the process should conclude at the end of the meeting. If not, then proceed to Step 4.

**STEP 4 - *Involve the Education Director or other School Company Officer.***

- a. You should ask the principal to make an appointment to meet with the Education Director of Adventist Schools WA or other School Company Officer. If resolution is not found at this level, the Internal Review Panel will be formed and a meeting scheduled.
- b. If the matter is resolved, the process should conclude at the end of the meeting. If not, then proceed to Step 5.

**STEP 5 - *Involve the Internal Review Panel.***

- a. You should ask the principal to make an appointment to meet with the Internal Review Committee. If resolution is not found at this level, the independent Conciliator will be contacted.

- b. If the matter is resolved the process should conclude at the end of the meeting. If not, then proceed to Step 6.

#### **STEP 6 - *Involve an Independent Conciliator***

- a. You should ask the principal to make an appointment to meet with an Independent Conciliator. The Conciliator would be called upon to make a decision. The Conciliator is a suitable qualified person who can meet with both parties and assist in making an independent decision.

#### **NOTES:**

- a. The **Independent Review Panel** is to consist of one staff member, one representative of the parent body, and one independent person.
- b. Complaints should be dealt with in the current school year whenever reasonable to do so. Serious breaches involving matters such as abuse may require legal action and the law will dictate the time limits for making such complaints.
- c. At all meetings, each person should state their case clearly.
- d. **The School Principal is the dispute officer for Victoria Park Christian School.**
- e. In most cases where a matter proceeds beyond Step 2, **a written statement of dispute is recommended to formalise and clarify the issue.** (see Appendix 1 - Proforma: Record of Parental Complaint)
- f. Disputes between parents and children from other school families must be managed by school leadership. **Under no circumstances should a parent approach a student directly at school and address an issue to them.**
- g. In events of serious incompetence or misconduct the matter should be referred immediately and directly to the principal. Where such an issue involves the principal, the matter should be referred to the School Company's executive officers. As care is taken to ensure accountability and responsibility is maintained, serious matters will attract appropriate action.
- h. *The South Pacific Division (SPD) of Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church working policy defines "grievance" as being "any misinterpretation, inequitable application or violation of the policies and practices of the institution.*
- i. The student's enrolment will be maintained until the appeals process is completed. Effort will be maintained to keep educational needs met throughout the process.



Expectations of Parent:	Response Given to Parental Expectation:  What further Action is Required? (Mark when completed)  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------	---

**PARENTAL SIGN OFF**

As the Parent, have you been satisfied with the school's action in regards to your complaint? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Signed by Parent:  Date:	Comment: