



Grievance Policy

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1		2010	Creation	VH
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1. Introduction

At Yallingup Steiner School, everyone is valued. The teacher aims to promote, within the children and themselves, the positive attributes and qualities of compassion, patience and kindness and address the lower aspects such as greed, anger and jealousy. Within the curriculum itself children meet qualities of truth, beauty and goodness. These are the guiding principles for the school years and the basis of our curriculum.

Teachers engage with parents to bring about the development necessary for the children to become freethinking, compassionate and loving human beings, the central aim of Steiner Education. Parents are encouraged to discuss with teachers their child's achievements, well-being and social development.

We acknowledge that differences in opinion, understanding and feelings inevitably arise in many relationships, including in schools. We strive to deal with these in a way which is helpful for all those who are involved. This applies equally to staff members, parents and students. Please understand that each situation is different and these are guidelines to assist with resolution.

2. Scope and Application

This policy is applicable for staff, parents, guardians, students and members of the public and school community. A copy of this policy will be available in the office for parents and staff to view and will also be available on the School's website. Furthermore, it shall be noted in both the Parent Handbook and Staff Handbook where the Policy can be found.

The Grievance and Concern support form is available at the school office as well as the digital version on school stream and our website.

3. Guiding Principles

A complaint is defined as 'expression of dissatisfaction made to the school about its services, decisions, actions or those of its staff, or about the complaint management process itself.'

YSS strives to be a safe environment where all staff members, parents, students, and other contractors feel confident that their concerns will be heard and taken seriously.

In the spirit of the provision of a safe school environment, the expression of a concern or a complaint equates to an expression of dissatisfaction and both should be managed and recorded in the same manner.

The main focus when it comes to handling complaints are the students and their well-being. While this policy may be used by a student's parent or guardian on behalf of a concern or grievance their child has, part 9 of this policy is to specifically assist students to express a concern. The flowchart outlines the process of how a child can make a complaint.

Complaints and concerns may include:

- A bullying issue
- How an issue has been handled
- The actions of another member of the school community
- Safety in the school
- A child's treatment by a member of staff
- Financial issues
- Discrimination

The expression of a concern/complaint may involve:

- The school as a whole
- A specific department in the school
- A particular school activity
- An individual member of staff
- Another person working in the school
- One or more students.

A healthy complaint handling system provides security amongst staff, parents and children and assists one to speak up and express a concern. YSS encourages each member of the community to resolve their concerns or complaints directly with the other parties. YSS also encourages parents to contact Teachers, the Education Facilitator, the Chaplain, the Business Manager or other staff directly. Each complaint will be:

- Acknowledged, regardless in which form (verbal, written, via telephone) and to whom it was made.
- Dealt with in an expeditious manner.
- Confidential at all times.
- Dealt with under procedural fairness (provide a hearing appropriate to the circumstances and demonstrate lack of bias)

“The Director General of the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the school observes the registration standards, including the standard about its complaints handling system. Any student, parent or community member is entitled to contact the Director General with concerns about how the school has dealt with a complaint. Information is available on the Department of Education website¹⁶. While the Director General may consider whether the school has breached the registration standards, she does not have power to intervene in a complaint or override the school's decision.”

4. Steps Toward Resolution

Note: If an outcome is reached during any of these steps that either party is not happy with, a system of review shall be applied.

Step 1. Discuss with the person concerned and attempt to resolve the grievance.

In many instances the Class Teacher will be the first person to whom a concern is expressed. This does not necessarily mean the teacher themselves is the concerned person. With concerns that involve students, concerns on behalf of students, or concerns from a parent, the teacher plays a fundamental role in assisting to find a resolution that agrees with the values and philosophy of YSS. The teacher is encouraged to seek support at any stage from the Chaplain, Education Facilitator and College Executive to resolve a complaint.

Step 2. If the grievance is not resolved satisfactorily by direct communication, either party can bring the matter to the attention of the Chaplain and/or Education Facilitator, either by appointment or in writing.

When a complaint is put in writing, the complaint should be based on an identifiable instance or instances and record information. The Chaplain/Education Facilitator will contact the complainant as a matter of priority.

A meeting will be arranged to listen, to respond to the concerns, and to discuss options for actions to be implemented. If appropriate, the person who is the subject of the complaint is advised of the complaint and invited to submit their own account of the incident/s to the Chaplain/Education Facilitator.

Where the complaint involves two or more parties, meetings are held to explore the matter or incident with all parties and facilitated by the Chaplain/Education Facilitator. The school shall keep the complainant informed of the process, how the school proposes to deal with the complaint, any outcomes at this stage, and the proposed time frame. Options for action are explored and agreement is sought regarding those actions which may need to be implemented.

It is the responsibility of the Chaplain/Education Facilitator to track and see that implementation is carried out. If any action requires sanctioning, ratification will be sought from the appropriate body.

Action/s will be implemented and followed up as agreed by parties involved and/or as is required by law.

Step 3. If the grievance is not resolved satisfactorily with the Chaplain/Education Facilitator, the grievance can be brought in writing to the Executive Committee for consideration. The school shall keep the complainant informed of the process and any outcomes at this stage.

Step 4. Any unresolved complaints can be addressed in writing to the School Board by either the Executive Committee or the Complainant for further review. The Board will use its discretion to intervene with the aid of advisory and/or legal bodies or arbitration if necessary.

To support resolution, we recommend the mediation services provided by the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) or a similar independent body.

5. Resolution

Satisfaction for a complainant may come from any of the following:

- knowing that changes have been made and that matters will be different in future
- knowing that the school is now alert to a possible problem
- feeling that their concern has been considered seriously
- an outcome which may be different from the one they sought, but which they perceive to be well-considered
- a considered letter
- an apology
- If time is needed to investigate/consider the complaint then the complainant will be kept informed of its progress, in writing, giving the assurance that the issue has been understood and the matter is being dealt with.

6. Concern and Grievance Flow Chart.

All members of the school community are encouraged to follow these procedures.

STEP 1: Try to resolve the Concern directly

Discuss with the person concerned and attempt to resolve the grievance.

If the concern is not resolved or if the complainant has difficulty speaking directly to the person concerned, he/she may:



STEP 2: Request an appointment with the Chaplain and/or Education Facilitator

Complainant to raise the concern with the Chaplain and/or Education Facilitator who will arrange to mediate discussions between both parties.

If concern is not resolved to a favourable outcome for both parties or the concern pertains to school management.



STEP 3: Written Concern addressed to the Executive Committee

Complainant may forward a written concern to the Executive committee.
(See Appendix for Grievance and Concern Report Form).

Resolution not forthcoming



STEP 4: Written Concern for Review by the School Board

The Executive Committee or the Complainant may request a review by the School Board if a satisfactory resolution has not been reached thus far. The School Board may confer with the College Executive and/or relevant advisory or legal bodies. The complainant will receive a written reply from the Board.

An outside facilitator may be necessary for the mediation and/or arbitration process.

7. Record Keeping and Complaints Register

Staff will keep written notes of their interviews/correspondence with all parties to the grievance, and what action they took to resolve the grievance.

These notes will be kept in the office while the issue is being resolved. Once the matter has been finalised, the Education Facilitator/Chaplain will keep all records of concern in a secure location.

YSS holds a complaints register which is accessible by the Education Facilitator and the Chaplain.

The school reviews its complaints records regularly with a view to assessing both its services and its complaints management system.

Teachers are encouraged to raise their concern at any time with the Education facilitator/Chaplain if repetitive minor issues or patterns are noted that have not progressed yet to a formal complaint.

Any complaints pertaining to governance will be reported to the Board by the Executive Committee.

8. Help a Child to Make a Complaint

YSS acknowledges that listening to children and young people, dealing with concerns or complaints about behaviour towards a child, or between children, and disclosure or discovery of abuse is of critical importance.

At YSS the Chaplain plays a key role in liaising with students, parents or staff regarding any concern. The Chaplain is responsible for reviewing and implementing the Keeping Safe Curriculum in collaboration with the teachers, creating a safe culture and providing a clear process for the children to follow.

Teachers promote regular feedback from the students by;

- Empowering students by providing opportunities for them to participate in discussions, such as Weekly Sharing Circle, Class Meetings, and general discussion at mealtimes.
- Teachers demonstrating their listening and care by taking complaints and concerns seriously.
- Teachers assuring children they will be listened to.
Teachers providing strategies to identify adults that students can trust and talk to.

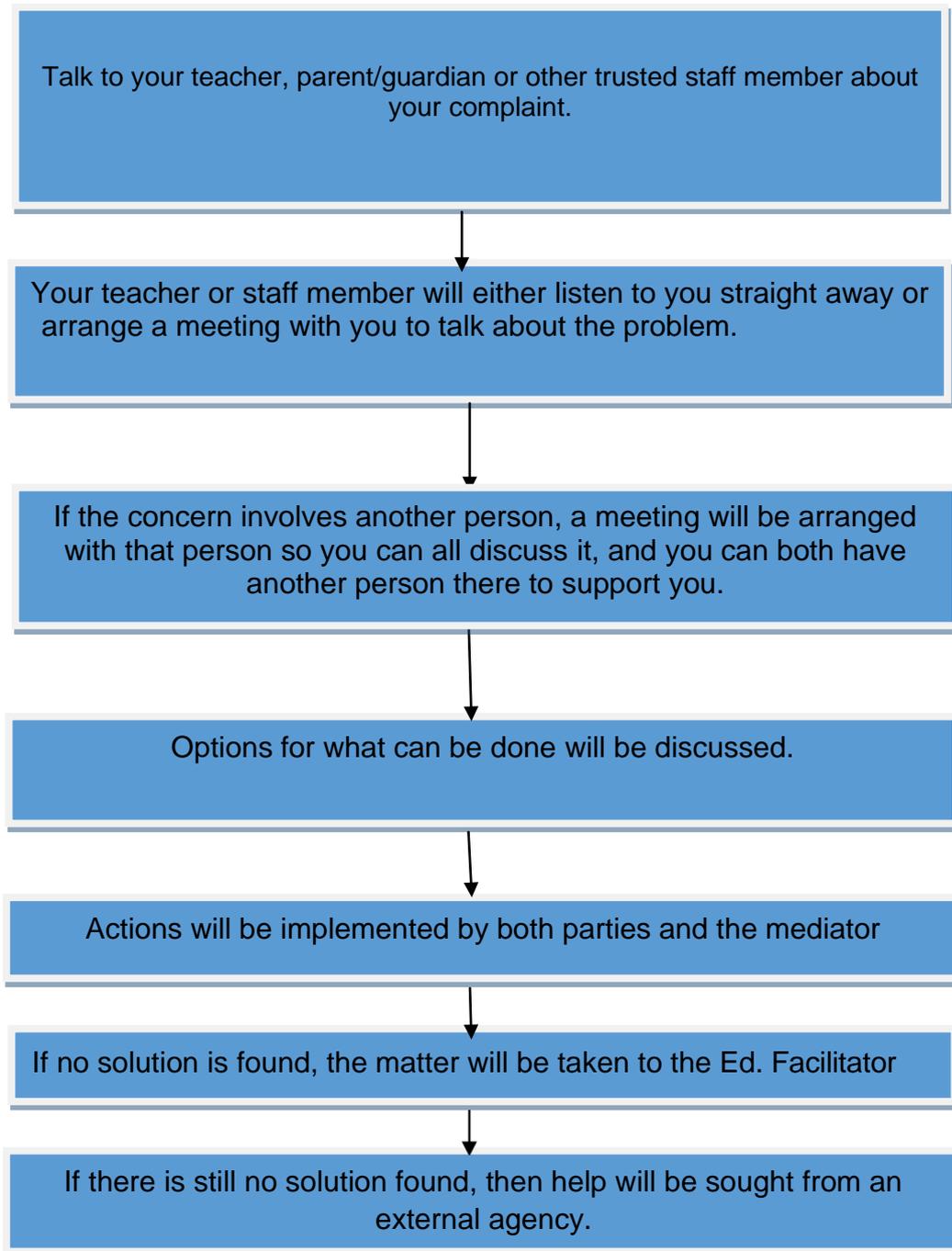
8.a Procedure

Every child has the right to express a concern to any member of staff or community that they feel comfortable with. Any complaint will be taken seriously and addressed rapidly. The process for alleged child abuse is outlined in the Child Protection Policy.

If a child's complaint concerns bullying or abuse by other children, the process will also include the parents of the children involved. They will be notified by the Chaplain or Staff Member who mediates the situation. In such instances, the Education Facilitator will be informed or involved.

9. Child friendly complaints process flowchart

COMPLAINT FLOWCHART FOR STUDENTS



10. Resources and related documents

Guidelines/ Resources

1. Guide to the Registration Standards and Other Requirements for Non-Government Schools January 2020

<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/standards>

2. National principles for Child safe organisations

https://childsafef.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/National_Principles_for_Child_Safe_Organisations2019.pdf

3. Educator Guide– <https://www.snaicc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/03204.pdf>

4. Complaints Handling and the very useful associated checklist

<http://www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/Publications/Documents/guidelines/Binder-Complaint-Handling.pdf>

"<http://www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/Publications/Documents/guidelines/Complaint-handling-systems-Checklist.pdf>" Complaints' Handling Checklist.

Related Documents

- Child protection Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Parent Handbook
- Critical Incidents policy

Appendix I: Grievance and Concern Report Form

YALLINGUP STEINER SCHOOL CONCERN REPORT FORM

This form may be used when putting a concern or grievance in writing. Please refer to the procedure outlined on the Concern and Grievance Flow Chart.

Once completed:

- Email, post or hand this form to the front counter at the school office (Place in an envelope marked "confidential" if necessary)
- It will be directed accordingly
- You may ask for a receipted copy if required

Concerns will be processed in accordance with the Grievance Policy.

Indicate Level of Concern to you (circle): MINOR MIDDLE MAJOR

Date:

Name of person filling in this form:

Phone number:

Email:

Address:

Person filling in this form is a (please circle, or note other):

Teacher Parent/ Guardian Teaching Assistant Other:

Description of concern and actions taken so far:

(Add additional pages if more space is needed)

Thank you for filling out this form. You will be contacted to let you know how your concern is being addressed.