INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Anglican Schools Commission (Inc.), trading as AngliSchools ("AngliSchools"), Dispute and Complaint Resolution Policy set out how Cobram Anglican Grammar School (the School) manages complaints and concerns. The School welcomes suggestions, feedback and comments from parents, students or staff, and takes all complaints and concerns seriously.

The School is committed to ensuring the safety, welfare and well-being of all children and people at the School. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and with consistency. We will always give priority to any complaints involving the safety, welfare and well-being of students.

This policy deals mainly with procedures for parents (and guardians), the community and students (including past students). This policy does not cover complaints from staff members about aspects of their employment.

Parents will often wish to raise issues on behalf of their children. There are other issues which students may choose to raise on their own behalf, and which are best raised by them.

What is a Complaint?

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

A complaint or concern may be raised about the School as a whole, a specific department in the School, about a particular School activity, about an individual member of staff, about one or more students, or about another member of the School community.

All complaints will be handled seriously.

Commitment

We recognise parents and students have a right to complain and our aim is to ensure that:

- students, parents and the community wishing to make a complaint know how to do so;
- a child-focused, child-friendly, culturally safe dispute and complaint process is adopted;
- complaints are received in a positive manner and the outcome, the complainant or the subject of the complaint is not pre-judged;
- concerns are dealt with promptly and thoroughly and those who have raised them are kept informed about progress;
- all complaints are handled on their merits;
- the complaint process allows complaints to be made face-to-face, by email, by telephone call, a letter or a meeting.
- parents and students can expect to be taken seriously and can approach any member of staff about their concerns;
- training is provided to staff and volunteers on the dispute and complaint process;
- complaints made by parents will not rebound adversely on their children and similarly, complaints raised by students will not rebound on them or on other students;
- confidentiality is respected and maintained so far as is possible;

- a resolution of the matter is sought, with the parties directly involved, at the local level;
- children, young people, families, communities, staff and volunteers are engaged in the review processes and provide feedback on review outcomes;
- complaints are recorded and regularly analysed in order to identify causes or systemic weaknesses;
- mandatory reporting obligations when receiving, responding to and investigating complaints of child harm or abuse are adhered to;
- the dispute and complaint processes are reviewed annually, or after an event and participation of children and young people is sought in this review.

For a copy of the full Dispute and Complaint Resolution Policy, please refer to:

https://www.anglischools.edu.au/about-us/policies/

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

What can I complain about?

If there is anything that makes you feel unsafe, unhappy or worried about something, you can tell us! We will listen and try to help.

It could be about:

- how you've been treated by someone, e.g. a teacher or another child or young person
- something that's changed that has made you feel unhappy or unsafe
- something to do with our environment or facilities
- us not doing anything about something that happened to you or you are unhappy with what we did to try to fix it.

Who can I speak to if I feel unsafe or concerned about something?

You can talk to anybody who works here with whom you feel comfortable.

Can somebody help me make a complaint?

Yes. If you would like a parent, carer, friend or someone you trust to help you make a complaint you can bring them with you when you complain. You can also use an interpreter if you need to or if your parent or friend needs one. If you don't want to talk to us about something that has happened, you can ask the person you trust to tell us, and you can speak with us when you want to do so.

Will I be in trouble for speaking up?

No. Your safety and how you feel is important to us. By speaking up, you are helping us to do a better job and take better care of you and other children and young people.

What will the School do with information I tell them?

If you tell us that you have been treated badly or you are feeling unsafe or worried about something, we will listen, write down what you tell us, and try to fix it. After we talk to you, we may need to find out more about what happened. We will tell you how long this will take and what will happen next.

Will you keep what I have told you a secret?

We will keep information about you private. Private means we will keep your details safe. Sometimes we may need to share certain information with another organisation, such as the police, to protect you and other children and young people.

How will I know you're dealing with my complaint?

We will ask if you would like us to give you updates about what is happening as we look into what you have told us and get further information.

You can tell us how you would like us to let you know how things are going with your complaint, e.g. in person, over the phone, by email or text message.

If you are worried about anything, we will try to fix it and get back to you quickly. We will let you know when we have finished looking into your complaint and explain what we're going to do. We will make sure that we involve the person you want to be with you when we give you information (e.g. parent or friend).

What if I don't want to be involved in the investigation?

We will only contact you if you want us to do so. If you don't want updates that's okay. If you would like us to give information to a family member, carer or support person instead, that's also okay. If you change your mind and later want to speak with us, you can contact the person looking into your complaint or anybody else you trust in the School.

What if I'm still not happy?

If you are not happy with how we handled your complaint or the result, we can help you to contact someone else to look at it. We can explain who this is if this happens. They will decide whether we have made the right decision.

NB: This information is based on the Complaints Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people

DISPUTE AND COMPLAINT RESOLUTION POLICY FLOWCHART – STUDENT

NB: You will be advised if a STEP in the process is not taken e.g., the Principal decides to omit STEP TWO due to the serious nature of the complaint. Complaints raised with a volunteer will be referred to the relevant class teacher, middle manager or senior manager (as appropriate).

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS – Making a Complaint

Where the dispute or complaint involves the Principal, the matter shall be referred in writing directly to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and STEP 3 applied.

Step 1: Local Resolution

Any member of staff will be happy to help. We recommend parents contact the person who knows their child the best i.e. classroom teacher, Year Group Coordinator. They may be able to resolve the matter quickly and with the minimum of fuss. Alternatively, we will accept complaints lodged verbally by phone, in-person, by letter, email or via the complaints form on the School's website. If you have made a complaint or raised a concern in writing, we will contact you within two (2) working days.

Persons for whom English is not their first language, or who have reduced literacy skills, may bring a translator or advocate.

We are here for you and your child, and we want to hear from you.

Anonymous Complaints

We would prefer to know the identity of a person making a complaint as it can help in investigation and resolution.

Anonymous complaints will be noted and dealt with in accordance with the circumstances, available information and the action required.

Step 2: Informal Resolution

Where a resolution cannot be reached, the Head of House/Year or senior staff member should be approached. Complaints raised face-to-face or by telephone may be resolved immediately and to your satisfaction. However, if you have made a complaint or raised a concern in writing, we will contact you within five (5) working days, to explain how we propose to proceed.

The person you contact will give you an opportunity to state your position on the matter, so they gain a thorough understanding of the matter. In many circumstances, they will need time to look into the matter and consider it further before responding. You will be given a date by which time you will receive a response. If a detailed exploration of the issue is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

The Principal will be advised of the dispute/complaint.

NB: You will be advised if a STEP in the process is omitted e.g. the Principal decides to omit STEP 2 due to the serious nature of the complaint.

Step 3: Formal Resolution

If you are not satisfied, you can write directly to the Principal.

When an informal resolution fails or when the Principal decides to move to the Formal Resolution Process immediately, the Principal shall:

- contact you, within five (5) working days, to explain how the school proposes to proceed.
- provide you with a copy of the School Dispute and Complaints Process.
- request in writing from you about the nature and details of the dispute/complaint.
- record the specifics of the dispute/complaint including:

a. the nature of the dispute/complaint

b. the parties involved

c. the parties' views of the matter and their suggested resolution

d. any substantiation provided

e. the provision to the parties of a proposed timeline for resolution.

- make a decision based on the merits of the case and appropriately balance the principles of justice and compassion.
- discuss the decision with the parties and provide the decision in writing within the proposed timeline.

The Principal may, after exhausting all reasonable attempts at conciliation, offer outside mediation, including the service of providers such as the Employee Assistance Programme providers, prior to any decision being made.

The Principal will maintain an appropriate Complaints Register recording all formal complaints and how they have been resolved.

Confidentiality

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal and those directly involved. The COO may also need to be informed. It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents will not rebound adversely on their children.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. If information is passed to a third party, such as the Police or other external authorities, you will be informed, unless this is prevented by legal obligation.

In some cases, we will not be able to discuss the details of action taken as it would be inappropriate. Legally we are not able to divulge information of matters which require the involvement of a relevant government authority, without the permission of that government authority.

Step 4: Appeal to the Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Not satisfied with the outcome

We hope to resolve the matter, so you feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

If you feel that there has been an error in some way based on any of the criteria in this policy, you can write directly to the COO. The COO is responsible for reviewing the process followed by the Principal to ensure it complies with this Policy. The COO will acknowledge receipt of your appeal within five (5) working days and advise you of the process to be followed within ten (10) working days. The COOr will obtain a full report from the Principal, examine matters thoroughly to determine if the complaint has been handled in accordance with the School's policy and procedure as well as to give further consideration. You will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal.

Step 5: Appeal to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

If the outcome of the COO's review and consideration does not bring about a resolution, you can write to the CEO, who will appoint an Investigating Officer(s) or an independent arbiter. The CEO will acknowledge receipt of your appeal within five (5) working days. The investigator will advise you of the process to be followed within ten (10) working days.

It is their task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner and report to the CEO. The CEO will notify you, within five (5) working days of the outcome of the appeal.

The School recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain, and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.

Contact Details

Written complaints should be addressed to:

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

The Principal
Cobram Anglican Grammar School
P.O. Box 607
Cobram, VIC 3643

Serious complaints will be shared with the Chair of Council by the Principal.

There may be certain circumstances, such as complaints about the Principal or a Council member or when you feel that there has been an error in some way based on any of the criteria in this policy, when you need to direct your complaint in writing to the COO. This should be addressed to:

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

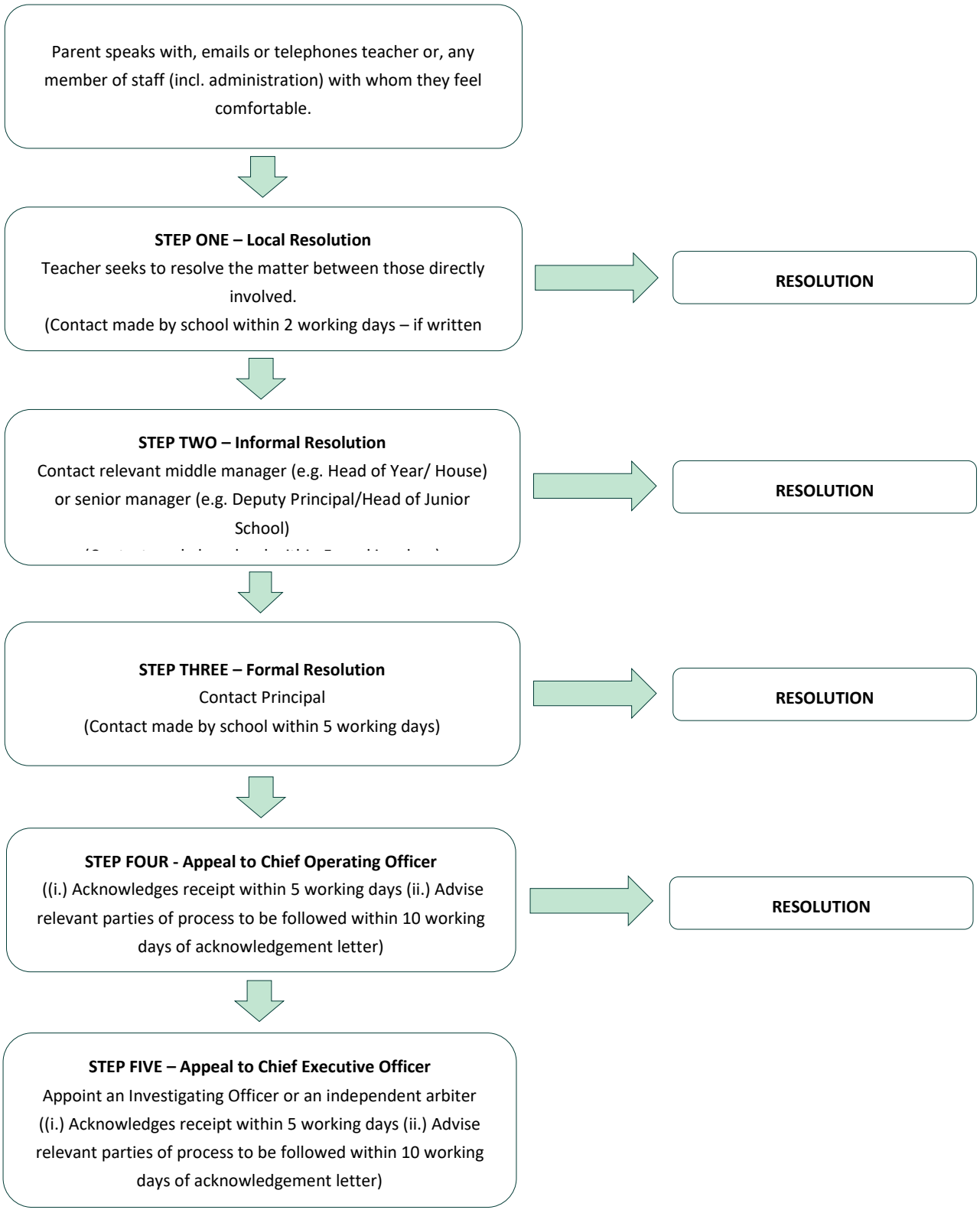
Chief Operating Officer
AngliSchools
Locked Bag 41
Cloisters Square
PO Perth WA 6850

Complaints about the Chief Operating Officer's decision may be addressed to:

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Chief Executive Officer
AngliSchools
Locked Bag 41
Cloisters Square
PO Perth WA 6850

DISPUTE AND COMPLAINT RESOLUTION FLOWCHART – PARENTS AND SCHOOL COMMUNITY



NB: You will be advised if a STEP in the process is omitted e.g. the Principal decides to omit STEP TWO due to the serious nature of the complaint. Complaints raised with a volunteer will be referred to the relevant class teacher, middle manager or senior manager (as appropriate).