

Complaints and Disputes Policy

1. RATIONALE

Children's education does not happen in isolation at the College and healthy, open communication amongst parents, College staff and students is a key ingredient for successful learning.

Inevitably, incidents and perceptions will arise that can negatively impact on relationships and therefore the effectiveness of the College community in achieving the goal of educating with excellence as preparation for life.

This policy for handling complaints and disputes is designed to facilitate resolution in a Biblical manner, preserving the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (Ephesians 3:3) and ensuring that no root of bitterness is able to grow up and defile many (Hebrews 12:15).

2. PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE POLICY

To maintain a positive, healthy College community, all members of the College community are encouraged to 'keep short accounts' by approaching relevant staff members to discuss any issues, complaints or disputes, no matter how big or small they may seem.

All complaints will be treated as important and investigated fully and appropriately with the goal of achieving full resolution.

All members of the College community are valued and respected and can expect to be treated as such. It is the expectation of the College that complaints or disputes will be raised and presented in a respectful and appropriate manner.

In all matters, the well-being of students' learning environment is the primary concern. Confidentiality is highly valued and it is expected that both staff and parents who are involved will respect this at all times, before the complaint is made, during and after the resolution process.

Two key ingredients in resolving complaints and disputes are humility and an acknowledgement that the focus is on the 'task at hand' (that is, students' learning environment). In order to resolve complaints and disputes, a humble attitude and a commitment to preserving a positive and peaceful learning environment for all students are essential.

3. PROCEDURES

3.1 Who may complain?

All members of the College community (parents and carers, students and College staff) are entitled to appropriately, respectfully and safely raise any complaint or seek resolution to any dispute that may arise at any time within the College.

All College community members are urged to raise and discuss issues with a view to seeking full resolution.

3.2 What may be complained about?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. A complaint may be made, for example, about aspects of provision of education, failure to meet reasonable expectations, unfairness, impoliteness or the conduct of College community members.

Any concern, be it perceived or actual, should be raised with a view to seeking resolution.

3.3 How will the complaint be handled?

All complaints and disputes will be treated with utmost respect and confidentiality. All complaints will be considered important and appropriately addressed as quickly and decisively as possible.

Actions and timelines will be discussed and agreed upon by all involved parties and follow up meetings or communication will be scheduled as appropriate to the circumstances.

Communication of the complaint will be confined to the appropriate spheres and College staff are expected to maintain an impeccable standard in modelling this. Parents and carers within the College community are likewise expected to act in a suitably professional manner in this regard.

Gossip and slander are destructive, contrary to Biblical and College ethos and work against the objective of educating with excellence.

3.4 How should a complaint be made?

If there is a complaint, it should be raised in the first instance to the teacher or staff member directly involved or responsible. If resolution is not achieved, then the process outlined in the flow chart in section 4 will be followed.

Anyone making a complaint is entitled to have a friend or other College community member present at all discussions and meetings if this is felt necessary.

3.5 May a complaint be withdrawn?

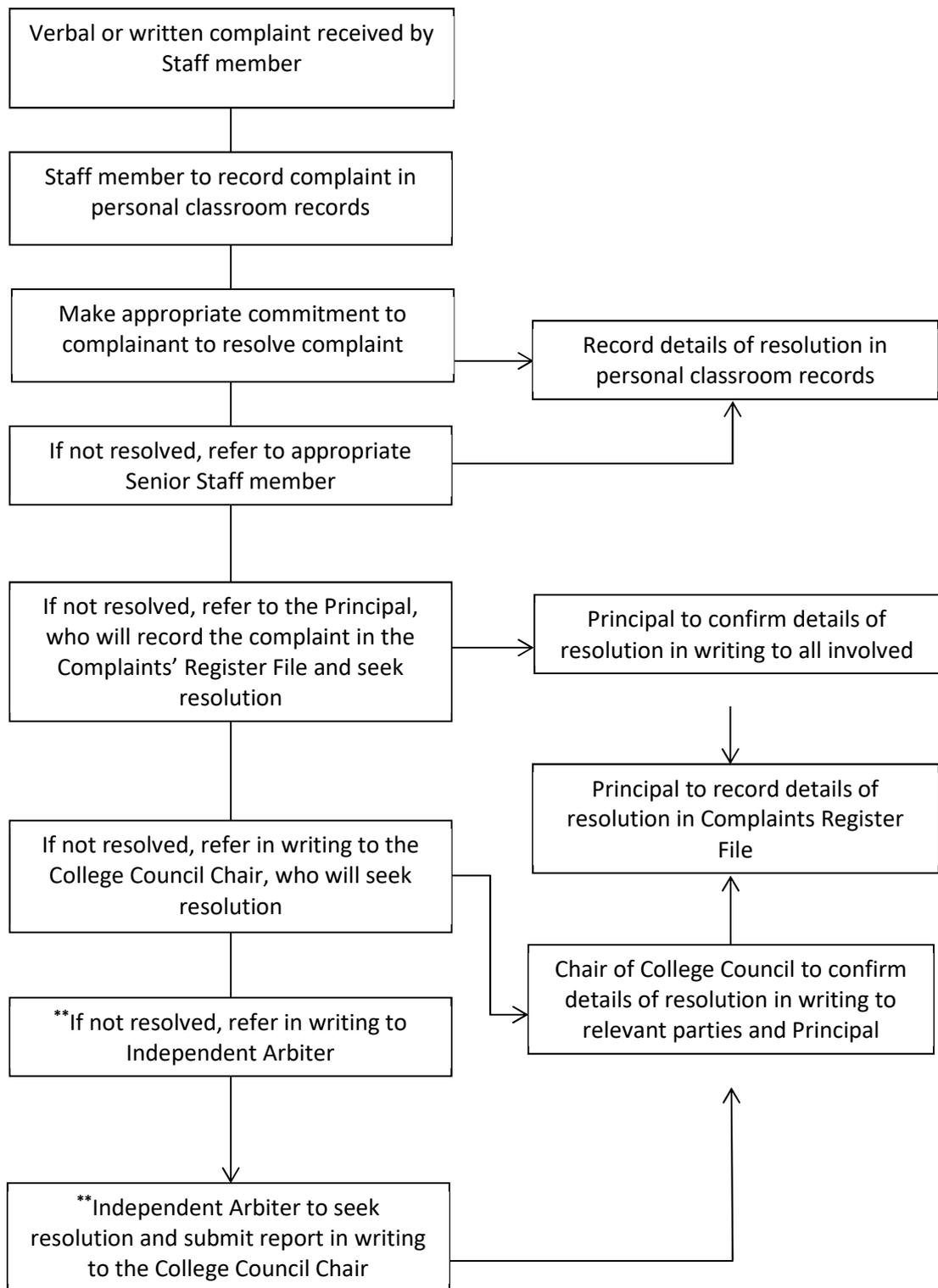
A complaint may be withdrawn at any time and should be by similar means that the complaint was made. For example, a complaint made in writing should be withdrawn via letter or email to the staff member to whom the complaint was made.

The staff member who received the complaint is to give notice to any involved parties that it has been withdrawn.

Complaints that are deemed by the principal to warrant investigation will be followed up regardless of withdrawal.

4. FLOW CHART FOR MANAGEMENT OF COMPLAINTS

The flowchart below outlines the process for managing complaints and disputes within the college community.



**Please refer to the Independent Arbiter Procedure for the process of seeking resolution through the involvement of an independent arbiter.