



SILVER TREE STEINER SCHOOL

Concerns and Complaints Management Policy and Procedure

2024

This policy applies to: staff, parents, volunteers and students

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Silver Tree Steiner School is committed to being a Child Safe Organisation, taking a preventative and participatory stance on child protection issues and promoting a child safe environment based on the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

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Background

At Silver Tree Steiner School, we acknowledge that differences of opinion, understanding and feelings inevitably arise in human relationships, including in schools. We strive to deal with these in a way which is helpful for all those who are involved and in line with our school values of connection and respect. This policy applies equally to parents, volunteers, community members, students and staff. We understand that each situation is different, and these are guidelines to assist with resolution.

Silver Tree Steiner School is committed to providing a supportive working and community environment. The school values direct communication between individuals and expects that individuals will bring concerns directly to the parties involved. We urge everyone to try to address any misunderstandings, unclear communication, or other incidents by firstly communicating with the person involved, whether a teacher, another staff member or someone else in the school community.

The school implements a complaint handling system which satisfies each of the key action areas of Principles 6 and 9 of the National Child Safe Organisation Principles and which is culturally safe in accordance with the Royal Commission recommendations. The process attempts to overcome cultural barriers and taboos to disclosure, provides culturally appropriate means of making complaints, is managed by people who are aware of and sensitive to the potential complainant's culture and cultural attitudes, including those arising from historic trauma and mistrust of authorities, and which facilitates access to culturally appropriate therapeutic and other services as required.

The school's complaint handling system conforms to the rules of procedural fairness and includes a system for analysis and review of complaints and the complaints handling process itself.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to explain what to do should a parent, staff member, student, volunteer or member of the community have a concern or complaint. Silver Tree Steiner School takes all complaints seriously. Guidelines and procedures are set out to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the process for managing concerns and complaints and that such claims are dealt with in a fair, transparent and consistent manner. All reasonable efforts will be made by all parties to resolve the issue using the appropriate internal school processes in a sensitive and timely manner. The school will apply the rules of procedural fairness to any investigation. Confidentiality is respected and maintained so far as is possible.

Taking a calm, positive approach to concerns and complaints and treating them as constructive suggestions can help to diffuse angst, the potential for acrimony and escalation. The receipt of a concern or complaint, even an unjustified one, can be helpful to a school in that it may indicate an area that can be improved.

Application

This policy applies to and is binding upon all members of the Silver Tree Steiner School staff, parents, volunteers and community. For the purpose of this policy 'parent/s' includes legal guardians, step-parents, foster parents, grandparents and carers.

Definitions

A **concern** is the expression of a worry, something that has made a person troubled or anxious about an issue. It is usually expressed at a 'first level' i.e. to a class teacher at the classroom door or by telephone or email directly to the relevant staff member. Depending on the nature of the concern, it can often be resolved at this 'first level' in an informal manner. A concern will be treated as a less serious matter that may be resolved with a more informal approach.

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 may be made about the

whole school, about a specific class, about a specific school activity, about an individual member of staff, about a parent or about one or more students and will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction that requires following a formal process as detailed below.

A complaint ideally is expected to be in the form of a written communication, a letter or email, addressed directly to the relevant staff member, the Head of School or the Chair of the School Board. However, it should be noted that complaints may be made verbally (in person or by telephone). These would then need to be put into writing if possible. Although it may not be possible to obtain sufficient details when a complaint is made anonymously, such complaints will still be accepted, recorded, evaluated and actioned to the extent possible for any information they may contain.

Procedural fairness is about the fairness of the process used to reach a decision. Procedural Fairness as set out in the Registration Standards for Non-Government Schools requires:

- A hearing appropriate to the circumstances
- Lack of bias
- Evidence to support a decision
- Inquiry into matters in dispute.

A culturally safe environment as defined by the Royal Commission is:

- *An environment 'where there is no assault, challenge or denial of (a person's) identity, of who they are and what they need' and refers specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*
- *This encompasses Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals' own assessment of their safety and capacity to engage meaningfully on their own terms with a non-Indigenous person or institution.*
- *This requires action from the non-Indigenous person or institution to listen, enable and support these environments with accountability to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues or service users (Final Report, Volume 1, page 322).*

Role of the Director General of Education

The Director General is the chief executive officer appointed in accordance with s.151 of the *School Education Act 1999*.

'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 website. 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.'

Guidelines for Handling of Concerns and Complaints

Silver Tree Steiner School welcomes and encourages all feedback. It recognises that concerns and complaints are important pieces of information for school improvement and that effective procedures are needed to ensure they are heard, recorded, addressed and reviewed in a timely manner.

A concern or complaint may be made by a parent, student, staff member, volunteer or a member of the wider community following these procedures. Parents or guardians may also act on behalf of a concern or complaint expressed by their child, in accordance with this policy and procedure. While parents will often wish to raise issues on behalf of their children, there are some issues which students may choose to raise on their own behalf, and which are best raised by them. Separate policies and child-appropriate

procedures are in place for students wishing to raise a concern or complaint themselves. Students know that their complaints can be made to anyone in the school they trust or feel safe to speak with. They understand that their complaints will be taken seriously.

Complaints relating to staff employment matters are managed through appropriate statutory provisions and the Schools' Staff Grievances Policy. Silver Tree Steiner School has made every attempt to ensure that its concerns and complaints handling procedures are understood by children, staff, families, community members and volunteers.

We encourage parents to first treat any issue or problem as a concern when approaching the School, and then only to lodge a complaint if this is not handled to your satisfaction. The receipt of a concern or complaint, even an unjustified one, is always taken seriously and can be helpful to a school in that it may indicate an area that can be improved. Taking a calm, positive approach to concerns and complaints and treating them as constructive suggestions can help to diffuse angst, the potential for acrimony and escalation.

Concerns and complaints are always treated seriously, sensitively and confidentially. They are responded to promptly and investigated thoroughly. A gentle expression of concern, or a simple query, may grow into a dispute or confrontational matter if parents feel that they have been brushed aside. Flexible procedures are in place to handle both formal complaints and the informal raising of concerns.

- All parties involved with or impacted by the complaint will be treated with procedural fairness and respect. Family values and cultural beliefs and practices are always acknowledged when handling the concern or complaint.
- Any complaint that raises potential child well-being concerns will be prioritised.
- Complaints made by parents or guardians will not adversely impact their children.
- The substance of the complaint is usually provided to the subject of the complaint.
- The Complaints Officer is the Head of School. If the Head of School is the subject of the complaint, then the Chairperson of the Board of Governors should be contacted.
- Action that is being taken by the Complaints Officer is communicated to the complainant.
- A clear record is kept of the complaint, including the actions taken and the outcome.
- Records of concerns and complaints and actions taken in relation to them are evaluated and procedures reviewed. Concerns and complaints are analyzed regularly by the Leadership Team and communicated to the Board of Governors to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement
- Where appropriate, and where complaints are of a serious nature, the Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed about the nature of the complaint.
- A third party, where necessary/appropriate, will be involved to mediate and/or act as independent arbiter. The Complainant can invite a third person to the meeting(s) for additional support.
- Where required, according to obligations to act and report, depending on the nature of the complaint, a referral will be made to external relevant authorities such as an AISWA representative (legal representative), Child Protection Officer or the Western Australian Police Force for advice or immediate action. This may occur regardless of whether the law requires reporting of the issue. The school will always cooperate with law enforcement.

If there is a situation involving the Police then the Head of School, or their delegate if the Head of School is unavailable, will take responsibility for action to be taken within the school and the Board of Governors Chairperson will be informed as soon as possible. Depending on the circumstances, the school may also need to fulfil requirements with the submission of a Reportable Incident Form to the Department of Education. Where a complaint raises potential child wellbeing concerns, the matter will be referred to the appropriate authorities as required.

Implementation

A flowchart for addressing concerns and complaints has been developed. (Appendix A) Further clarification of these procedures is outlined below.

1. A concern should initially always be taken to the person involved directly. Parents should take any concern related to their child or children to the teacher involved. All members of staff are encouraged to deal with parental concerns that lie within their area of responsibility. All staff are trained in the correct procedures for dealing with concerns as part of their formal staff induction.
2. If approached about a matter that lies outside their responsibility, staff will refer the person to the Concerns and Complaints Management Policy and advise them of the next step. Some parents may wish to go straight to the Head of School with their concerns, and this should be respected. However, the Head of School might not be able to respond until she has consulted the staff concerned.
3. If a concern cannot be resolved directly with the person concerned, contact the Head of School or the Education Coordinator according to the nature of the concern to see if they can resolve the concern. The concern will then be recorded on the Concerns and Complaints Register.
4. If the concern cannot be resolved after consulting the relevant staff member, you may wish to escalate it to a complaint by putting it in writing on a Complaint Form and sending it to the Complaints Officer. When a complaint is put in writing, the complaint should be based on an identifiable instance or instances and should record actual information and events.
5. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors. is not to be contacted directly to resolve concerns or complaints. Should a formal complaint be unresolved after following the process, it may be escalated to the Chairperson. The complainant can ask (in writing addressed to the Chairperson) for the matter to be referred to the Board of Governors. In this situation further professional assistance may be sought.
6. Serious complaints will be shared by the Head of School with the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. There may be certain circumstances, such as complaints about the Head of School, when parents will need to write directly to the Chairperson.
7. The Complaints Officer will contact the complainant as a matter of priority within 3 working days to respond to the complaint and explain how to proceed.
8. The Complaints Officer will undertake an investigation.
9. Where 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 Complaints Officer.
10. The Complaints Officer will respond to the complainant outlining any action taken or facilitate a meeting between both parties to explore the incident/s. In the same meeting or in a further meeting, options for action are explored and agreement is reached upon those actions which need to be implemented. This process may extend beyond one meeting and may be formal or less formal depending on the situation and events under discussion.
11. Action/s are implemented and followed up as agreed by parties involved in the mediated meeting.
12. Where an aspect of a complaint includes an issue about a staff member's professional performance or conduct, the issue will be referred to the Head of School. If required, support will be offered to the staff member to explore these issues and to address any concerns through professional development, mentorship or by agreement.

Exceptions

When the nature of the complaint concerns issues of safety for themselves or a child or if the same issue has been the subject of an earlier complaint and one party has failed to keep their commitment/s then the complainant should bring the matter to the attention of the Head of School as a matter of urgency.

Intractable Complaints

Most complaints can be resolved if approached positively. A complaint may become intractable, due to its nature or to the way in which it was handled. Intractable complaints are taken to the Chairperson of the School Board of Governors or an arbiter.

Referral to the Chair of the School Board of Governors

The Head of School can refer any matter to the Chairperson of the School Board of Governors and inform the complainant that this stage has been reached. However, a situation may arise where the complainant is unhappy with the Head of School's response. In this case the complainant can write directly to the Chairperson.

The Chairperson will discuss the matter fully with the Head of School and be provided with relevant documentation. If a briefing is required from another member of staff, this will occur in the presence of the Head of School.

The Chairperson will respond to the parents, notifying them that he/she is reviewing the matter, asking them if they wish to add anything further and providing a date by which they may expect a response. The Chairperson will offer a meeting if the complainant requests this.

Meeting with the Chairperson of the School Board of Governors

If a meeting is requested, the Chairperson will meet the parents at a time convenient to them. Those to be involved are:

- the Chairperson of the School Board of Governors
- the Head of School and, at the most, one other member of staff
- the complainant

Complainants should be permitted to bring with them a support person who is not involved with the complaint. Legal representation is discouraged at this stage.

The Chairperson, after questioning and listening to the complainant and the Head of School, may be able to find a solution. If this is not possible, and the parents wish to take the matter further, the Chairperson will seek the advice of an independent arbitrator.

Referral to an Arbiter

As a final step in the disputes and complaints procedure, **if appropriate**, the school may use an independent arbiter to resolve an issue. The arbiter will be:

- Agreed by both parties
- Remunerated by both parties (if appropriate)
- Assured both parties will accept the arbiter's decision.

Further Action

At all stages of a complaints resolution procedure the complainant can seek legal advice if they wish.

Resolution of Complaints

Resolution of a complaint may come from any of the following:

- knowing that changes have been made and that matters will be different in the future
- knowing that the school is now alert to a possible problem
- feeling that the complaint has been considered seriously
- an outcome which may be different to what was sought, but which is perceived as well-considered and fair
- a considered letter. When time has been needed to consider matters, parents will receive a letter to assure the complainant that the issue has been understood and the matter is being dealt with.
- an apology.

It should be noted that the complainants may not receive explicit information on what action has been taken due to privacy and confidentiality issues. This is especially important when the complaint is related to another student, or a staff member.

Record Keeping

The school will keep an effective record of complaints and other significant parental concerns. Staff responding to a significant concern should ensure that the process and outcome are documented. The Complaints Officer, upon receiving a Complaint Form, is responsible for recording the details of the complaint in the Concerns and Complaints Register.

The register will contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised;
- Name of complainant and relationship to school;
- Subject matter of the complaint including the name of the person complained about and his/her relationship to the school;
- Name(s) of staff member(s) investigating the complaint and role at school;
- Date investigation completed
- Whether complaint upheld
- Resolution agreed with or offered to complainant;
- Date of referral for review (eg by Board of Governors) ;
- Complaint reviewer and relationship to school;
- Date review finalized;
- Review resolution agreed with or offered to complainant
- Date of closure of the matter;
- Location of the confidential detailed file (if applicable).

The Head of School and staff will keep written notes of the following:

- Their interviews with all parties
- What action they took to resolve the complaint

These notes will be kept within the Head of School's office while the issue is being resolved. Once the matter has been finalised, the Head of School will keep all records of concerns in a secure location. Records will be reviewed at least annually so that systemic problems can be identified, and trends reported upon.

Confidential files on all complaints will be maintained and kept together. The files will contain simple but clear notes of all conversations with parents about any source of dissatisfaction. This applies to friendly chats and to telephone conversations. There should be a clear statement of what is concerning the

complainants. The notes can be agreed with parents.

All records are kept and maintained according to the STSS Records Maintenance policy which follows recommendations set out by the Australian Society of Archivists' Records Retention and Disposal Schedule for Non-Government schools.

Students' Complaints

The principles that apply to parental complaints will also be applied to complaints and concerns from students.

Teachers introduce children to the concept of complaints and concerns through story and reference is made to the 'Are You Listening – Complaints Guidelines for Children' for reinforcement (Appendix 5).

Students are welcome and encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable, whether it is the class teacher, a member of the support staff, or the Head of School.

The school will promptly acknowledge the complaint and treat the student with understanding and helpfulness.

Students are encouraged to choose a person with whom they feel comfortable to provide support. In accordance with the WA CCYP guidelines, students will be provided with an advocate, independent from the complaint investigation and management process, when they do not have one.

Students will be given a choice on how they wish to be kept updated on the progress of their complaint. They will be advised on the provision of confidentiality of the complaint, as well as being made aware of the limits of confidentiality as the process progresses.

Once the matter is resolved, the outcome will be discussed with the student/s by a member of staff. A written record may be shared to help the student's understanding, if appropriate. Monitoring will be conducted by the school to ensure any steps put in place to rectify/assist are having the desired effect.

In situations where it is believed to be in the best interest of the student's welfare and safety to refer the matter on to an external authority, a member of staff will, at an appropriate time, explain this to the student. It is very important this situation is handled sensitively and in a supportive manner and that the staff member follows the school's policy and fulfils all applicable legal obligations.

The school will decide if a student's parents are to be informed or involved and at what point in the process this should take place, as is appropriate. It should be noted that, in circumstances involving an allegation/complaint related to staff code of conduct breaches, grooming and child abuse, it is required that:

- 'the complainant is informed about the services, including advocacy and support services, which may be available; and
- the matter is reported promptly to the responsible government authorities and their direction is sought and complied with as to when, what and by whom information related to the matter and its investigation may be given to the person against whom the complaint or allegation is made, the complainant and his/her parents/guardians, other affected students and their parents and guardians, and the wider school community. (Guide to the Registration Standards and Other Requirements for Non-Government Schools, January 2024, p 47).

Policy Review and Dissemination

This policy and related procedures will be made available to the public and staff on the school website and is available to staff in the Policies and Procedures folder in Reception. The School Community will receive reminders to refer to this policy (and updated versions) through the School Newsletter.

All staff will be directed to read this document at the first staff meeting at the commencement of the school year. New staff will be informed of this policy as part of the School's Induction Program. The school will provide ongoing training to ensure that all staff members understand their responsibilities in relation to this policy.

The school may, at any time, make amendments to this policy to ensure continuous improvement. If changes are made prior to the scheduled review, they will be noted in the Version Management table and communicated to the school community as appropriate. The policy will be formally reviewed annually every two years by the Head of School.

Relevant Legislation

- School Education Act 1999, Sec 159(1)(k)
- The Privacy Act 1988
- Guide to the registration standards and other requirements for non-government schools. January 2024
- The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care
- The Privacy (Enhancing Privacy Protections) Act 2012
- Ombudsman Western Australia -The Principles of Effective Complaint Handling
- Incorporated Associations Act (2015) – Schedule 1(18)
- National Child Safe Organisation Principles

Related Policies

Other policies that should be read in conjunction with this policy are:

- Communication Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Code of Conduct for Parents
- Staff Grievances Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Whistleblower Policy
- Records Management
- Privacy Policy

Appendix 1 – Procedures for raising Concerns or Complaints Flowchart

WHERE DO I GO WITH A CONCERN or COMPLAINT?

The following flow chart outlines the appropriate procedure for raising a concern or complaint. Management staff and members of the School Board of Governors check that the procedure has been followed if a matter is brought to them. Whole school concerns should be put in writing to the Head of School for appropriate action. Parents are encouraged to attend the weekly Listening Circle held on Tuesday mornings during term to raise any informal concerns. The school has an open-door policy and encourages open parent and staff communication.

PROCEDURES FOR RAISING CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS FLOW CHART

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

With Regard to: **Education Staff**

STEP 1: Appointment with Teacher/Assistant

- Make an appointment to discuss the concern with the relevant person

↓ If the matter is not resolved proceed to the next step

STEP 2: Appointment with Education Coordinator

- Parent and/or teacher to raise the concern with the Education Coordinator who will arrange to mediate a discussion between the parties. A support person is welcome to join that meeting.

↓ If the matter is not resolved proceed to the next step

STEP 3: Written Concern or Complaint Reviewed by Head of School

- The concern is to be put in writing to the Head of School by letter/email using the 'Concern Report Form' available from Reception and the School Website
- The Head of School is to mediate the dispute
- A response will be provided to relevant parties regarding the substance of the concern and what actions are being taken to resolve the matter by the Head of School.

↓ If the matter is not resolved proceed to the next step

STEP 4: Contact the School Board

- A formal complaint is to be lodged with the Chairperson of the School Board.
- The Chairperson of the School Board in consultation, or with the support, of the School Board will arbitrate a resolution.
- All relevant parties kept informed.
- If the matter is not resolved proceed to the next step

↓ If the matter is not resolved proceed to the next step

STEP 5: Independent Arbitration

- If the matter is not considered resolved the School Board may seek a resolution through an external, independent arbiter. A request for this should be put in writing to the School Board.

With regard to: **Non-Education Staff**

STEP 1: Appointment with Staff Member

- Make an appointment to discuss the concern with the relevant person

↓ If the matter is not resolved proceed to the next step

STEP 2: Head of School

- The concern to be put in writing to the Head of School by letter/email or using the 'Concern Report Form' available from Reception and the School Website
- The Head of School will arbitrate a resolution
- A response will be provided to relevant parties regarding the substance of the concern and what actions are being taken to resolve the matter by the Head of School

↓ If the matter is not resolved proceed to the next step

STEP 3: School Board Arbitration

- A formal complaint is to be lodged with the Chairperson of the School Board
- The Chairperson in consultation with the support of the School Board will arbitrate a resolution
- All relevant parties are to be kept informed

↓ If the matter is not resolved proceed to the next step

STEP 4: Right of Review

- If the matter is not considered resolved, the School Board may seek a resolution through an external, independent arbiter. A request for this should be put in writing to the School Board.

Confidentiality

All parties to a concern are requested to respect confidentiality in dealing with issues of concern and therefore refrain from discussing issues of concern with other members of the school community until the matter has been resolved.

NOTE: Concerns or Grievances regarding the Head of School should be directed to the School Board Chairperson.

CONTACT DETAILS FOR CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Listening Circle

The Listening Circle is held every Tuesday during term from 8:30am – 9am in the School Gazebo with either the Head of School or Education Coordinator. This is an informal time set aside for parents to raise any feedback, questions or concerns with members of the Leadership Team.

School Staff

You can arrange an appointment with a staff member by phoning Reception on (08) 9295 4787.

Alternatively, you can email a staff member directly to organise an appointment. Most email addresses are in the following format:

firstname.surname@silvertree.wa.edu.au

**please note there are some exceptions to this email format. If you are having difficulty emailing a staff member, please contact reception for assistance on welcome@silvertree.wa.edu.au or (08) 9295 4787.

When emailing staff at Silver Tree Steiner School, please refer to the 'Email Guidelines for Staff and Parents' available on the school website or from Reception.

Education Coordinator

Education Coordinator: Kristy Brookes

Phone: (08) 9295 4787

Email: kristy.brookes@silvertree.wa.edu.au

Post: Silver Tree Steiner School
695 Roland Road
Parkerville WA 6081

Head of School

Head of School: Anna Brindal

Phone: (08) 9295 4787

Email: anna.brindal@silvertree.wa.edu.au

Post: Silver Tree Steiner School
695 Roland Road
Parkerville WA 6081

The School Board

Chairperson: Cristian Southall

Email: cristian.southall@silvertree.wa.edu.au

Post: c/o Silver Tree Steiner School
695 Roland Road
Parkerville WA 6081

Appendix 3: Guidelines for Parents

SILVER TREE STEINER SCHOOL CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS GUIDELINES

Silver Tree Steiner School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents/guardians and takes seriously concerns and complaints that may be raised. A full copy of the Concerns and Complaints Management Policy is available on the school website or a hardcopy can be obtained from the School Reception. If you are unable to attend the school in person you are welcome to ring us on 9295 4787 and request a copy to be sent to you by email or mail.

Please see below for frequently asked questions about our concerns and complaints management process.

Frequently Asked Questions

How should I express a concern or complaint?

You can contact the school in the following ways:

- In person
- by telephone: (08) 9295 4787
- by email: welcome@silvertree.wa.edu.au
- or by letter: 695 Roland Road, Parkerville WA 6081

Please ask if you require some assistance in expressing your concern.

When you contact the school, please speak with the Receptionist or ask to speak to another appropriate staff member. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you.

Members of staff will be happy to help. It is best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue – e.g. the classroom teacher, or subject teacher. They may be able to sort things out quickly, with the minimum of fuss. However, you may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example the Education Coordinator or the Head of School.

I don't want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me.

The school is here for you and your child, and we want to hear your views and your ideas. You can start by contacting a member of staff, as described above, or attending Listening Circle on Tuesday mornings during term.

I am not sure whether to complain or not.

If as parents you have concerns, you are entitled to raise them. If in doubt, you should contact the school, as we are here to help.

What will happen next?

If you raise something face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction.

If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing, we will contact you within three (3) working days, to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.

In many circumstances, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague 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.

Please be aware that in some cases the school will not be able to discuss the details of action taken as it would be inappropriate. For example, if the action involved staff discipline. Under its legal obligation the school is also not able to divulge information on matters which require the involvement of a relevant government authority, without the permission of that government authority.

What happens about confidentiality?

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Head of School and those directly involved. The Chairperson of the school's Board of Governors may also need to be informed. It is the school's policy that complaints made by parents and guardians should 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. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the Police or other external authority. If information is passed to a third party, you will be informed, unless this is prevented by legal obligation.

Can I remain anonymous?

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

What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?

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

If you are not satisfied, the Head of School will offer to refer the matter to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Chairperson whose contact details can be found on the Concerns and Grievances Flowchart.

The Chair will call for a full report from the Head of School and will examine matters thoroughly before responding to ensure that the complaint has been handled in accordance with the school's policy and procedure as well as to give further consideration. When notified of the outcome of the Chairperson's review and consideration, the opportunity of a meeting with the Chairperson will be offered if you remain concerned. You may wish to be supported by a friend, but legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage.

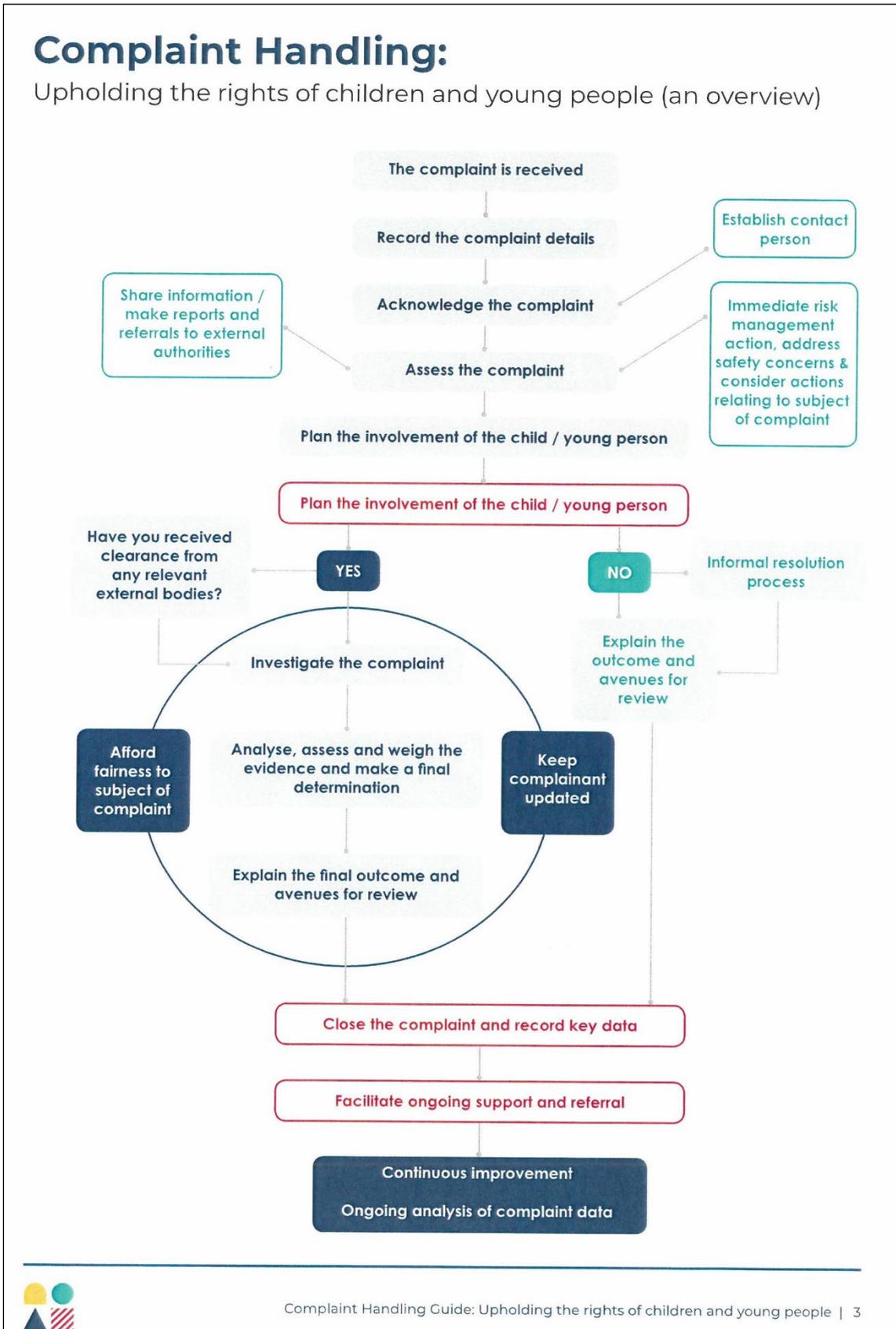
If the meeting does not bring about a resolution, the matter may be referred to arbitration. It is the arbiter's task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. You would be invited to a meeting with a mutually agreed upon arbiter. You will be asked if there are any papers you would like to have circulated beforehand. As with the Chairperson's meeting, you will be offered the opportunity to bring a support person with you.

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.

Special note – Students' raising a concern or complaint:

This information is specifically for parents and guardians in the school; the school also has a 'child-friendly' complaints process that is tailored to meet the needs of students who wish to express a concern or complaint. The school employs multiple methods of letting students know that they can express a concern and how they can go about it. They include student meetings, in-class discussions, and through the Protective Behaviours curriculum taught in the school.

Appendix 4: Complaint Handling: Upholding the rights of children and young people (an overview)



Appendix 5: Are You Listening – Complaints Guidelines for Children



Top tips for making a complaint

1 Get support

Talk to a parent, carer, friend or someone you trust and ask them to help you. They can even be with you when you complain. You can also use an interpreter if you need to.

2 Find out how

Sometimes it is tricky to know how to make a complaint. It is usually best to talk to the organisation you are dealing with first.

- Talk to someone in the organisation you feel comfortable with or check out the website to find out about their complaints system.
- Find out who is the person responsible for complaints. This will save you from having to tell lots of people your full story.
- What are the different ways you can make a complaint (face-to-face, by phone, in writing - letter, email, any others)?

If you are not safe or do not want to talk to someone in the organisation there are other agencies that can help you. Check out our website ccyp.wa.gov.au

3 Plan what you want to say

Write down what you are not happy about and how this has affected you. Also decide what you think should be done.

This will help you when you have to talk about it. You may need to tell a couple of people in the process, so it will also help you remember what you've said before.



4 Be calm and ask questions

When you make your complaint, try to be calm and polite even if you feel upset. Staff of the organisation should also treat you with respect.

Ask as many questions as you like. You may want to know:

- How they will keep your complaint private?
- What will happen next?
- Who will get back to you and your support person?
- When will they get back to you?
- If you're not happy about the result of your complaint what is the next step - who will review your complaint then?



5 Keep notes

Write down who you speak or write to, the dates, anything they promise they will do and the date they say they will get back to you. This will help you keep track of things. You can also write down how you feel about the complaint process, this may be useful later.

6 Keep at it

Don't be afraid to complain further if you are still not safe or feel the matter has not been resolved fairly.



From the Commissioner for Children and Young People WA

Appendix 6 - Student Complaints

(From the STSS Code of Conduct for Students)

What if I have a problem or want to make a complaint?

If you have a problem with something that happened, or is happening, at school, *you have a right to ask for help or complain about it.*

If you don't feel safe or are being hurt, *you have a right to ask for help or complain about it.*

If you're unhappy with the way you, or another person, are being treated, *you have a right to ask for help or complain about it.*

Remember your student rights, be brave and tell us your concerns. They will be taken seriously.

Step 1: Find support

- This could be an older student or your teacher, the Duty Teacher or anyone at school you trust or feel safe to speak to.
- Go to Reception and ask to see Kristy Brookes (Education Coordinator) or Anna Brindal (Head of School)
- A parent, carer or friend can also help you make a complaint

Step 2: Tell your support person or write it down

- Tell them why you're not happy, how the problem has made you feel, what would help to fix it.
- Sometimes it is easier to write things than say them out loud. You can write a letter or draw a picture if you want to.
- You can fill in a Student Complaint and Concerns Form available from Reception if you want to. Someone in Reception can help with this and give your complaint to Kristy Brookes (Education Coordinator) or Anna Brindal (Head of School).

Making your complaint

- Be brave and try your best
- It's okay to ask for help
- It's okay to ask questions
- You will not be in trouble for speaking up
- Remember you are trying to do the right thing to help yourself or someone else, or to fix a problem

Will you keep what I have told you private?

We will keep information about you private. Private means we will keep your details safe. Sometimes we may need to share certain information with other adults who can help sort out the problem.

What will happen next?

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.

We will let you know when we have finished looking into your complaint and explain what we're going to do.

Adults will always listen, answer your questions and treat you with respect.