



Primary Only	Secondary Only	<b>Combined Policy</b>
<b>Both Campuses</b>	Taylor's Hill Only	Mernda only

**RATIONALE**

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a student or parent(s)/legal guardian with the opportunity to access procedures to facilitate the resolution of a dispute or complaint. These internal procedures are a conciliatory and non-legal process. This policy is to be used in conjunction with the Procedural Fairness Policy.

**DEFINITION**

A grievance or complaint is a notification provided by a school community member, that they have suffered some form of offence, detriment, impairment or loss as a result of a decision by the school.

**PROCESS OVERVIEW**

In the first instance, an attempt to informally resolve the issue will be undertaken. If this is unsatisfactory or does not result in a resolution of the matter, the School's internal formal complaints handling procedure will be followed.

The handling of complaints is confidential and any complaints are a matter between the parties concerned and those directly involved in the complaints handling process. Information will only be shared on a need to know basis.

If the student or parent(s)/legal guardian remain dissatisfied with the outcome, the School will advise of a further review through the appeals process.

Grievances brought by a student against another student will be dealt with under the School Code of Conduct.

**PROCEDURE**

**Students**

Students should contact the student's teacher or Pastoral Care Adviser/Head of School in the first instance to attempt mediation/informal resolution of the complaint.

If the matter cannot be resolved through mediation, the matter will be referred to the Principal/Head of Campus.

At this point, the student should notify the school in writing of the nature and details of the complaint (See School Grievance Appeal Form below).

Each complainant has the opportunity to present his/her case to the Principal/other. Students may be accompanied by a support person.

The formal complaints process will commence within 10 working days (term time) of the lodgement of the complaint with the Principal/other.

Once the Principal has come to a decision regarding the complaint, the student will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome.

If the complaints procedure finds in favour of the student, the SCHOOL will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventative action required.

If the complaints procedure does not find in favour of the student or the student is dissatisfied with the result of the complaints procedure, he/she will be informed of the complaints and appeals process available to them.

The school undertakes to finalise all grievance procedures within 10 working days (during term time) where possible.

### **Parent(s)/Legal guardians**

Parent(s)/legal guardians should contact the Class teacher/Head of School/Deputy in the first instance to attempt informal resolution of the complaint.

If the matter cannot be resolved through informal processes, it will be referred to the Principal or his representative for mediation/formal processes.

At this point, parent(s)/legal guardians must notify the school in writing of the nature and details of the complaint.

Each complainant has the opportunity to present their case to the Principal or his representative. Parent(s)/legal guardians may be accompanied by a support person.

The school's internal formal complaints process will commence within 10 working days of the lodgement of the complaint with the Principal or his representative.

Once the Principal has come to a decision regarding the complaint, the parent(s)/legal guardian will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome.

If the complaints procedure finds in favour of the parent(s)/legal guardian the School will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventative action required.

If the complaints procedure does not find in favour of the parent(s)/legal guardian or the parent(s)/legal guardian is dissatisfied with the result of the complaints procedure, the School will be informed of the complaints and appeals process available to them.

The school undertakes to attempt to finalise all grievance procedures within 10 working days within a term.

Please Note: If the matter is of a very serious or illegal nature. Adventist Schools Victoria and the appropriate legal authorities will be involved.

## **Appeals procedure**

The Principal or his representative is the agreed complaints officer, where the Principal is not the subject of complaint – this is to be referred to the School Council.

A school based policy is developed that incorporates the following process:

- Complainant is encouraged by relevant school leader to seek a resolution at the level at which the complaint is made.
- If a resolution cannot be reached at the initial level, the claim can then be submitted to the next level of management as follows:
  - Head of School or Deputy
  - Principal
  - School Council or sub-committee of Council
  - Adventist Schools (Victoria) Ltd - Director of Education
  - Independent Regulatory Authorities, for example, Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)
- Provide written acknowledgement of complaint to both parties including an outline of the process and expected time frame for the complaint to be reviewed.
- Consider all relevant information including the views of all parties in line with school policy.
- Ensure an impartial decision is made based on appropriate evidence and proper investigation of the facts and inform all parties of the reason for the decision.
- Once an agreement between the parties has been reached, provide a written response.
- Provide all parties with details of the appeal process if a resolution is not reached at each level.

## **Policy Approved by**

This policy was shared with staff on: 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2017

This policy was ratified by the College Council on: 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2017

This policy was updated on: 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2017