



Complaints Policy Parents

VISION STATEMENT

Geraldton Grammar School will provide outstanding education and a strong sense of community, cultivating people of integrity, independence of mind and a love of learning.

VALUES

| Respect | Responsibility | Inclusivity | Perseverance |

Introduction	This statement outlines the Geraldton Grammar School policy on grievances by a parent/s or student/s.
Scope and application	Policy applies to all employees and students, including overseas students, of Geraldton Grammar School.
Related legislation and guidelines	National Safe Schools Framework, School Registration Standards, National Child Safe Principle, Whistleblower Policy, Children and Community Services Act 2004
Related Policies	Code of Conduct Policies, Privacy Policy, Communications Policy
Policy Locations	O: drive, SEQTA, website
Evaluation	Annually

Date	Action (issue, reissue, amendment, replacement of pages, etc)	Initials
08/05/19	Redrafted	M Nelson
06/06/19	Ratified	D Lange
18/06/19	Redrafted following feedback	MNN/DLE
05/08/19	Ratified	SLT
05/05/20	Reviewed and amended to reflect the requirements of <i>Standard 9 Complaints, as outlined in the Guide to the Registration Standards and Other Requirements for Non-Government Schools, January 2020</i>	MNN
17/09/20	Update following clarification from the regulator (<i>identify who within the school is permitted to know or access the information about a complaint</i>)	MNN
01/04/21	Reviewed and minor amendments	NFT
11/05/22	Complaints Policy split to Complaints Policy Parent and Complaints Policy Students	Student Wellbeing Committee

COMPLAINTS POLICY PARENTS

RATIONALE:

Geraldton Grammar School values the partnership between the School and parents and encourages open communication in order to best meet the needs of our students. We encourage concerns to be raised in order to find a resolution to an issue. If a concern/complaint is dealt with seriously and sensitively at an early stage, it is more likely to have a satisfactory outcome.

Geraldton Grammar School is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment within which respect, responsibility, inclusivity, and perseverance are valued and encouraged. All parents are expected to behave in accordance with the School Values and the Codes of Conduct that apply respectively to parents.

This Policy establishes the procedures for all parents to follow for resolving a complaint concerning the School. For purposes of this Policy, parents include guardians of a student.

POLICY:

All matters will be handled with sensitivity and apply the principles of procedural fairness including a hearing appropriate to the circumstances, a lack of bias, evidence to support a decision and an inquiry into the matter in dispute. It is important to protect and maintain confidentiality and not discuss the matter with others. It is also important to recognise that all parties must be given an opportunity to be heard and for there to be a reasonable time frame for consideration of issues and their response.

The nature and extent of investigation will be proportionate to the seriousness of the complaint.

For all the Principal is the final decision maker and as such is not able to act as a support person for any involved party. If a complainant is not satisfied by the decision of the Principal, the matter may be referred to the Chair of Board for review. The review by the Chair shall be final, binding on the complainant and the School and the last step in this Policy.

Any complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal, the Deputy Principal and those directly involved. The Chair of the school's Governing Body may also need to be informed. It is the school's policy that complaints made by parents and guardians will not rebound adversely on their children. The school will not tolerate victimisation or adverse consequences shown towards a person who raises a concern and/or complaint.

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 be most likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk and it became necessary to refer matters to the Police or other external authority. Matters of this nature would include an allegation/complaint of grooming, child abuse and/or there was a breach of the Code of Conduct. If information is passed to a third party, you will be informed, unless this is prevented by legal obligation

The Principal may consider a complaint and determine that the School will not proceed further with the complaint procedure where the Principal considers the complaint to be not substantiated, vexatious, trivial or regarding previously finalised issues.

The School will maintain clear confidential records of the complaint, the actions taken and the outcome on a Complaints Register and through SEQTA for students. The Deputy and Principal will review the Complaints Register and SEQTA each school term to enable the detection of any patterns emerging over time. The School can lock records on SEQTA to only the Principal and Deputy Principal in order to maintain confidentiality.

Definitions

Complaint

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.

Director General

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

National Child Safe Organisation Principles

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations incorporate the ten standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in December 2017 but cover all forms of child abuse. They were developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission and endorsed by all members of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in February 2019.

Key principles for handling complaints at Geraldton Grammar School:

- Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- Reporting, record keeping, privacy and employment law obligations are met when complaints are received.
- The School will analyse complaints to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement
- Complaints do not need to be submitted in writing
- Procedural fairness rules will be applied

Rules of procedural fairness

- a) a hearing appropriate to the circumstances;
- b) lack of bias;
- c) evidence to support a decision; and
- d) inquiry into matters in dispute.

Geraldton Grammar School will always give priority to any complaints involving the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students.

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS:

You can contact the School in person, by telephone (08 9965 7800), by email at ggs@gegs.wa.edu.au, by letter (PO Box 76, Geraldton WA 6531) or by going to the Contact Us tab on the School website. Please ask if you require some assistance in expressing your concern.

When you contact the School, be as clear as possible about your concern.

Members of staff will be happy to help. It may be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue being the classroom teacher or for example, sports concerns could be addressed to the Head of Health, Physical and Outdoor Education. The appropriate Head of Learning Area may be able to sort things out quickly and efficiently. However, you may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example, a member of the Senior Leadership Team including the Principal.

Please refer to the following flowcharts, at the end of this policy, to assist with identifying the appropriate person in different circumstances:

- Students Pastoral Care (Appendix 1)
- Curriculum & Co-Curriculum Issues (Appendix 2)

If the complaint is regarding the alleged misconduct of a staff member, the Deputy Principal will meet with the relevant staff member ¹ to inform her/him of the appropriate details of the complaint and the staff member will then be invited to respond as he/she wishes or at a later time within a reasonable timeframe.

Where a complaint is against the Principal, first seek to resolve the matter by a discussion with the Principal. If the matter is still not resolved, the parent may seek to refer it to the Chair of the School Board.

The decision of the Chair of Board in relation to the complaint shall be final, binding on the complainant and the last step in this Policy.

All parties may be accompanied to a meeting by an appropriate support person.

¹ Should the complaint refer to a Child Protection or Mandatory Reporting matter, this will then be referred immediately to the Child Protection or Mandatory Reporting process.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Anonymous Complaints

Parents are encouraged to give their names and will be given reassurance on the issue of confidentiality. Anonymous complaints may be where there is no name or address supplied, or where the complainants say they do not wish to be identified.

It is at the Principal's discretion as to what action, may be able to be taken, depending on the nature of the complaint as it may not be possible to obtain sufficient details when a complaint is made anonymously however the complaint will still be accepted, recorded, evaluated and actioned to the extent possible for any information they may contain.

Past Parents and Guardians

Complaints from former parents or guardians will be accepted and dealt with in accordance with this policy.

Role of the Director General of the Department of Education:

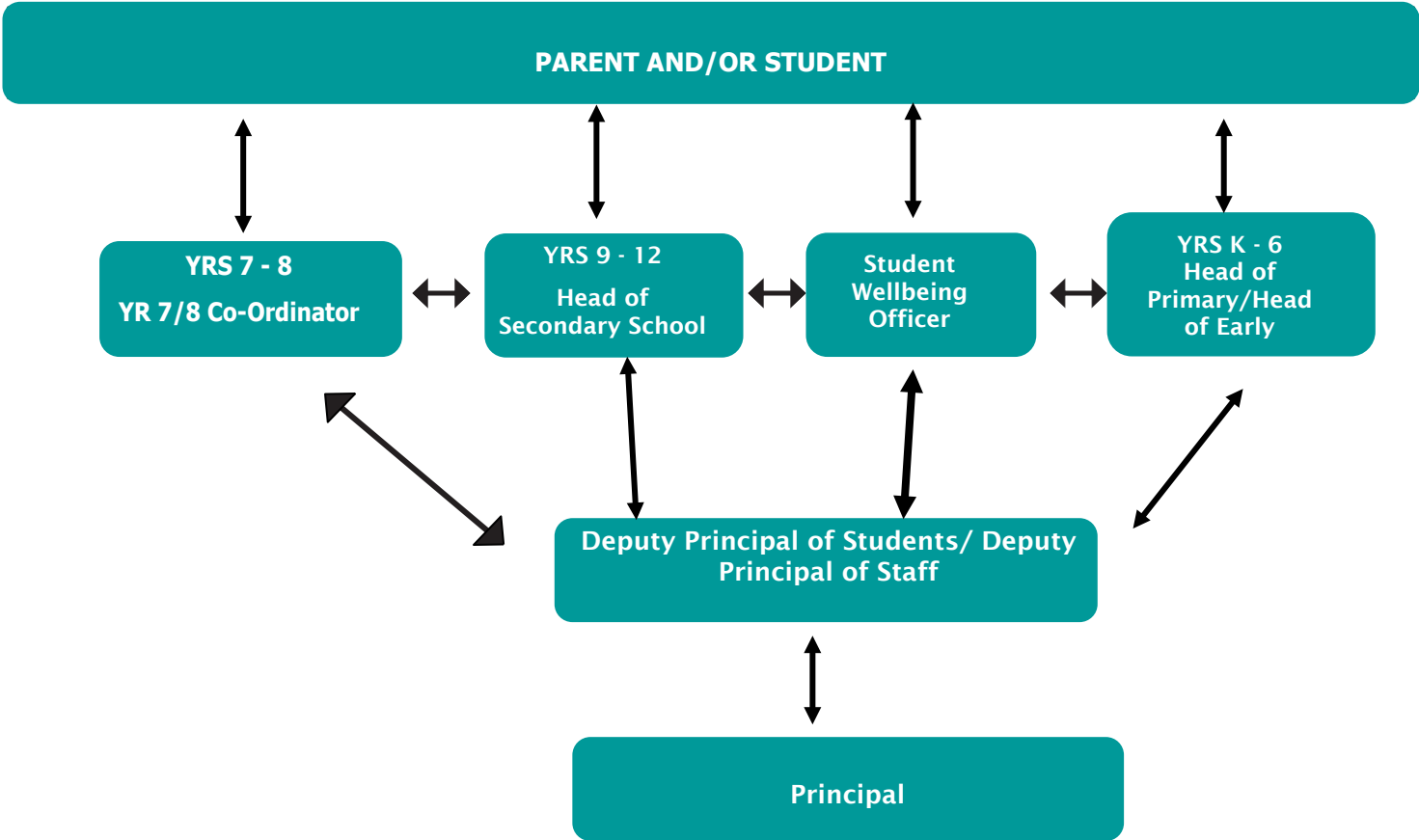
The Director General of the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the school observes the registration standards, including the standard about its complaints handling system. Any student, parent or community member is entitled to contact the Director General with concerns about how 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, they do not have power to intervene in a complaint or override the school's decision.

APPENDIX 1: Student Pastoral Care

STUDENT PASTORAL ISSUES/CONCERNS/QUERIES

Should you have any queries, concerns or issues regarding pastoral matters, (for example disorganisation, peer relationships, discipline), the suggested points of contact are shown below.

If you are worried, speak to a staff member you know and trust.



If a complainant is not satisfied by decision of the Principal, the matter may be referred to the Chair of Board for review.

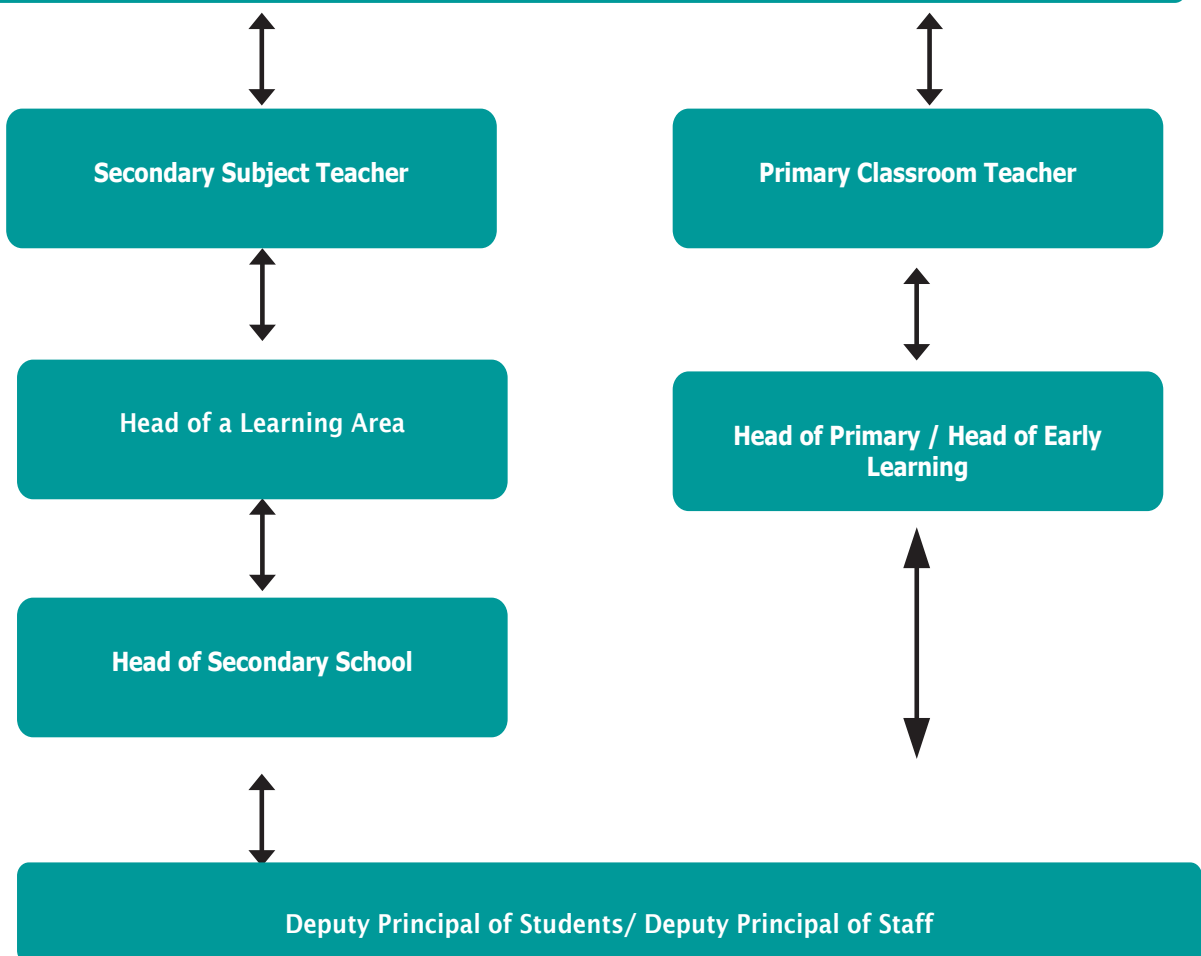
The review by the Chair shall be final, binding on the complainant and the School and the last step in this Policy.

CURRICULUM & CO-CURRICULAR ISSUES/CONCERNS/QUERIES

Should you have any queries, concerns or issues regarding curriculum or co-curriculum, (for example WACE, subject selections or academic progress), the suggested points of contact are shown below. For most issue the first point of contact should be with the Class/Subject Teacher or the Head of a Learning Area

If you are worried, speak to a staff member you know and trust

PARENT AND/OR STUDENT



If a complainant is not satisfied by decision of the Principal, the matter may be referred to the Chair of Board for review.

The review by the Chair shall be final, binding on the complainant and the School and the last step in this Policy.