

Grievance Policy

Parents and Students

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.

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	Sex Discrimination Act,
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

GRIEVANCE POLICY PARENTS AND STUDENTS

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. In all instances, we encourage concerns to be raised at the appropriate level in order to find a resolution to an issue. It is often easier to address a minor issue as they arise, rather than to leave this to escalate into a significant or more complicated issue.

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

The School understands that there may be times when parents may feel aggrieved about communications, actions, processes, conduct or decisions made by the School or its staff members. This Policy establishes the procedures for all students and their parents to follow for resolving a grievance which gives rise to a complaint concerning the School. For purposes of this Policy, parents include guardians of a student.

This Policy will apply where a grievance cannot be resolved through an open dialogue with the School.

A grievance is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived outcome. The dissatisfaction may arise as a result of something not being done, something being done which is seen as wrong, or behaviour which is considered unfair or inappropriate.

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

POLICY:

All matters will be handled with sensitivity and apply the principles of natural justice. 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.

We recognise that it is critical to empower children and young people to understand their rights, to report problems and concerns and effectively support them to address the issue.

For all matters except those involving the School Board, the Principal is the final decision maker and as such is not able to act as a support person for any involved party.

Any person who has lodged a grievance, or is a witness to a grievance, will not be discriminated against or victimised.

The Principal may consider a grievance and determine that the School will not proceed further with the grievance procedure where the Principal considers the grievance 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. The Deputy and Principal will review the Complaints Register each school term to enable the detection of any patterns emerging over time.

The School is committed to ensuring the complaints process is child-friendly and that students feel respected, valued, listened and responded to.

The School will accept complaints lodged verbally by phone, in-person, by letter, email or via the formal grievance form (Appendix 1) attached to the policy.

INFORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:

The informal grievance procedure may apply where the complainant initially requests the matter to be dealt with informally.

A student and/or their parent should first seek to resolve the matter through an informal discussion directly with the subject of the complaint. 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 2)
- Curriculum & Co-Curriculum Issues (Appendix 3)

If it is not possible to discuss the matter directly with the person concerned, or the student and/or their parents do not believe the matter has been satisfactorily addressed, then the matter should be discussed with the Head of Department, the Head of Primary/Secondary School, or the Deputy Principal.

If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the Head of Department, the Head of Primary/Secondary School, or the Deputy Principal, the matter should then be referred to the Principal.

The Principal shall try to resolve the matter through further discussion. If the Principal is unable to resolve the matter through discussion, she/he may direct the matter to be dealt with through the Formal Grievance Process.

Where a student or their parent has a grievance against the Principal, they shall first seek to resolve the matter by discussion with the Principal. If the matter is still not resolved, the student and/or their parent may seek to refer it to the Chair of the School Board through the Formal Grievance Process.

FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCESS:

Formal Grievance Procedure

Before lodging a formal grievance, the complainant must have made reasonable attempts to resolve the complaint informally with the person who is the subject of the complaint.

On receiving a written grievance or complaint (Appendix 1 – Formal Grievance Form), the Principal/Deputy Principal will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the grievance in writing to the complainant;
- Ensure the grievance is documented and filed accordingly;
- Provide the complainant an opportunity for further discussion at a mutually convenient time with the Principal/Deputy Principal.

In light of the information provided/obtained, the Principal/Deputy Principal will decide how best to address the grievance as follows:

- If the complaint is regarding the process followed by the School or School staff member(s) in reaching a decision, the Principal/Deputy Principal will meet with the relevant staff member(s) and any other parties involved in the process to inform her/him of the complaint and such details as are appropriate, and:
- The staff member(s) will then be invited to respond at the time or, if she/he wishes, at a later time within a reasonable timeframe;
- Other relevant parties, who were involved in the process, will also be invited to provide relevant information in relation to the complaint.
- 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.

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

The Principal/Deputy Principal will consider all the material provided by the complainant and the response of the staff member(s) and information of other relevant parties and make a decision about the grievance.

The decision handed down by the Principal/Deputy Principal will mark the end of the review process, subject to an appeal to the Principal in the circumstance set out below.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the process in which her/his grievance was dealt with, they may lodge an appeal to the Principal.

The Principal will consider all the material obtained during the internal review and decide whether to confirm the decision or if not, what other action is then necessary.

The decision of the Principal is the end of the review process.

¹ Should the grievance refer to a Child Protection or Mandatory Reporting matter, this will then be referred immediately to proceed through the Child Protection or Mandatory Reporting processes.

Review of Decision made by the Principal

If a complainant is not satisfied by the process in relation to the decision of the Principal made according to this procedure, the matter may be referred to the Chair of Board for review of the material having been previously considered.

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

Conflict of Interest

In order to offer a fair and unbiased process, where a conflict of interest is identified concerning a complainant's grievance, an alternative to this procedure must be followed.

For example where:

- The procedure requires that the grievance be taken to the Deputy Principal, and the Deputy Principal is the staff member whom the grievance is against, the complainant may proceed directly to the Principal;
- Where the grievance is against the Principal, the complainant may proceed directly to the Chair of Board.

Where the grievance is against the Principal:

- These procedures will be followed as appropriate to the circumstance;
- The Chair of Board may at any time determine the grievance to be not substantiated, or to be vexatious, trivial or regarding previously finalised issues, and not proceed further with the grievance procedure;
- The decision of the Chair of Board in relation to the grievance shall be final, binding on the complainant and the last step in this Policy.

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints may be where there is no name or address supplied, or where the complainants say they do not wish to be identified.

Parents and students are encouraged to give their names and will be given reassurance on the issue of confidentiality. If they persist in wishing to remain anonymous, it is at the Principal's discretion as to what action, if any, will be taken, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Full fee overseas students

Overseas students

Overseas students and parents are required to access Geraldton Grammar School's complaints process within 20 working days. If the student chooses not to access the process or withdraws from the process, or the process is completed and results in a decision supporting the School, the Business Manager must notify the Department of Education through PRISMS of the student not achieving the satisfactory course progress as soon as practicable.

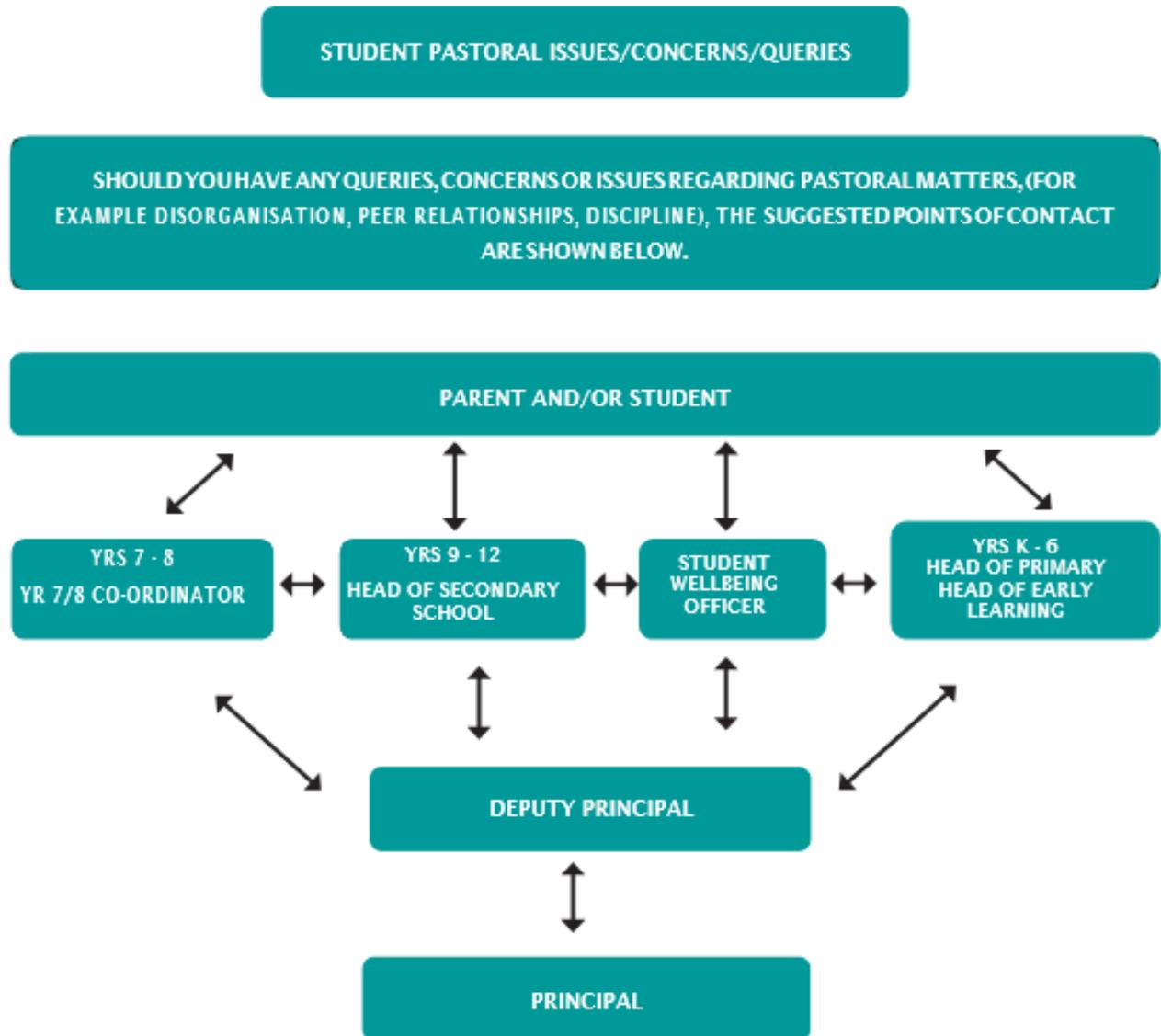
Overseas Students Ombudsman – external process

In the event of an overseas student being dissatisfied with the result or conduct of the internal complaint appeals process, the School will advise the student of his right to access the external appeals process by contacting the Overseas Students Ombudsman at www.ombudsman.gov.au or phone 1800 117 000. This service is free and independent for external appeals and complaints about decisions made by the School.

Past Students, Parents and Guardians

Complaints or greivances from former students, parents or guardians will be accepted and delt with in accordance with this policy despite enrolment of the student having ceased.

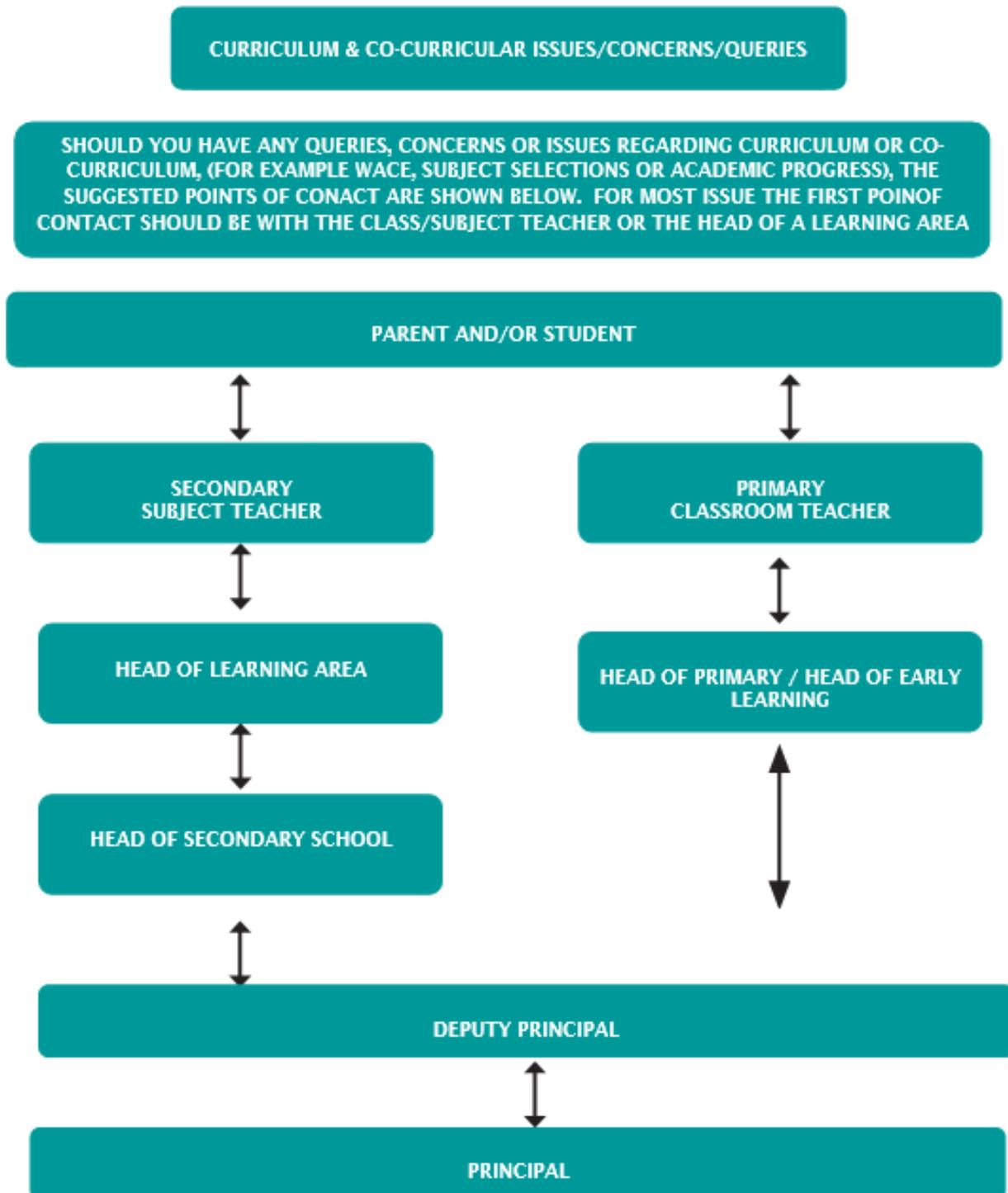
Appendix 2 – Student Pastoral Care



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.

Appendix 3 – Curriculum and Co-Curricular Issues



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.