CARNARVON
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
"Walk as Children of Light"

COMPLAINTS & DISPUTES RESOLUTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

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CARNARVON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
COMPLAINTS & DISPUTES RESOLUTION POLICY & PROCEDURE

1 PREAMBLE

This Policy covers the Carnarvon Christian Parent Controlled School Association (Inc), which administers Carnarvon Christian School [herein referred to as CCS].

This Policy applies to all employees, students, their families and guardians and contractors of the Association.

Matthew 18:15-17 15"If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. 16But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' 17If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

2 INTRODUCTION

Carnarvon Christian School exists to teach children, whose parents wish for it, a curriculum that is founded on the knowledge of the sovereignty of God and developed in an environment where the love of the Lord Jesus Christ is seen on a day to day basis. A school community built on this basis should, therefore, always be aiming to honour God by showing love and respect to one another in all situations and all relationships.

This Complaints & Disputes Resolution Policy seeks to create a procedure whereby disputes and complaints can be addressed in an honest effort to bring about a genuine resolution between all parties involved. The ultimate aim of restoring broken relationships between members of the school community [students, parents & guardians, carers, staff & board] is to create a harmonious school workplace where students can be taught and nurtured in an environment of peace and safety.

Parents are charged with nurturing and protecting the children God has given them and there will be times when parents will feel the need to challenge the school or its staff on issues they perceive as a threat or an injustice to their child/ren. Many times the resulting emotional upsets will stem from misunderstandings or issues that can be quickly resolved if the issue is raised quickly and face to face in a polite manner with the offending person/s. Other times there are issues that need to be addressed by individual staff or the school as a whole in order to bring about a harmonious and satisfactory resolution.

CCS is a Child-friendly school and acknowledges that our complaints system should be accessible and responsive to children and young people with reference to the resource, “Are you listening?” Guidelines for making complaints systems accessible and responsive to children and young people, WA Commission of Children and Young People, June 2013.

The purpose therefore of the CCS Complaints & Disputes Resolution Policy is to provide parents and students with a process to facilitate the resolution of their grievance and thereby restore broken relationships.

At CCS we ensure that complaints are dealt in a way which is culturlally appropriate. All complaints are taken seriously and dealt with promptly and thoroughly.

> *‘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.'

3 DEFINITIONS

A **concern** is the expression of a worry, something that has made a person troubled or anxious about an issue and is expressed at a 'first level' ie to a class teacher at the classroom door or by telephone or email directly to the relevant staff member. Can usually be resolved at an informal level and may be just a misunderstanding.

A **complaint** is an "expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required (as defined by the AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organisations).

A complaint may be made if a complainant thinks that the school or someone has, for example:

- Done something wrong
- Failed to do something it/they should have done;
- Acted unfairly or impolitely; or
- Ignored their concern.

A complaint may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department in the school, about a particular school activity, about an individual member of staff or about one or more students.

A **dispute** is a pursued unresolved complaint that has been escalated, either internally and/or externally by the school.

A **dispute** would usually be viewed as an argument or disagreement.

4 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- School Education Act 1999 Standard
- Incorporated Associations Act 2015
- Corporation Act 2001

5 THE NATURE OF COMPLAINTS

There are essentially four areas of complaints: Parents (and guardians); Students; The public and CCS Staff.

This policy offers information and guidelines in identifying and dealing with complaints primarily from parents and students but staff and public procedures are referred to also.

The *Education Act 1999, along with the Director general* has, as a condition of registration and re-registration, a requires that a school has a dispute resolution procedure. Carnarvon Christian School has a Complaints & Disputes Resolution Policy.

While parents will often wish to raise issues on behalf of their children, there are other issues which pupils may choose to raise on their own behalf and which are, in fact, best raised by

them. There are a series of steps outlined in the students' leaflet that will assist CCS students in finding resolutions to any issues they may want to raise with the school or its staff.

Complaints from the public will be dealt with by the Principal and if necessary in consultation with the Board Chairperson.

6 SPECIFIC PROCEDURAL INFORMATION ABOUT COMPLAINTS

1. Parental Complaints

1.1. Complaint about a staff member by a parent.

Parents & guardians are encouraged to feel confident to approach staff members about any issue. All parties involved are asked to keep in mind the aim of raising issues is to restore a harmonious work environment for all. There are guided meeting sheets available to assist parties at any step to work through the issue in order to find a resolution.

Step 1a; Parent and Teacher Meeting

Parents should firstly make contact with the teacher involved to raise the concern face to face or via telephone. An appointment can be made through the office to see the staff member. The parent should outline the purpose of the meeting to the office staff member but this is at the discretion of the parent. If after the first meeting with the teacher the parent is not satisfied with the outcome they should ask for a second meeting

Step 1b; to further work through areas of concern. If the parent is not comfortable meeting with the staff member alone at either of these Step 1 meetings, they should contact the Deputy Principal or senior teacher who will sit in on the meeting as an observer/mediator as is appropriate.

If after the second meeting with the staff member, with or without the Deputy Principal present, a resolution is not reached the Deputy or parent should make an appointment to see the Principal. At this informal Parent and Principal meeting.

The parent should outline all the facts to the Principal. The Principal will attempt to resolve the issue during this meeting but if this does not occur then the parent should put in writing all the facts of the issue. This is to be sent to the Principal so that he/she can make any necessary inquiries before the Step 2 formal meeting is held. The Principal will establish the facts, discuss the facts with both parties to make sure that both parties understand them, and then make a decision as to what each party should do.

Step 2; Meeting with Principal.

If there is no resolution to the dispute the Principal will refer the matter to the Chair of the CCS governing body and advise the complainant that this is the next step. The complainant may also write directly to the School Chair. The letter should be given to the Board Secretary. This may be done through the school office.

The Chair should respond to the complainant, 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 Chair's response should be clear and detailed, and should offer a meeting if the complainant remains troubled.

Step 3; Meeting with the Chair of the School Governing Body

Referral to the Chair of the school governing body

In some cases the procedure will be that the Principal refers the matter to the Chair of the school's governing body and advises the complainant that this is the next step in the process. However, a situation may arise where the complainant is unhappy with the Principal's response, in which case the complainant should be able to write directly to the Chair.

The Chair should discuss the matter fully with the Principal and be provided with relevant documentation. If a briefing is required from a member of staff, this should occur in the presence of the Principal.

If a meeting is requested, the Chair would offer to meet the complainant at a time convenient to them. Those involved are:

- *the Chair of the school governing body;*
- *the Principal and, at the most, one other member of staff; and*
- *the complainant.*

The complainant should be permitted to bring with them a supportive friend who is not involved with the complaint. Legal representation would be discouraged at this stage.

The Chair, after questioning and listening to the complainant and the Principal, may be able to find a solution. If this is not possible, and the complainant wishes to take the matter further, the Chair will consider the Conciliation Committee.or engaging an independent arbiter.

Step 4; Carnarvon Christian School Referral to a Conciliation Committee.

- *the Convenor is a governing body member, other than the Chair;*
- *there is one CCS Board member, one Church Pastor and one Police Officer*
- *members are committed to keeping the proceedings of the Committee confidential and to operating in a procedural,fair and objective manner – their aim is to conciliate; and*
- *In accepting appointment, members accept that they may never be called upon to meet.*

The Chair of the school governing body, in consultation with the Principal, decides when to refer a complaint to the Conciliation Committee, and invites the Convenor to call a meeting.

The Chair has no further involvement until the Convenor reports back at the end of the Committee's deliberations.

Step 5; Meeting with the Conciliation Committee

Those involved in the meeting are:

- *the Committee members, including the Convenor*
- *the Principal, and possibly a key member of staff*
- *the complainant, who is invited to bring a supportive friend, as for the meeting with the Chair of the school governing body.*

Step 5a; Meeting Procedure

Sufficient time should be committed to the meeting.

The complainant and the Principal should be asked in advance whether there are any papers they would like to have considered at the meeting, bearing in mind the need for all to keep the proceedings confidential. The papers are copied and distributed before the meeting, allowing due consideration by all parties of any written statement submitted by any party.

The Convenor emphasises that he or she is concerned to reach a positive conclusion and invites first the complainant, then the Principal to speak. After this, the Convenor encourages questions and general discussion.

The Convenor may find it helpful at some point to invite the Principal, the complainant and their friend to withdraw from the discussion for a time, leaving the Committee alone.

If more time is required, it may be necessary to convene a second meeting. If so, Committee members must commit themselves to attend, as continuity is essential.

If a positive solution is reached, the Convenor should summarise the outcome and confirm the nature of the agreement before ending the meeting. The agreement should be recorded, copied and circulated as soon as possible.

At the end of the Committee's deliberations, the Convenor makes a full report to the Chair of the school governing body and informs the complainant that this is being done. The Chair would expect to endorse the Committee's decision.

Step 6; Referral to Arbitration

If the disputants do not accept the Committee's decision then the dispute shall be referred to arbitration in accordance with the process in Appendix 7.

Step 7; Further Action

At all stages of a complaints' resolution process the complainant should be reminded that they can seek legal advice if they wish, especially at the point where the school has done all it can to reach a resolution.

1.2. Complaint about a child by a parent.

Parents should NEVER approach or question another CCS child about an issue

Step 1; Parents should make an appointment through the office to see the teacher of the child. The parent should outline the purpose of the meeting to the office staff member. The issue is to be discussed with the teacher, who will then decide on the follow up action/s if required. The follow up actions can be decided upon by the teacher after consulting the relevant CCS policies [eg Behaviour Management or Bullying Policy]. The complainant will be informed that follow up action is being taken, but not the actions themselves as confidentiality is to be maintained.

NB; If the complaint is established to be a bullying issue the Principal will be given a report and the BULLYING POLICY will be initiated.

Step 2; If after meeting with the teacher a parent feels a satisfactory resolution is not reached the parent should make an appointment to see the Deputy Principal. The Deputy Principal will establish the facts, and then make a decision as to what actions are required.
Step 3; If parents are unhappy with the Deputy Principal's determination they should ask to meet with the Principal and outline their complaint. If there is no satisfactory resolution the parent should put in writing their complaint and address it to the Principal.

Step 4; The formal meeting level with the Principal. The Principal will have gathered information from all parties involved. The Principal will use his/her discretion as to the; follow up actions; confidentiality issues; the child's parents' concerns and then decide if there is to be any further mediatory meetings. The Principal's decision will be the school's final decision.

1.3. Complaint about the Principal by a parent.

(i) Parents should make an appointment, through the office, to see the Principal. The parent should outline the purpose of the meeting to the office staff member.

(ii) If Parents are unhappy with the Principal's response they should make a second appointment. At this meeting both parties should have at least one witness present. The Principal should have the Deputy Principal present to ensure that all relevant information is properly discussed and another attempt at a resolution made.

(iii) If parents are unhappy with the Principal's determination they should write to the Chairperson of the School Board outlining their complaint. The letter should be given to the Board Secretary. This may be done through the school office. The Chairperson, at his/her discretion, may call a meeting of all concerned and act as a mediator or he/she may take the issue to a School Board meeting or take some other course of action.

(iv) A decision by the School Board will be the school's final decision.

(v) If parents are not happy with the decision of the School Board they should request through the Principal, a meeting with the independent mediator – The Arbitrator.

1.4. Complaint about a parent by a parent.

Parents are encouraged to settle disputes between themselves by arranging a suitable time to discuss the issue. Parents should not hastily accuse anyone before taking time to discover all the facts. Meetings to discuss an issue should be private and not discussed with anyone else.

The Principal is happy to meet with both parties and act as a mediator at a time convenient to all.

1.5. Complaint about a non-teaching staff member by a parent.

(i) All complaints about non-teaching staff should be brought to the Principal. An appointment should be made through the school office.

(ii) If parents are unhappy with the Principal's determination they should write to the Chairperson of the School Board outlining their complaint. The letter should be

given to the Board Secretary. This may be done through the school office. The Chairperson, at his/her discretion, may call a meeting of all concerned and act as a mediator or he may take the issue to a School Board meeting or take some other course of action.

(iii) A decision by the School Board will be the school's final decision.

(iv) If parents do not accept the decision of the School Board then they may refer the dispute to arbitration in accordance with Appendix 7.

2. Staff Complaints

Step by step procedures are described below; however the following general principles still apply in **all** circumstances.

NB If the complaint or dispute concerns the Principal or a family member of the Principal then the complaint or dispute should be taken to the Chairperson of the School Board at the appropriate stage of the process.

2.1. Complaint about a staff member by a staff member

I. Step 1a; The staff member feeling wronged should arrange to meet with the other staff member at a time and place convenient to both so that the issue can be openly discussed and resolved.

II. Step 1b; If the staff members cannot resolve their dispute they should discuss the problem in the presence of the Deputy Principal or Senior teacher who will endeavour to suggest a way forward.

III. If the staff members are not happy with the Deputy Principal or senior teacher's suggestions/requirements they should arrange a meeting with the Principal.

IV. At this informal Principal meeting [Step 2] the issue/s should be outlined to the Principal. The Principal will attempt to resolve the issue during this meeting but if this does not occur then the staff members should put in writing all the facts of the issue. This is to be sent to the Principal so that he/she can make any necessary inquiries before the Step 3 formal meeting is held. The Principal will establish the facts, discuss the facts with both parties to make sure that both parties understand them, and then make a decision as to what each party should do.

V. Step 4; Should staff not be satisfied with the Principals' determination then the chairperson should be approached by a written account of the issues. The Chairman, at his/her discretion, may call a meeting of all concerned and act as a mediator or he/she may take the issue to a School Board meeting or take some other course of action.

VI. A decision by the School Board will be the school's final decision.

VII. Step 5; If the staff members do not accept the decision of the School Board then they may refer the dispute to arbitration in accordance with Appendix 7.

2.2. Complaint about the Deputy Principal by a teacher

(i) Step 1a; Teachers should firstly make contact with the Deputy Principal to raise the issue/s face to face. If after the first meeting with the Deputy the teacher is not satisfied with the outcome they should ask for a second meeting [Step 1b] to further work through areas of concern. Step 1b; A Senior teacher should be asked to mediate a second meeting between the teacher and the Deputy with the aim of finding a resolution.

(ii) If after the second [2nd] meeting with the Deputy Principal, a resolution is not reached the senior teacher should make an appointment to see the Principal. At this informal teacher and Principal meeting [Step 2] the teacher should outline all the facts to the Principal. The Principal will attempt to resolve the issue during this meeting but if this does not occur then the teacher should put in writing all the facts of the issue/s. This is to be sent to the Principal so that he/she can make any necessary inquiries before the Step 3 formal meeting is held. The Principal will establish the facts, discuss the facts with both parties to make sure that both parties understand them, and then make a decision as to what each party should do.

(iii) Step 4; If the teacher or Deputy Principal is unhappy with the Principal's determination they should write to the Chairperson of the School Board outlining their complaint. The letter should be given to the Board Secretary. This may be done through the school office. The Chairperson, at his/her discretion, may call a meeting of all concerned and act as a mediator or he/she may take the issue to a School Board meeting or take some other course of action.

(iv) A decision by the School Board will be the school's final decision.

(v) Step 5; If the staff members do not accept the decision of the School Board then they may refer the dispute to arbitration in accordance with Appendix 7.

2.3. Complaint about the Principal by a staff member.

(i) Step 1a; Teachers should firstly make contact with the Principal to raise the issue/s face to face. If after the first meeting with the Principal the teacher is not satisfied with the outcome they should ask for a second meeting [Step 1b] to further work through areas of concern. Step 1b; A Deputy or Senior teacher should be asked to mediate a second meeting between the teacher and the Principal with the aim of finding a resolution.

Steps 2 - 3 are now directed to the Board Chairperson

(iv) Step 4; If the teacher is unhappy with the Principal's determination they should write to the Chairperson of the School Board outlining their complaint. The letter should be given to the Board Secretary. This may be done through the school office. The Chairperson, at his/her discretion, may call a meeting of all concerned and act as a mediator or he/she may take the issue to a School Board meeting or take some other course of action.

(iv) A decision by the School Board will be the school's final decision.

(v) Step 5; If the teacher or Principal does not accept the decision of the School Board then they may refer the dispute to arbitration in accordance with Appendix 7.

7 PRINCIPLES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES

Carnarvon Christian School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, guardians, students and staff alike and takes complaints and concerns raised seriously. We have an open approach – climate and culture. We wish to ensure that:

- All handling of complaints is carried out in a way which is fair and just.
- All issues are dealt with in a way that will bring about a harmonious workplace for all as soon as possible.
- CCS will accept and deal with complaints from former students and/or their parents or guardians.
- Parents wishing to make a complaint or raise an issue, know how to do so. See details and flowchart below.
- We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way. Action is taken within a stated timeline and communicated to the complainant.
- Parents will realise that we listen and take complaints seriously
- Where required / or is appropriate, follow up action will occur promptly.
- Complainants will be informed of follow up actions providing there is no privacy issue involved.
- All issues are to be addressed, in each instance, in a way that seeks a genuine resolution for all parties involved and in a manner that is glorifying to God.
- Staff are asked to be available and respectful to complainants in times when complaints and dispute issues are being raised.
- While, understandably, complainants may become emotional during resolution discussions - if disrespectful, angry or threatening attempts to intimidate staff occur, the interaction will be terminated immediately. The staff member is to report the matter immediately to the Deputy Principal and to the Principal.
- CCS staff are asked to be proactive in trying to reach resolutions as soon as possible after the issue/ complaint is raised.
- All issues are to be kept confidential and restricted to only those that need to be informed and that records are kept in the relevant filing system.
- That all students and parents are to be treated equally and no prejudice is to occur as a result of a complaint or dispute issue being raised.
- The CCS Principal reserves the right to intervene at any level of the procedure should they deem it necessary.
- Where a CCS staff member is the subject of a complaint they will be informed of the complaint by the Deputy or Principal and asked to provide written details and information about the case brought against them. This will then be dealt with according to CCS Teacher & Education Assistant Performance Management & Misconduct Policy if necessary.
- CCS chairperson is informed where appropriate.
- CCS will allow and/or assist with the involvement of an advocate (adult or student)
- Child complaints will be prioritized should there be potential child welfare concerns and appropriate authorities informed.
- A third party either from within or independent of the school community will be used where necessary to assist in dispute resolution.
- Where a dispute cannot be resolved by facilitative means then the disputants may seek independent arbitration.
- The CCS complaints register will be reviewed at the end of the third term by the Principal.

8 CCS COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

NB An information leaflet and flowchart is made available to CCS Parents, Guardians and Students. See appendix for copy

8.1. PROCEDURAL AIMS

It is of the utmost importance that ***all parties*** involved in the complaints or disputes procedures at CCS keep in mind the aim of the resolution procedure is to bring about;

- a complete and genuine restoration of all broken relationships &;
- to restore a harmonious work environment for all, one that is glorifying to God.

Any person who has a complaint or dispute to raise, should firstly gather the facts and then refer to the 'Complaints and Disputes Resolution Procedure' below so that the right people are approached and the correct steps are followed. The emphasis must be on trying to solve any issues in the earlier informal steps if at all possible.

While rectification or redress in relation to a complaint may be reasonably straightforward, this is not always the case so CCS will seek legal advice if necessary.

Options that CCS may use include but not limited to:

Rectification

- Reconsidering and/or adjusting/stopping or starting conduct/actions
- Making changes to ensure the problem does not reoccur

Mitigation (to reduce the adverse consequences)

- Ceasing action so as to prevent further issues/detriment
- Taking steps to ensure that records are correct and up to date
- Waiving fees, charges or debts

Satisfaction

- Providing an apology (information on this is available in Appendix 1 of the Standard)
- Providing assurance of steps put in place to correct matters and then following through
- Instituting disciplinary action

Compensation

- Restitution – for loss (financial/earnings etc) or damage to property
- Reimbursement – Refunds, and costs or damages that may or are likely to have been incurred by the complainant e.g. medical
- Satisfaction for appeasement – Financial assistance or payment, goodwill gift for damage to reputation or humiliation, worry or distress (including grief and suffering)

8.4. PRINCIPLES OF THE FORMAL STAGES OF THE PROCEDURE

- Each meeting must begin by committing the issue to the Lord for His guidance
- Each meeting must provide fair opportunities for each person involved to present their version and have opportunity to respond to the other person/s
- Each meeting should follow the procedure marked on the Focus Questions recording sheet [see Appendix] except where deemed otherwise by Principal, Board Chairperson or Arbitrator.
- Each individual is expected to show respect and courtesy to others present, regardless of their differences, with the sole aim of bringing about a resolution and restoring broken relationships
- ,Information presented must be clarified for meaning if not clear so that only facts are dealt with and therefore a decision can be made based on clear evidence/information
- Decisions will be made as soon as is possible and conveyed to all parties quickly
- Where necessary a formal letter will forwarded to the complainant informing them of the reasons for the final decision and any changes to be made as a result [taking into account confidentiality issues]
- Where a change in school procedures is deemed necessary as a result of the resolution process, CCS will review its relevant policies and procedures to help prevent a repeat occurrence of the issue.

9 RECORD KEEPING

CCS will keep an ongoing log of complaints and disputes and other parental concerns to ensure accurate details can be accessed at a future date if deemed necessary. These records will be kept in the administration confidential filing cabinet.

The log should contain the following information for each issue:

i. Date when the issue was raised;
ii. Name of parent;
iii. Name of pupil;
iv. Brief statement of issue;
v. Location of detailed file;
vi. Member of staff handling the issue; and
vii. Brief statement of outcome including date of resolution/outcome;
viii. Name of person/member of staff reviewing the decision made;
ix. Any request for an interview;
x. Any referral to the CCS governing body.

10 CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is an important issue for pupils, parents and staff both during and after the resolution process. All complaints and disputes are treated in a confidential manner and with respect for all parties involved.

Parents are to be assured of confidentiality by staff as necessary, to alleviate any concerns they may have about expressing their concerns. If, for example, parents wish to discuss a particular member of staff, they may fear that their child will suffer in some way because they have complained. *It should be made clear to all concerned that it is the CCS policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children and, similarly, that complaints raised by pupils should not rebound against themselves or on other pupils.*

The question of confidentiality should be discussed sensitively and on an individual basis with the parents and the School's policy should be carefully explained.

It must be noted that, while at most times, it will be possible to deal with a problem without naming individuals, there will be times when, even if no names are given, the source of the complaint may be clear. Depending also on the nature of the complaint and on the circumstances, it may be impractical to investigate without identifying the member of staff or the child – it may also need to be - as in the best interest of the child to do so. CCS will endeavour to keep the issue/ complainant/ details strictly confidential where it is able to do so.

Members of staff are rightly concerned that they should know about complaints that might be damaging to their reputation. Such complaints will be known only to themselves and to those who have to be consulted. The School must to be aware of the need to provide support for staff against whom a complaint is made; this should be provided by a colleague who is not otherwise involved, or by a Board member.

If there is a situation involving the Police then the CCS Principal, or next most senior staff member if the Principal is unavailable, must take responsibility for action in the School and the Board Chairperson should be informed as soon as possible. If it is a critical incident then CCS will inform the Department of Education.

11 ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

CCS Parents, guardians and students must be prepared to give their names when making a complaint. Anonymous complaints cannot be followed up or substantiated and will therefore not be acted upon. Bearing this in mind, CCS will never advertise that 'it will not accept a complaint.'

However, the CCS Principal reserves the right to act upon an anonymous complaint should he/she deem it necessary.

Anonymous complaints will be kept in complaints log.

***Anonymous allegations about child abuse should be monitored closely, but no action taken until there is more certainty about the veracity [reliability] of the allegation. Staff are urged to follow mandatory reporting steps if there is any suggestion of sexual abuse. See the CCS's Child Protection Policy for direction on how to deal with allegations of any form of child abuse or maltreatment.*

12 CHILD FRIENDLY COMPLAINTS PROCESS (SEE NATIONAL PRINCIPAL 6 CCS CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY)

CCS takes seriously its responsibility to investigate to investigating complaints of child harm or abuse and prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. "Are you listening?" a booklet published by the Commissioner for children and young people is used as a support document.
CCS recognizes that empowering children and young people to understand their rights, to report problems and concerns and will effectively support them to address the issue raised is serious and
As such:

- Students are acknowledged as service users;
  Students can choose how to make a complaint, including by speaking to someone face to face, online CCS website, CCS Voice Boxes (sample form Appendix 7), email, letter etc.
- CCS creates opportunities for students to give feedback and discuss their experiences;
- The complaints process and possible outcomes are outlines in publications which are developmentally suitable for and appealing to the students of CCS;
- CCS enables an advocate to complain on behalf of a student and, when that occurs, makes sure the student can participate directly to the extent he or she wishes;
- Students are provided with an advocate, independent from the complaint investigation and management process, when they do not have one;
  Staff handling student's complaints, and those reviewing the outcome of a complaint, have training working with children;
- Understanding, helpfulness and responsiveness is demonstrated towards students complaints while following procedural fairness at all times.
- Students understanding of information provided about the complaints process will be checked;
- Student complainants are given choices about how they wish to be kept informed about the process of their complaint
- This policy provides appropriately for maintainlng confidentiality and obtaining the student's consent in relation to the complaint;
- Student complainants are made aware of the limits of confidentiality as the process progresses and
- Staff are trained in the school's complaints procedure, particularly as they apply to student complaints.

The CCS Principal will decide if, and when, it is appropriate to inform the child's parents after they have made a complaint, taking into account consultation with relevant government authorities if circumstances warrant it.

Students in middle and upper primary, years 4-6, will be given a copy of the Student Complaints Leaflet (*see APPENDIX 3*) at the beginning of the school year.

The same principles that apply to parental complaints will also be applied to complaints and concerns from CCS students. Each will be treated with respect and as serious no matter whether it appears trivial or minor. It is important to us to have students who feel they will be 'listened to'.

There are, however, differences in approaches;
Students are able 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 Principal.

If the situation is a complex one, once the matter is resolved, the outcome should be discussed with the pupil by a member of staff. To make sure that it is fully understood, a written record may be shared.

If the issue is a painful one, or if exploration of it is taking time, a student will receive ongoing support from another pupil or from an adult of their choice whom they feel comfortable with.

Complaints, and ways of dealing with them, will be explained to students. Students will also be encouraged to mentor other students and be tolerant of other's viewpoints by understanding that all viewpoints matter and are important.

13 TRAINING

All CCS staff will be trained to carry out their responsibiliby to support and implement this policy. Training will cover:

- the CCS documented complaints' procedure and what information to give to complainants;
- knowing how to recognise complaints and be proactive in responding promptly and appropriately to expressions of dissatisfaction, in accordance with school policy;
- complaints that are associated with child protection matters;
- staff members' roles, responsibilities and authorities in respect of complaints;
- communication skills, such as listening, questioning and calming;
- respectfully and courteously handling complaints, negotiation and mediation skills;
- skills in observing, recording and reporting; and
- the benefits of handling complaints well and the consequences of handling them badly.

14 OTHER COMPLAINTS

All CCS complaints and disputes should be settled using the General Principles stated earlier in this policy statement.

General public complaints should be directed to the administration office where the office staff will direct the complaint to the CCS Principal.

The Principal is always available to help settle any complaint or dispute once proper procedures have been followed.

APPENDIX 1: FOCUS QUESTIONS AND SUMMARY RECORDING SHEET FOR MEETINGS

CARNARVON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
COMPLAINTS & DISPUTES RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

NAME OF COMPLAINANT:

MEETING DATE; _____ VENUE; _____ TIME;
_____

ATTENDEES;_____

MEDIATORS [IF ANY]; _____

	RESPONSES
PLEASE DESCRIBE THE ISSUE THAT HAS OCCURED IN DETAIL [WHEN, WHERE, HOW, WHAT ETC]	
GIVE DETAILS OF THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED &/OR AFFECTED AS A RESULT OF THIS ISSUE	
GIVE DETAILS OF SOME SUGGESTED WAYS THAT THE ISSUE CAN BE 'PUT RIGHT'	
GIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR WAYS THAT WE CAN HELP EVERYONE INVOLVED TO BE ABLE TO PUT THINGS RIGHT AND MOVE ON AS BEST AS IS POSSIBLE	
SUGGESTIONS OF THINGS TO IMPLEMENT OR CHANGES TO BE MADE AS A RESULT OF THIS ISSUE	
WHAT FOLLOW UP HELP COULD BE / IS TO BE OFFERED TO THE AFFECTED INDIVIDUALS FROM HEREIN TO ENSURE RESTORED RELATIONSHIPS THAT BRING GLORY TO GOD?	
NOTES;	

APPENDIX 2: STUDENT INFORMATION LEAFLETS

CARNARVON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

"Walk as Children of Light"

COMPLAINTS & DISPUTE RESOLUTION LEAFLET FOR STUDENTS

Do you have any problems, complaints or suggestions?

If so, we would like to hear.

How do I make a complaint?

- By talking about it – or by writing it down if you find that easier.
- You can do it by yourself, or as part of a group, or through your parents.

To whom?

- Discuss the issue with a responsible friend or
- With a school prefect or
- To anyone on the CCS's staff you feel comfortable talking with.

Does it matter what the issue is?

- No, it can be a big problem or a small one. By discussing it, you may come up with some positive ideas and solutions of your own.

What will happen next?

- If possible, the prefect or staff member will help you with the problem in person. If not, he or she will go on your behalf to someone who can help.

Do others have to know?

- If you are at all worried about confidentiality, go directly to a teacher that you feel comfortable talking to and let them know you are uncomfortable about others knowing – they will understand and keep it confidential – *unless they feel you need extra protection for help.*

Even if you find the issue hurtful or embarrassing, don't worry – it will only be discussed by staff who can help you.

APPENDIX 3

Complaint Form
To be completed by Parents who wish to make a formal complaint to the Principal – Carnarvon Christian School

General Information	
Date	
Name of Complainant	
Name of Student (if relevant)	
Other relevant parties	
Staff member handling the Issue	
Preferred method of contact	o Phone o Email o Other
Phone number	
Email address	

Details of the Complaint	
Date that the event occurred	
Detail the complaint ***Provide as much relevant information as possible***	
Name of person complaint is about **(where appropriate)**	
Did anyone else witness the events that led to the complaint? **Name if applicable.**	

Information Resolution	
Self –Resolution Have you tried to resolve the complaint informally with your Child's Teacher?	o Yes o No
Assisted-Resolution Did you seek the support of your Child's Teacher along with the Principal to help you resolve your complaint?	o Yes o No
When did you try to resolve the matter with your child's Teacher?	Date:
Detail what you and your child's Teacher did to try to resolve the problem informally	

Resolution Sought	
Describe the outcome that you are seeking (what you want)	
Is there anything else you would like your child's Teacher/Principal to consider in resolving this complaint?	
Are you willing to participate in mediation or another process to resolve this complaint?	

Signature of Complainant	
Date	

Initial Assessment and Investigation	
Teacher/Principal to complete Outline the details of the initial assessment of the complaint or attach a report to this form.	
Is there a reason to investigate further	o Yes o No
Outline the reasons why it is/is not necessary to investigate further	

Supervisor Name	
Date	

Resolution	
Principal to complete Outline the resolution to the complaint and Any proposed actions/interventions taken to resolve the complaint	
Is the Principal satisfied that the complaint has been resolved.	o Yes o No
If the complaint has not been satisfactory resolved, are you going to make a further attempt to resolve the complaint	o Yes o No

If the complaint has not been resolved, and you do not intend to make a further attempt to resolve the complaint, what do you intend to do?	o Close the complaint as it is ill founded o Close the complaint as there is not reasonable resolution available o Monitor the situation o Implement an alternate solution o Notify the complainant that the complaint cannot be resolved and will be closed with no further action

Investigation	
Principal to complete	Supervisor will follow up to ensure that: o The complainant has been notified that the complaint has been resolved; or o The complainant has been notified that the complaint has been closed; or o A copy of all documentation in relation to the formal complaint has been saved.

Principal name	
Date	

APPENDIX 4

CARNARVON
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
"Walk as Children of Light"

Student Complaint Form

All students will be notified within two class days that a complaint has been received and a follow-up will be scheduled within ten class days of the date of the written complaint.

Student Name: _____Year level: _____

Phone Number: _____Email: _____ Date: _____

Nature of complaint (please select):

☐ Academic (program, course content, delivery method, instructor, learning environment, access to resources, ☐ etc.) Non-Academic (student actions, safety concern, administrative action, procedure, decision, etc.)

Students are encouraged to discuss their concerns and complaints via informal conferences with the Teacher and relevant parties.

Have you attempted to resolve your complaint? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide any evidence of resolution steps (include dates, times, names, etc.):

Summarize the nature of your complaint using factual information in your narrative. You may attach an additional sheet of paper if needed:

Specify the outcome being sought:

With any additional comments, please attach a separate sheet to this form. For academic complaints, please submit a hard copy of this form to the Teacher or to the Administration Staff. For non-academic complaints, please submit a hard copy of this form to the Teacher or to the Administration Staff.

I hereby declare the information on this form is correct, true, and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any misrepresentation of the information may result in disciplinary action in accordance with Student Code of Conduct policies.

Student Signature: Date:

Document can be found at: O:\OFFICE DATA (Shared Folder)\POLICIES and REPORTS\COMPLAINTS Resolutions ALL\TEMPLATES\2025

COMPLAINTS & DISPUTES RESOLUTION LEAFLET; CCS PARENTS & GUARDIANS

PREAMBLE

Carnarvon Christian School [CCS] welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes complaints and concerns raised seriously. This leaflet will show you how to use the CCS complaints system.

We wish to ensure that:

- All issues are to be addressed in a way that seeks a genuine resolution for all parties involved and in a manner that is glorifying to God;
- Parents wishing to make a complaint / raise an issue know how to do so [see details and flowchart below];
- We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way;
- Parents will realise that we listen and take complaints seriously;
- Where required / or is appropriate, follow up action will occur promptly;
- Complainants will be informed of follow up actions providing there is no privacy issue involved.

All CCS Staff are very happy to have you politely raise any problems, issues or grievances with them. Please do so with the staff member concerned, as soon as possible after the issue has occurred, in order to prevent the issue escalating or causing you or your family distress. We genuinely seek to keep an encouraging, open and approachable work place for the whole of the CCS school community.

"HOW SHOULD I RAISE CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS?"

CARNARVON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL'S COMPLAINTS & DISPUTES PROCEDURE

Step 1a*; CCS follows the Biblical approach in each grievance case and requests that you prayerfully approach the person involved, in the first instance, and to voice your complaint or issue directly to them in order for a resolution to occur quickly. This therefore gives both parties the opportunity to clear up, explain or clarify the issue immediately and in a respectful way. Members of staff will be happy to sit and discuss the issues raised by you in this informal setting.*

Step 1b*; If the issue cannot be resolved in this first instance, with the staff member directly involved, please ask for a second meeting. This will give both parties more time to think and pray about a resolution for the issue. You may also ask the Deputy Principal or Senior teacher to assist in reaching a satisfactory outcome. They will mediate at the second informal meeting along with you and the staff member, to assist in finding a resolution for the issue raised.*

Step 2*; If there is still no resolution then this senior staff member will inform the Principal of CCS who will arrange a time to meet with you informally to attempt further to resolve the issue to your satisfaction.*

Step 3*; If you are still not satisfied with the outcome of this meeting, then you are asked to put your complaint formally into writing and address it to the Principal who will then call a formal meeting of all those involved. The meeting will seek to address and resolve the issue. Please note*

that you are more than welcome to ask a support person to accompany you to the meeting but they are to have no contribution to the meeting other than to offer you support.

Step 4*; If no resolution is forthcoming / or to your satisfaction, then the Principal will offer to refer the matter to the Board Chairperson. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Chairperson yourself. The Chairperson will call for a full report from the Principal and will examine matters thoroughly before responding. This may result in a positive solution, but if it does not, the Chairperson will invite you to a meeting. Again please feel free to ask a supportive a friend to attend also.*

Step 5*; If this meeting does not bring about a resolution, then the matter would be referred to the School's Conciliatory Arbitrator. It is their task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. The Arbitrator will invite you to a meeting. As with the Chairperson's meeting, you will be invited to bring a support friend of your choice with you.*

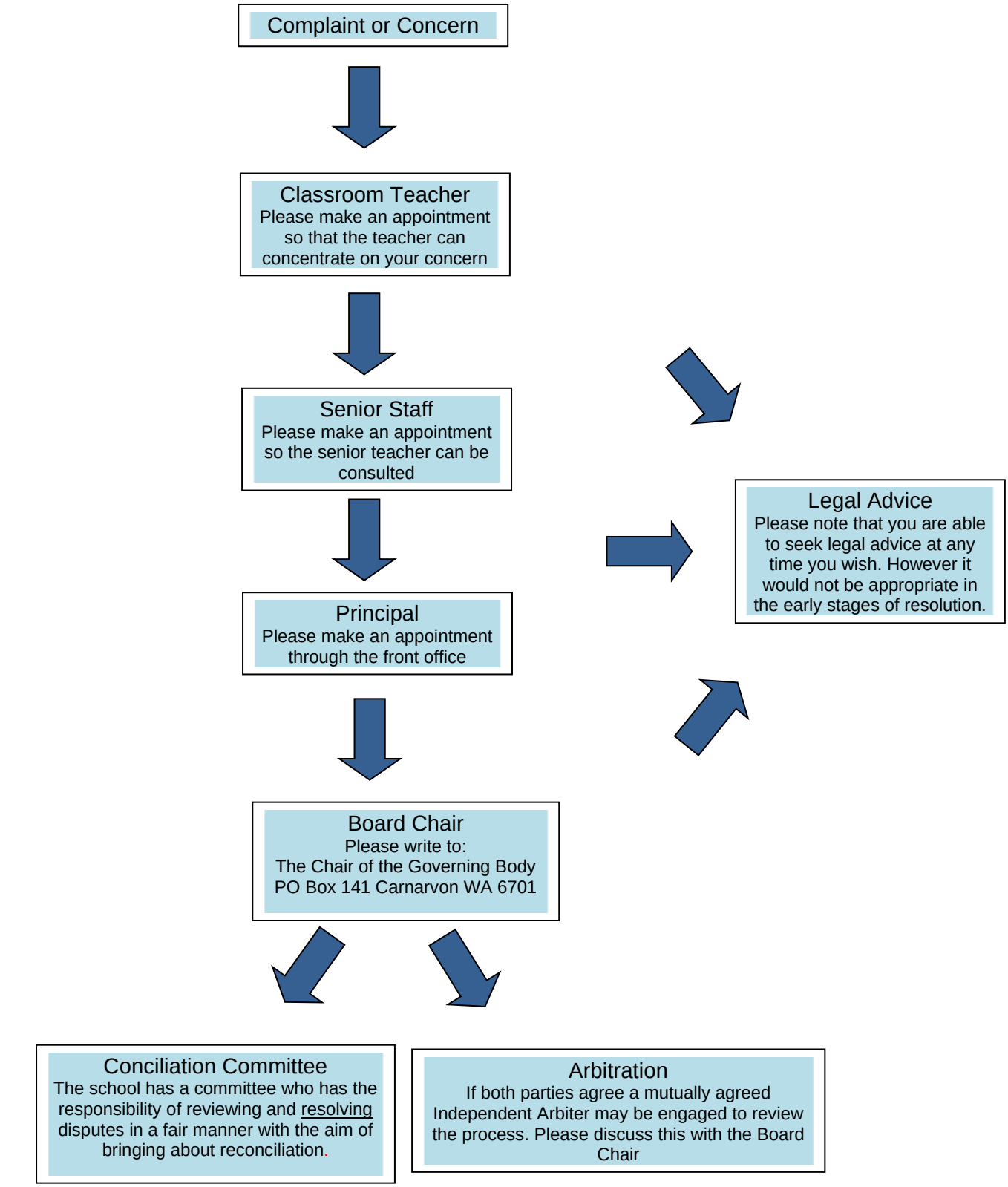
SOME COMMON QUESTIONS PARENTS RAISE FROM TIME TO TIME;

PARENT'S QUESTIONS	CCS'S RESPONSE
"I AM NOT SURE WHETHER TO COMPLAIN OR NOT."	If as parents/guardians, you have concerns, you are more than welcome to raise them. Even if in doubt please contact the School so that we can help resolve the concern. Please refer to the prior 'Complaints & Disputes Procedure Information' or the following flowchart on how to go about this.
"I DON'T WANT TO COMPLAIN, 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. Contact the relevant staff member to discuss the issue.
"WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?"	If you raise your issues face-to-face with the staff member involved, or by telephone, there is a much greater chance the issue can be resolved immediately and to your satisfaction. Please refer to the prior 'Complaints & Disputes Procedure Information' or to the following flowchart.
"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 those directly involved. The Principal and Board Chairperson may also need to be informed if the CCS resolution process does not achieve an outcome to your satisfaction. It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents will 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. However, 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. You would be kept fully informed. While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints will not be pursued. Any action needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints would be handled confidentially within the School.
"WHAT IF I AM NOT SATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME?"	We sincerely 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 however, the following steps would then be formal meetings with the Principal, then Chairperson then as a final step with the school's Arbitrator. At each step the aim is to reach a genuine resolution for all parties involved and in a manner that glorifies God.

At the end of this policy document is a flowchart summarises the information in this leaflet.

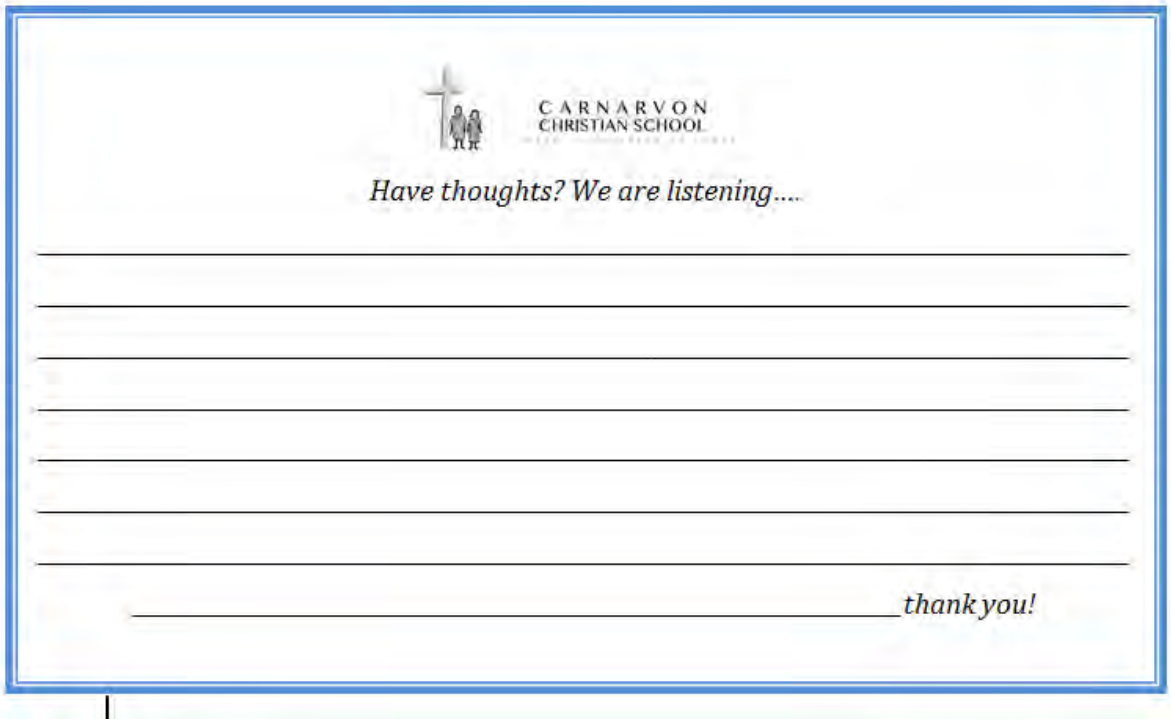
APPENDIX 4: CARNARVON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL'S 'COMPLAINTS & DISPUTES RESOLUTION FLOWCHART'; PARENTS, STUDENTS & GUARDIANS

CARNARVON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL; COMPLAINTS & DISPUTES RESOLUTION PROCEDURE; *CCS REQUIRES ALL PARTIES INVOLVED TO APPROACH AND USE THIS PROCEDURE PRAYERFULLY AS A MEANS TO RESOLVING ISSUES AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. THE ULTIMATE AIM OF THIS PROCEDURE IS FOR BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS TO BE FULLY RESTORED AND FOR GOD'S GLORY TO BE EVIDENT THROUGH THE SAFE AND HARMONIOUS WORK ENVIRONMENT AT CCS.*



APPENDIX 5: CCS COMPLAINTS FORM

APPENDIX 6: VOICE BOX FORM



APPENDIX 7: ARBITRATION

ARBITRATION
Arbitration is a means of privately resolving disputes by use of an independent arbitrator who hears from the parties and makes a binding decision. That decision, known as an "award," has the force of law.
If negotiations have failed after the relevant steps outlined in the Policy have been taken then either disputant (a "party") may commence arbitration.
The parties shall appoint the arbitrator named below.
Mr John Fisher - Adjudicator
Level 28, AMP Tower
140 St George's Terrace
Perth WA 6000
Tel: 1300 760 297
Mob: 0414 402337 / 1300 760 297
Email: jfisher@adjudicate.com.au

Alternatively, if the arbitrator named above is not available, the parties shall refer the arbitration to;

Resolution Institute – Sydney Office
Tel: 02 9251 3366 / 1800 651 650
Email: infoaus@resolution.institute
Web: www.resolution.institute

who shall nominate an arbitrator.

The arbitration shall be conducted in accordance with the *Commercial Arbitration Act 2012 (WA)* and under the *Resolution Institute Arbitration Rules* current at the date of referral to arbitration.

Carnarvon Christian Parent Controlled School Association (Inc)

REVISIONS AND AGENDA

Revision Date	Clauses Affected	Page Number	Operative Date
Rewritten October 2005	Entire document	All	November 2005
Redrafted February 2010	Entire document	All	February 2010
25/9/2013	Entire Policy reviewed, updated and reworded [WJS]	Entire document	October 2013
20/04/2016	Entire policy reviewed and updated	Entire document	April 2016
24/10/2019	Updated Logo on student/parent leaflet Updated child safety regulations & legislation Updated flow chart (Appendix 5) Updated Handling Complaints & disputes resolutions	Pg 4, 5, 6, 9, 14, 15 & 24	October 2019
12/3/2020	Added appendix 6	Appendix 6	12/3/2020
10/6/2020	Added Voice Box Form	Appendix 7	10/6/2020
18/2/2021	John Fisher added multiple updates	All	18/2/2021
25/2/21	Added Matthew 18:15-17 in Preamble	Preamble	25/2/21
30/5/2023	Reviewed no changes		30/5/23
21/05/2024	Amended email. Minor formatting changes.	Cover page	21/05/2024
21/05/2024	Changed logo	Page 18 & 19	21/05/2024
13/02/2025	Updated complaints register according to this policy Updated appendix 1 & 2	Page 13 Page 17 & 18	13/02/2025

13/2/2025	Appendix C – updated the complaint form	Page 24-25	13/02/2025
25/2/2025	Appendix D – updated student complaint form	Page 23	25/02/2025
25/02/2025	Updated Adjudicator contact details	Page 27	25/02/2025