



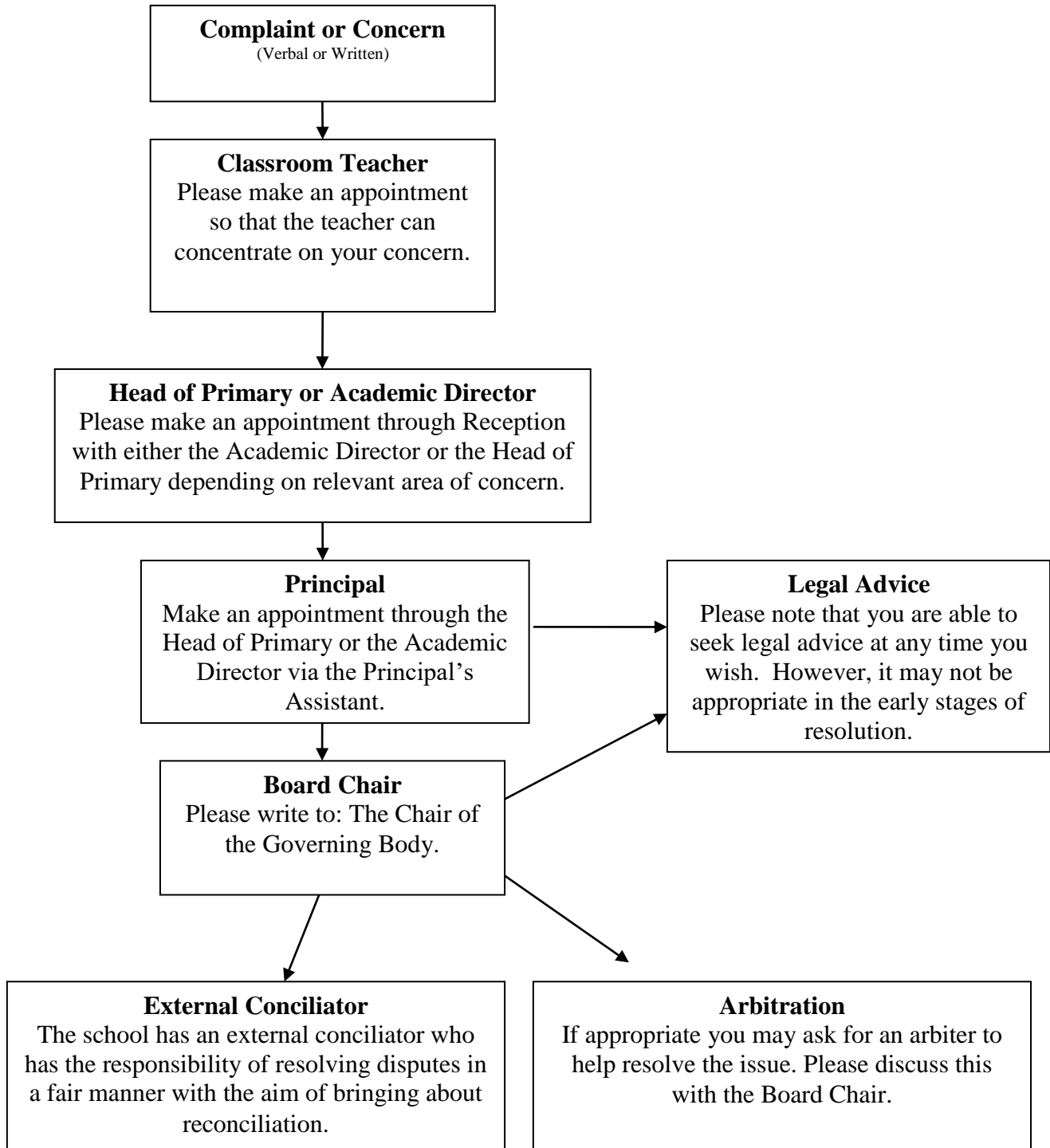
**ST. ANDREW'S GRAMMAR**

# **COMPLAINTS & DISPUTES POLICY**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Modified By</i>	<i>Ratified</i>	<i>Review</i>
April 2013	Principal	2014	2014
February 2014	Principal	2014	2015
January 2016	Principal	2015	Dec 2016
July 2017	Principal	2017	2018
January 2018	Principal	2018	2019
May 2018	Principal	2018	2019

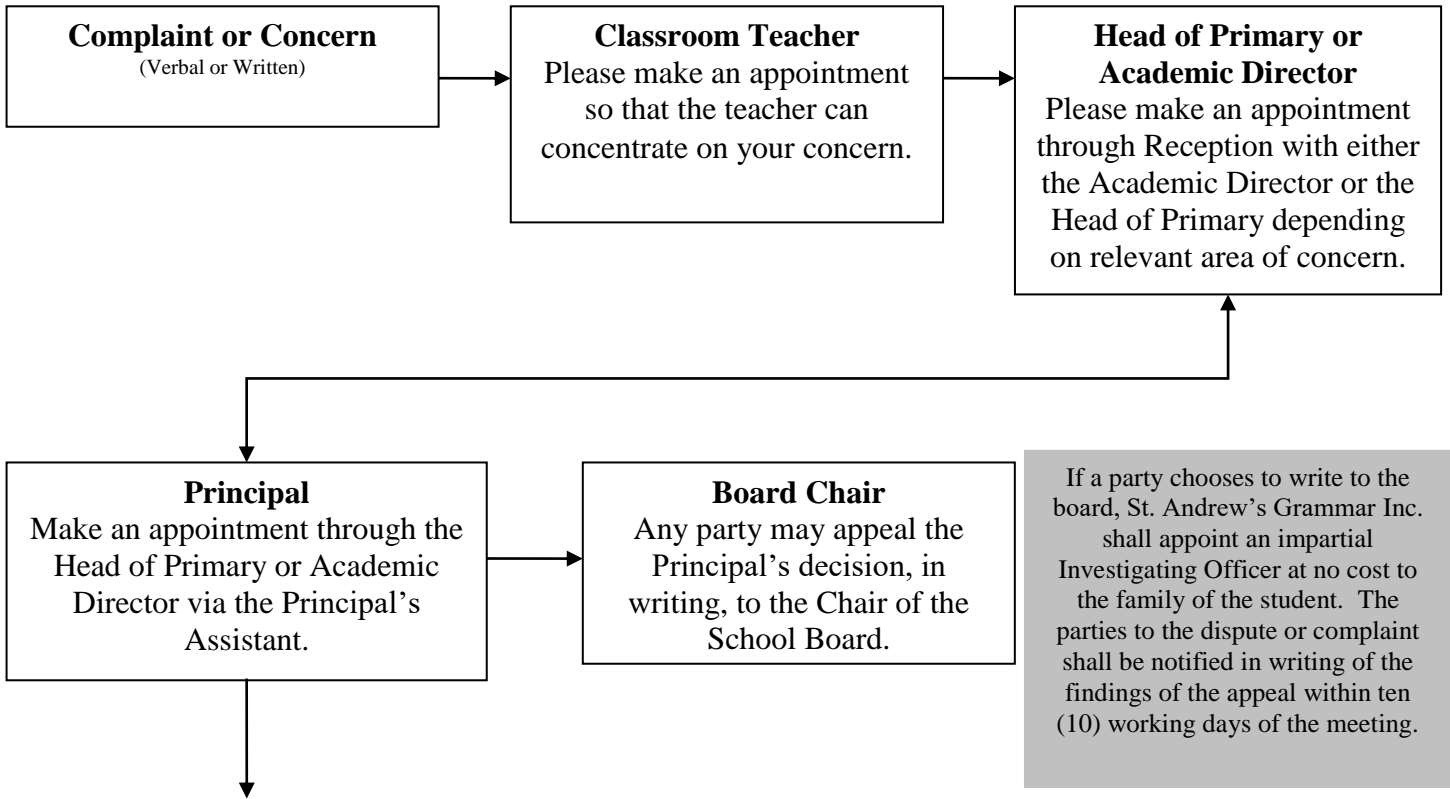


## Parent/Student Complaint Flow Chart





# International Parent/Student Complaint Flow Chart



If a party chooses to write to the board, St. Andrew's Grammar Inc. shall appoint an impartial Investigating Officer at no cost to the family of the student. The parties to the dispute or complaint shall be notified in writing of the findings of the appeal within ten (10) working days of the meeting.

**The Principal or parents of international students may also call on outside mediation, including:**

Department of Education	Phone: 9441 1900
<b>Steve Page</b> Senior Regulation Officer (Schools and International Education) Non-Government Schools Registration Department of Education	Phone: 9441 1962

Families and students are directed to the following URL if they require further information regarding their rights and responsibilities in the event of a grievance issue being raised.  
[http://www.des.wa.gov.au/pages/international\\_registration.php](http://www.des.wa.gov.au/pages/international_registration.php)

If the family remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they may seek independent external mediation, through other external organisations such as:

- The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission  
Phone: 1300 656 419  
complaintsinfo@humanrights.gov.au  
TTY 1800 620 241
- The Commonwealth Overseas Students Ombudsman's Office Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au  
Call: 1300 362 072\* within Australia. Outside Australia call +61 2 6276 0111.  
Web: [www.oso.gov.au](http://www.oso.gov.au)

**Note:** International students who may be involved in a Grievance Procedure against them will remain enrolled at the School until a decision has been reached. They may however, be placed on suspension from classes if required during this time.

# Complaints and Disputes Policy

St. Andrew's Grammar provides a unique Christian Orthodox and Hellenic co-educational experience with a particular focus on academic excellence, Greek language and culture within a safe and caring learning environment from Kindergarten to Year 12.

St. Andrew's Grammar welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes seriously complaints and concerns that may be raised.

## 1. Introduction

St Andrew's Grammar has created an effective complaints procedure with the aim to defuse problems and provide our school with helpful information. We treat complaints as constructive suggestions and we will use them to improve standards and hope these will prevent cause for further complaint. Even an unsubstantiated complaint may indicate an area that can be improved.

We seek to be a caring Christian community, where people are in harmony with each other. Therefore, this policy is designed to assist parents, students and others to resolve conflict in an appropriate and satisfactory way.

## 2. Principles

This policy is based on a number of fundamental principles.

1. Procedural fairness must be exercised in resolving any dispute or complaint. This requires that all parties receive a fair hearing and that the final decision is made without bias.
2. The resolution to a dispute or complaint must exhaust all reasonable attempts at conciliation prior to an imposed arbitrated decision.
3. Individual cases must be examined on their own merits.
4. Resolutions must appropriately balance the principles of fairness and compassion.
5. Appropriate confidentiality must be respected by all parties.
6. The Principal of the School has the responsibility to attempt to resolve a dispute or complaint with the parties directly involved at a local level. However, the first point of contact in most cases of complaints against the School should be the relevant teacher, or where this is not appropriate the Head of Primary or the Academic Director. Complaints not resolved at this level can be escalated to be dealt with by the Principal.
7. Parties may appeal to the Chair of the School Board the decision made by the Principal.
8. Anonymous or unsubstantiated complaints will not necessarily be investigated.

## 3. The Nature of Complaints

This policy deals mainly with procedures for parents and pupils. These guidelines do not cover complaints from members of staff about aspects of their work.

## 4. Parental and Student Complaints

St. Andrew's Grammar has implemented a process where parents and students may contact the teacher, then the Head of Primary/Academic Director should problems arise to ensure that parents and students

feel that the school is open to their concerns. We aim to ensure that parents feel valued and involved within St Andrew's Grammar and they are encouraged to voice their concerns.

### **What constitutes a complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem.

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

- *done something wrong;*
- *failed to do something it should have done; or*
- *acted unfairly or impolitely.*

A complaint may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific section/department or sub-school or about an individual member of staff.

St Andrew's Grammar ensures all complaints are handled seriously.

### **Lines of Approach**

If approached about a matter that lies outside a staff member's responsibility, staff should refer the person to the flow chart and advise them of the next step.

Parents and students with complaints will be directed to a nominated senior member of staff.

Some parents will wish to go straight to the Principal with their concerns, however St Andrew's Grammar requests that the process be respected and that the teacher, Head of Primary or Academic Director be advised of the concern and they will take this matter to the Principal if the matter is unresolved. Staff will explain to the parent or the student that the Principal might not be able to respond until he has consulted the staff that can help.

St. Andrew's Grammar requires that written responses are discussed with the Principal or senior staff before they are sent to the parent or student.

### **Complaint Handling**

St Andrew's Grammar will;

- *acknowledge complaints immediately or at most within five working days in writing.*
- *inform parents what is happening with their concern or complaint and, if a more detailed response is needed, we will provide a time frame when it will be received to ensure the issue is dealt with as quickly as possible.*
- *confirm the nature of the complaint and what is concerning about the complainant.*
- *assure parents and students that their views matter.*

### **Document Complaint**

St Andrew's Grammar will keep an effective log of complaints in an electronic Complaints Register. All written correspondence will be saved electronically. Records concerning students will be kept for 7 years after the student reaches 18 years of age.

These complaints are kept for the following reasons:

- *it may become the cause of legal action in the future;*
- *patterns in the record may indicate a need for action;*
- *the Principal is able to check the log and report on it regularly to the School Board.*

The Complaints Register contains the following information: (**Refer to Appendix B**)

- *date when the issue was raised;*
- *name of parent;*
- *name of pupil;*
- *brief statement of issue;*
- *location of detailed file;*
- *member of staff handling the issue; and*
- *brief statement of outcome.*

### **Confidentiality**

St Andrew's Grammar understands that confidentiality is an important issue for students, parents and staff. It is essential that any complaint is treated in a confidential manner and with respect.

We will assure parents and students that it is the school's policy that complaints made should not rebound adversely on their children and similarly that complaints raised by students should not rebound on them or on other students.

**If there is a situation involving the Police, the Principal (or next most senior staff member if the Principal is unavailable) must take responsibility for action in the school and the Board Chair will be informed as soon as possible.**

### **Anonymous Complaints**

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

If a complaint is to be addressed in a formal manner, parents and pupils are **required** to give their names and will be given reassurance on the issue of confidentiality. However, the person identified within the complaint will be given the full text of the complaint as part of a fair and transparent process.

If the complainants persist in wishing to remain anonymous, it is at the Principal's discretion as to what action, if any, should be taken, depending on the nature of the complaint. It will not, however, be dealt with as a formal complaint.

### **Resolution**

To ensure satisfaction for a complainant, St Andrew's Grammar may respond by any of the following:

- *advising that changes have been made and how matters will be different in future*
- *advising that the school is now alert to a possible problem*
- *ensure that the parent/student feels that their concern has been considered seriously*

- *if there is an outcome which may be different from the one they sought, ensure that the parent/student perceive to be well-considered*
- *write a considered letter or apology.*

### **Intractable Complaints**

Should a complaint become intractable, due to its nature or to the way in which it was handled, or possibly because the parent perceives the school to have ‘closed ranks’ against him or her, St Andrew’s Grammar will take this complaint to the School Governing Body Chair, or an arbiter.

### **Referral to the Chair of the School Board**

If the complaint is taken to the Principal and he is unable to satisfy the Parent, the Principal will refer the matter to the Chair of the School Board. The Parent will be informed that this stage has been reached. If the complainant is unhappy with the Principal’s response, the Parent can write directly to the Chair.

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

The Chair will respond to the parent, 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 will be clear and detailed, and should offer a meeting if the parent remains troubled.

### **Meeting with the Chair of the School Board**

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

- *the Chair of the School Board*
- *the Principal and, at the most, one other member of staff*
- *the parents*

Parents are 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 parents and the Principal, may be able to find a solution. If this is not possible, and the parents wish to take the matter further, the Chair could consider seeking the advice of an independent arbitrator.

### **Referral to an External Conciliator**

St Andrew’s Grammar have an external conciliator if the complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved.

The Chair of the School Governing Body, in consultation with the Principal, decides when to refer a complaint to the external conciliator, and invites the Convenor to call a meeting.

### **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 parents, who are invited to bring a supportive friend, as for the meeting with the Chair of the School Governing Body.*

## **Meeting Procedure**

Sufficient time will be allocated to the meeting. The parents and the Principal will 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.

The Convenor emphasises that he or she is concerned to reach a positive conclusion and invites first the parents, 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 parents 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 the meeting disperses. 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 parents that this is being done. The Chair would expect to endorse the Committee's decision.

## **Referral to an Arbitrator**

As a final step in the disputes and complaints procedure, if appropriate, St Andrew's Grammar may use an independent arbitrator to resolve an issue. The arbitrator would need to be:

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

## **Further Action**

At all stages of a complaints resolution procedure 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.

## **International Students**

Any party may appeal the Principal's decision, in writing, to the Chair of the School Board. Any party may appeal the School Board's decision, in writing, to the Chair of St. Andrew's Grammar Inc.

If a party chooses to write to the Board, St. Andrew's Grammar Inc shall appoint an impartial Investigating Officer at no cost to the family of the student. The parties to the dispute or complaint shall be notified in writing of the findings of the appeal within ten (10) working days of the meeting.



The Principal or parents of international students may also call on outside mediation, including:

Department of Education Services OR <b>Steve Page</b> Senior Regulation Officer (Schools and International Education) Non-Government Schools Registration Department of Education	Fax: 9441 1901  Phone: 9441 1962
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Families and students are directed to the following website if they require further information regarding their rights and responsibilities in the event of a grievance issue being raised.

[http://www.des.wa.gov.au/pages/international\\_registration.php](http://www.des.wa.gov.au/pages/international_registration.php)

If the family remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they may seek independent external mediation, through other external organisations such as:

- The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission  
Phone: 1300 656 419 (local call)  
Email: [complaintsinfo@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:complaintsinfo@humanrights.gov.au)  
TTY 1800 620 241 (toll free)
- The Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office  
Phone: 9613 6222 (international callers 0011 + 61 +3 + phone number)  
TTY via the National Relay Service ([www.relayservice.com.au](http://www.relayservice.com.au) )  
Email: [ombudwa@ombudsman.wa.gov.au](mailto:ombudwa@ombudsman.wa.gov.au)

Note- International students who may be involved in a grievance procedure against them will remain enrolled at the School until a decision has been reached. They may however, be placed on suspension from classes if required during this time.



## *Complaints and Disputes Policy*

### *Information for Parents and Students*

*St. Andrew's Grammar provides a unique Orthodox Christian and Hellenic co-educational experience with a particular focus on academic excellence, Greek language and culture within a safe and caring learning environment from Kindergarten to Year Twelve.*

### *Complaints and Disputes Policy*

St Andrew's Grammar welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and students and takes seriously complaints and concerns that may be raised. This leaflet will show you how to use our complaints system.

**A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction that needs a response.**

We wish to ensure that:

- Parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so
- We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way
- Parents realize that we listen and take complaints seriously
- We take action where appropriate

#### **“How should I complain?”**

When you contact the school, ask to speak to your child's teacher then either the ~~the~~ Head of Primary, Mr Wayne Cronin or the Academic Director Ms Nicky Chamberlain. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you.

Members of staff will be happy to help.

It may be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue. For example, the classroom teacher, or sports concerns with the Director of Sport. 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 Head of Primary, the Academic Director or the Principal.

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

The school is here for you and your child. We want to hear your views and your ideas. Contact a member of staff, as described in our Complaints & Disputes Policy.

#### **“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, 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 five (5) 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.

Parents need to 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 possible staff discipline.

### **“What about confidentiality?”**

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal and those directly involved. The Chair of the School Board may also need to be informed. It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents 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 becomes necessary to refer matters to the Police. You would be 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.

### **“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 Principal will offer to refer the matter to the Chair of the School Board. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Chair. The Chair will call for a full report from the Principal and will examine matters thoroughly before responding. This may result in a satisfactory solution, but if it does not, the Chair will invite you to a meeting. 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 would be referred to an Independent Arbiter.

It is the Arbiter's task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. The Arbiter will invite you to a meeting. You will be asked if there are any papers you would like to have circulated beforehand. As with the Chair's meeting, you will be invited to bring a friend 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.*

### **International Students**

Any party may appeal the School Board's decision, in writing, to the Chair of SAG Inc.

If a party chooses to write to the Board, St. Andrew's Grammar Inc shall appoint an impartial Investigating Officer at no cost to the family of the student.

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TTY 1800 620 241

The Commonwealth Overseas Students Ombudsman's Office Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)

Call: 1300 362 072\* within Australia. Outside Australia call +61 2 6276 0111.

Web: [www.oso.gov.au](http://www.oso.gov.au)

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## ***STUDENTS***

### **Any Problems, Complaints, or Suggestions?**

- **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, as part of a group, or through your parents.

- **To Whom?**

To anyone on staff.

- **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.

- **What will happen next?**

If possible, the staff member will deal with it 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 worried about confidentiality, tell the staff - they will understand.

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



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