

# NORTH WEST CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

## Grievance/Complaints Policy





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# *Grievance/Complaints Policy*

## **Purpose:**

School personnel have an obligation to proactively promote a workplace free of bullying and intimidation between themselves, parents and staff and between students and staff. This policy aims to support a work and study environment where staff, students and parents feel confident to raise concerns in the knowledge that they will be addressed appropriately and respectfully in a fair and Christian manner.

While North West Christian School believes that most grievances can be dealt with informally, we also acknowledge that:

- it is acceptable to lodge a formal grievance.
- a person lodging a genuine grievance should know that they will not be penalised or disadvantaged in so doing.
- a person can be confident that the grievance will be given due consideration and can expect to receive a response from the school.

## **Understandings:**

We **define** grievance as ... *resentment about the conduct of an individual that is seen as producing a significant injustice, wrong or an offence to another person.*

When managing grievances, we are guided by the following principles:

- procedural fairness and respect for all parties,
- consistency,
- resolution at the local level where possible,
- responsiveness and transparency,
- timely and effective management,
- awareness of equity principles.

We acknowledge that regardless how important or unimportant the issue may appear to be, for the persons involved it is a source of unhappiness and must be treated seriously and respectfully. Our response is a measure of how we live up to the Christian values and principles of Adventist education.

Prompt, respectful and fair manner in handling complaints has a two-fold benefit for our school. Firstly, it makes us aware of areas where we need to improve our practice. It also assists us in building positive relationships with all members of our school community.

Mediation is an option at any stage if the complainant and the person to whom the complaint is directed so agree.

Normally a mediation is facilitated by the Senior School Consultant.

If matters still remain unresolved you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation and other government commissions such as the Human Rights Commission etc. These might entail some financial costs to you.



## Key Principles for Grievance Management

1. Act promptly to investigate a complaint.
2. Listen carefully; gain all relevant information thus allowing complainants to tell their story fully.
3. Keep an open mind and discuss issues in a calm and reasonable way without prejudice.
4. Make sure a copy of this Policy and Grievance Procedures is shown and discussed with the complainant and procedural steps are outlined.
5. Be clear who is best suited to address the complaint - class teacher, Principal or School Council. Familiarise yourself with the policy.
6. Outline clearly to the complainant the follow-up actions that will be taken.
7. Keep complaints confidential – they should never be the subject of casual conversation or gossip.
8. Anonymous complaints will **not** be acted upon.
9. Keep a record of the grievance, subsequent actions and resolution in a School Complaints Log. The Log will include meeting notes, interviews, calls and other written documents such as letters and emails. They should be signed and dated.  
This is important for the following reasons -
  - Complaints can be tracked and seen in “a big picture context”.
  - They can lead to improvements in operations and processes.
  - Accurate information is available if further investigation occurs.

### ***Exceptions to recording in the Complaints Log:***

In a mediation process, information is strictly confidential and will **not be recorded** in the Log unless there is specific permission from all parties involved. This confidentiality guarantee however **does not apply** in the following cases.

- i) **Threats of physical violence, or where**
- ii) **Child abuse is suspected or reported.**

Mediation is an option at any stage if the complainant and the person to whom the complaint is directed so agree. Normally the mediation is facilitated by the Senior School Consultant.

If matters still remain unresolved you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation and other government commissions such as the Human Rights Commission etc. These might entail some financial costs to you.





## Information for Families

At North West Christian School, we believe that the relationship between the home and school is a very important part of effective learning. We recognize that parents and teachers need to work closely together to provide the best opportunities for students. Discussions of children's progress and any special concerns are encouraged.

Be assured that complaints in writing and subsequent actions will be fully documented. No one will be victimised as a result of making a formal grievance. You have the right to be represented by a support person in the formal process.

### Steps to take if you have a problem:

1. Identify the problem clearly before contacting the school. If there is more than one, list them to ensure you and the school clearly understand the issue.
2. Decide whether the problem is a **concern, enquiry or a complaint**. This helps in finding a solution. Even though complaints are confidential, if it is against a particular person, they will be informed and have a right to respond. Your complaint may be either verbal or in writing.
3. Make an appointment to meet with the class teacher. The best way to arrange a convenient time is with the school office or with the teacher directly.
4. Try to stay calm when discussing the concern. Even if you feel upset, being calm will help you get your concerns across more clearly than if you are emotional and angry. It may help to take a support person with you. Remember staff members are committed to resolving any issues that parents have and will discuss actions that might be taken in regard to your concern.
5. If you are not satisfied with the teacher-meeting, make arrangements to meet with the Principal at a mutually convenient time.
6. If you still feel the matter is of a very serious nature and has not been resolved, send your complaint in writing to *The Chairman of the School Council*. **(See address Page 182)**
7. If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you may send your complaint in writing to *The Chairperson, Board of Directors, Seventh-day Adventist Schools (Tasmania) Ltd.* **(See address Page 182)**
8. If matters still remain unresolved, you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation or other government commissions such as the Human Rights Commission. These might entail financial cost to you.
9. **If your complaint is regarding the Principal, see information Page 179 & Flow Chart 180.**

### See Flow Chart for Information for Families Page 172

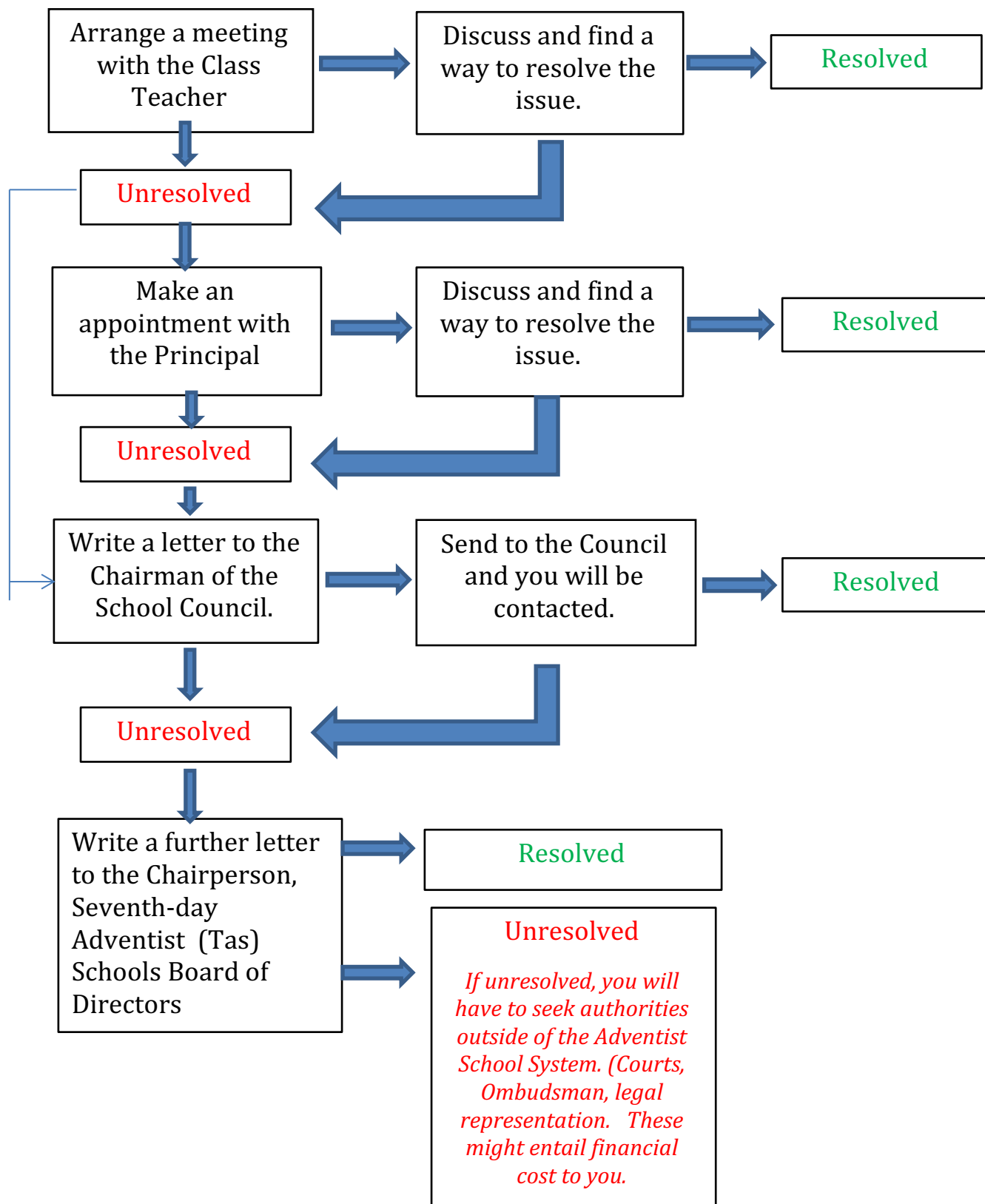
Mediation is an option at any stage if the complainant and the person to whom the complaint is directed so agree. Normally the mediation is facilitated by the Senior School Consultant.

If matters still remain unresolved you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation and other government commissions such as the Human Rights Commission etc. These might entail some financial costs to you.



# Flow Chart for FAMILIES Complaints Process

\* All procedures allow for mediation at any stage of the process. Mediation is a jointly agreed process including choice of mediator who both parties are happy with.





## Information for Staff

At North West Christian School, we believe that the relationship between colleagues is very important in ensuring that students are happy, secure and open to learning. We want positive, collegial relationships that will make the workplace a good place to be. To assist in this, we have outlined the following steps if you have any serious concerns or complaints regarding any other member of the school staff or larger community. We strongly encourage you to work together to resolve these as promptly and effectively as you can.

### Steps to take if you have a Serious Grievance

1. Try to identify the problem clearly before taking any action. Make sure it is clear so that the extent of the problem can be readily understood. Decide whether the problem is a concern, enquiry or a complaint. This will help you know what outcome you are seeking.
2. In the interests of resolving matters quickly and effectively, you are encouraged to informally discuss your concern/complaint directly with the person concerned.
3. If informal strategies do not resolve the issue, make your complaint formally and in writing to the Principal. Where the Principal advises, mediation can be arranged between the parties concerned with mutual agreement. This may include the *School Chaplain*.
4. If you still feel the matter is unresolved, you should outline the problem and subsequent actions in writing for the consideration of the *School Council*. (see address Page 182)
5. If you still feel you have no satisfaction, the *Chairperson, Seventh-day Adventist Schools (Tasmania) Ltd Board of Directors*, can be contacted by letter. (See address Page 182)
6. You have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation or other government commissions such as Workplace Safety, Anti-Discrimination and Human
7. Rights Commission. These might entail a financial cost to you.
8. **If your complaint is regarding the Principal, see information Page 179 & Flow Chart 180.**

### See Flow Chart for Information for Staff Page 174

#### Guiding Principles

- A Complaint made against a person means that this person will be informed of the complaint and will have the right to respond.
- Discussions concerning complaints are confidential. All complaints and subsequent actions will be fully documented in the Complaints Log Book.
- No one will be victimised as a result of taking out a formal grievance.
- At a formal stage, the complainant has the right to be represented and supported by a friend or colleague. A process of mediation is always available to assist in resolution. This will usually involve the School Chaplain.

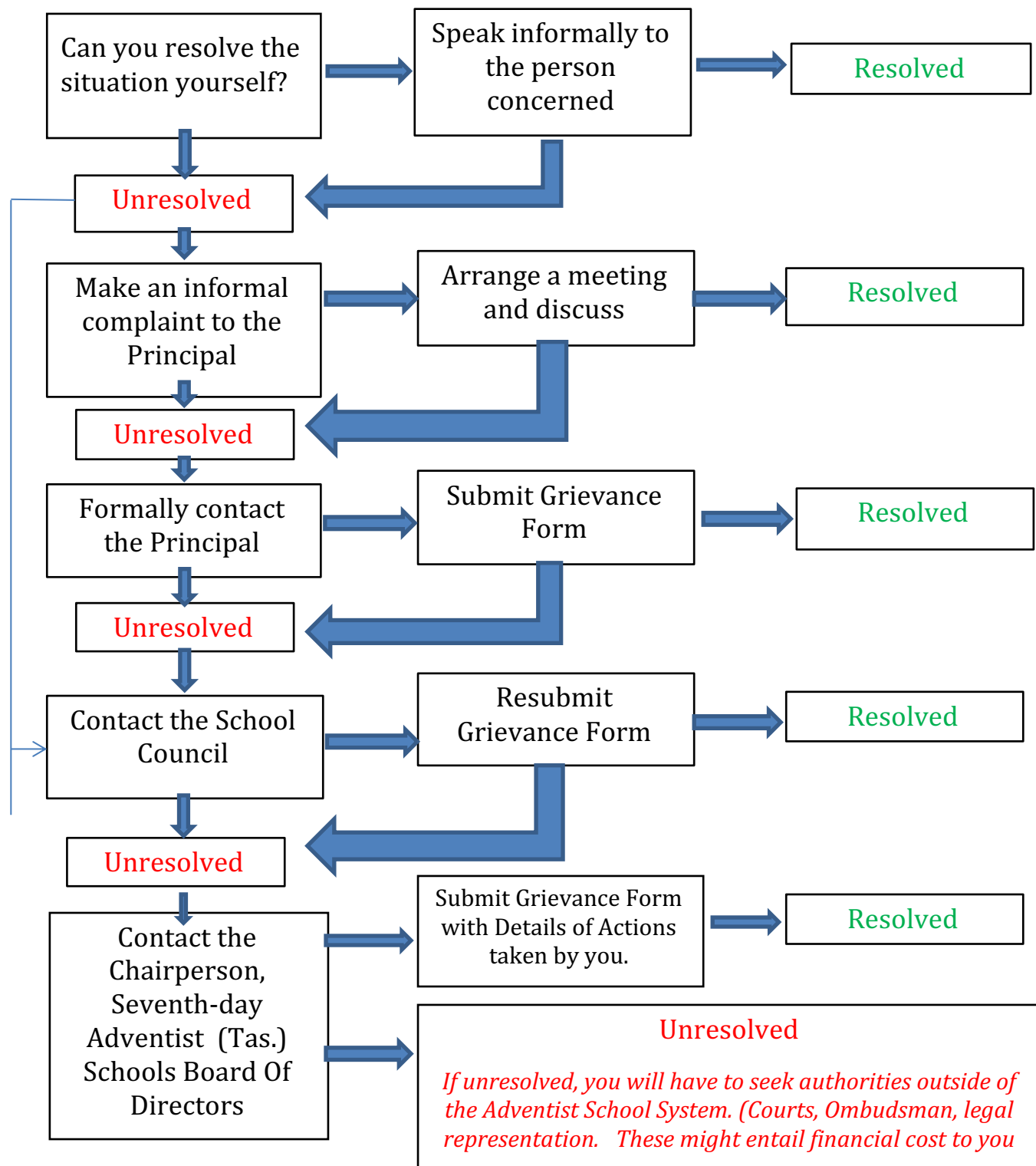
Mediation is an option at any stage if the complainant and the person to whom the complaint is directed so agree. Normally the mediation is facilitated by the Senior School Consultant.

If matters still remain unresolved you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation and other government commissions such as the Human Rights Commission etc. These might entail some financial costs to you.



# Flow Chart for STAFF Complaints Process

\* All procedures allow for mediation at any stage of the process. Mediation is a jointly agreed process including choice of mediator who both parties are happy with.



Mediation is an option at any stage if the complainant and the person to whom the complaint is directed so agree. Normally the mediation is facilitated by the Senior School Consultant.

If matters still remain unresolved you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation and other government commissions such as the Human Rights Commission etc. These might entail some financial costs to you.



## Information for Students

At North West Christian School, it is important that everyone feels happy and safe so that best learning can take place. We believe that staff, students and parents need to work closely together for effective education. If you have a serious problem, concern or complaint, we want you to speak to someone about it and we have provided the following steps to help you to do this.

### Steps to take if you have a problem

1. Try to identify the problem that is upsetting you in clear words. If there is more than one, make a list so that you are clear about what you feel or need. If you can, discuss it with your parents.
2. If possible, talk to the person that is causing the problem and ask them to stop any upsetting behaviour.
3. If you are not comfortable to do this, talk to a teacher about your problem and ask them to help you deal with it. Often your teacher will be able to give you some good strategies for dealing with the problem. Be sure you can explain:
  - a. The behaviour that you believe was unfair or unjust,
  - b. Who was involved,
  - c. What happened,
  - d. What you did about it.
4. Try to stay calm when discussing your problem. Even if you feel angry or upset, you will express yourself better when you are calm. Sometimes it will help to take someone with you that you trust like a good friend or a school captain.
5. Work with the teacher to decide what should be done to resolve the problem.
6. If you still do not feel that the matter has been solved, make an appointment to talk to the *School Chaplain*.
7. If this problem is still not resolved, make a time to talk to *the Principal*.
8. **If your complaint is regarding the Principal, see Page 179 & flow chart 180.**

### See Flow Chart for Information for Students on Page 176

#### REMEMBER

The person or teacher you talk to may have to share this with someone else so that the problem can be solved. Let them know that you are OK with this. You can always bring a friend, parent or another teacher to support you when you discuss the problem.

No one can pick on you or hurt you because you made a complaint. It is your right and usually the best way to deal with serious problems.

If you can, it may be better to write out your complaint in a letter. It will help you to be clear and be understood better.

Mediation is an option at any stage if the complainant and the person to whom the complaint is directed so agree. Normally the mediation is facilitated by the Senior School Consultant.

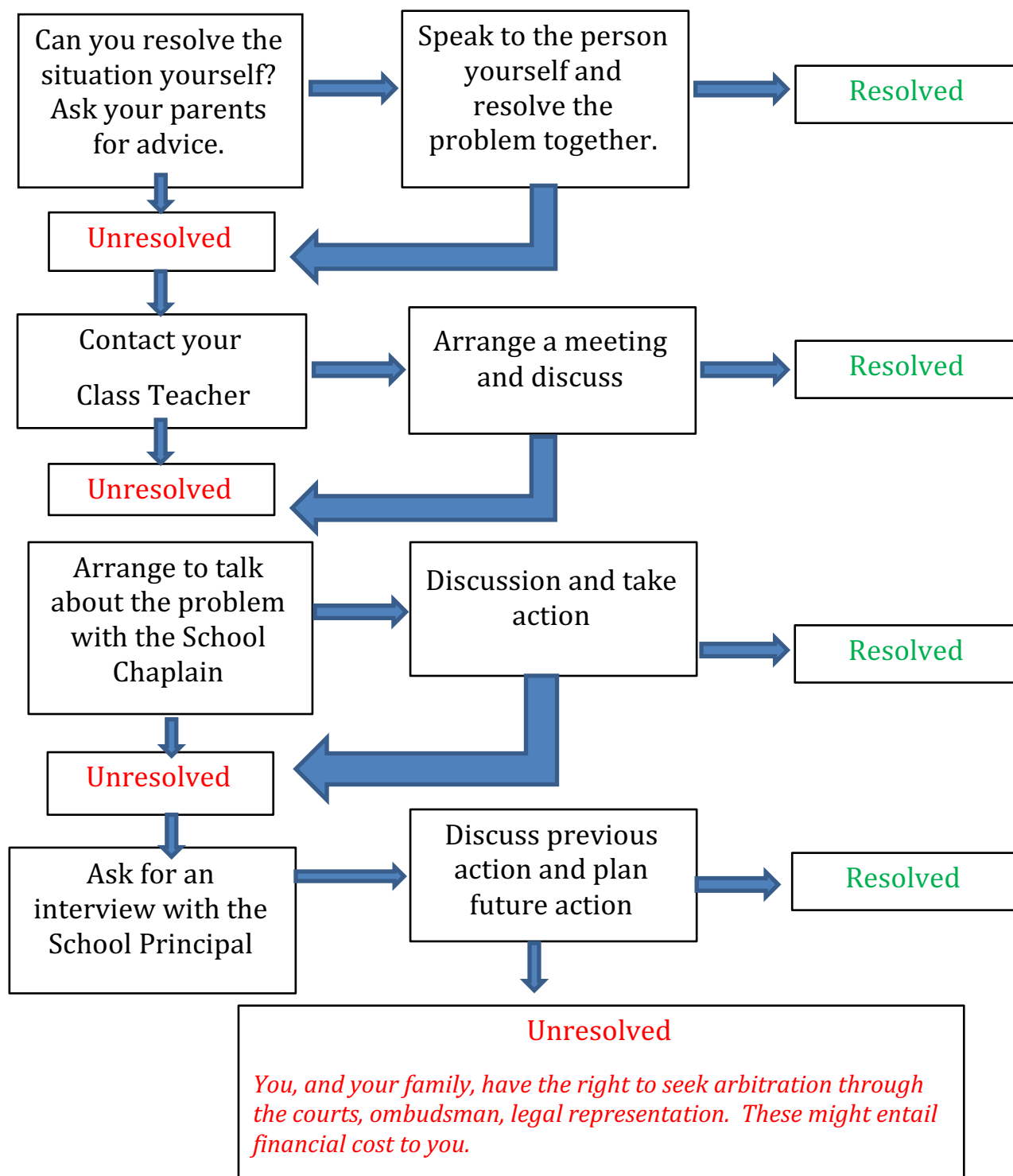
If matters still remain unresolved you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation and other government commissions such as the Human Rights Commission etc. These might entail some financial costs to you.





# Flow Chart for STUDENTS Complaints Process

\* All procedures allow for mediation at any stage of the process. Mediation is a jointly agreed process including choice of mediator who both parties are happy with.



Mediation is an option at any stage if the complainant and the person to whom the complaint is directed so agree. Normally the mediation is facilitated by the Senior School Consultant.

If matters still remain unresolved you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation and other government commissions such as the Human Rights Commission etc. These might entail some financial costs to you.



## Information for the Community

At North West Christian School, we believe that the relationship between the community and the School is a very important part of community living.

Be assured that complaints in writing and subsequent actions will be fully documented. No one will be victimised as a result of making a formal grievance. You have the right to be represented by a support person in the formal process.

### Steps to take if you have a problem:

1. Identify the problem clearly before contacting the school. If there is more than one, list them to ensure you and the school clearly understand the issue.
2. Decide whether the problem is a **concern, enquiry or a complaint**. This helps in finding a solution. Even though complaints are confidential, if it is against a particular person, they will be informed and have a right to respond. Your complaint may be either verbal or in writing.
3. Make an appointment to meet with the Principal. The best way to arrange a convenient time is with the school office or with the Principal directly.
4. Try to stay calm when discussing the concern. Even if you feel upset, being calm will help you get your concerns across more clearly than if you are emotional and angry. It may help to take a support person with you. Remember staff members are committed to resolving any issues that community have and will discuss actions that might be taken in regard to your concern.
5. If you are not satisfied with the Principal meeting and you feel the matter is of a very serious nature and has not been resolved, send your complaint in writing to *The Chairman of the School Council*. **(See address Page 182)**
6. If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you may send your complaint in writing to *The Chairperson, Board of Directors, Seventh-day Adventist Schools (Tasmania) Ltd.* **(See address Page 182)**
7. If matters still remain unresolved, you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation or other government commissions such as the Human Rights Commission. These might entail financial cost to you.
9. **Complaint involving the Principal: See Page 179 and Flow Chart 180.**

### See Flow Chart Page 178 to help clarify the Community process.

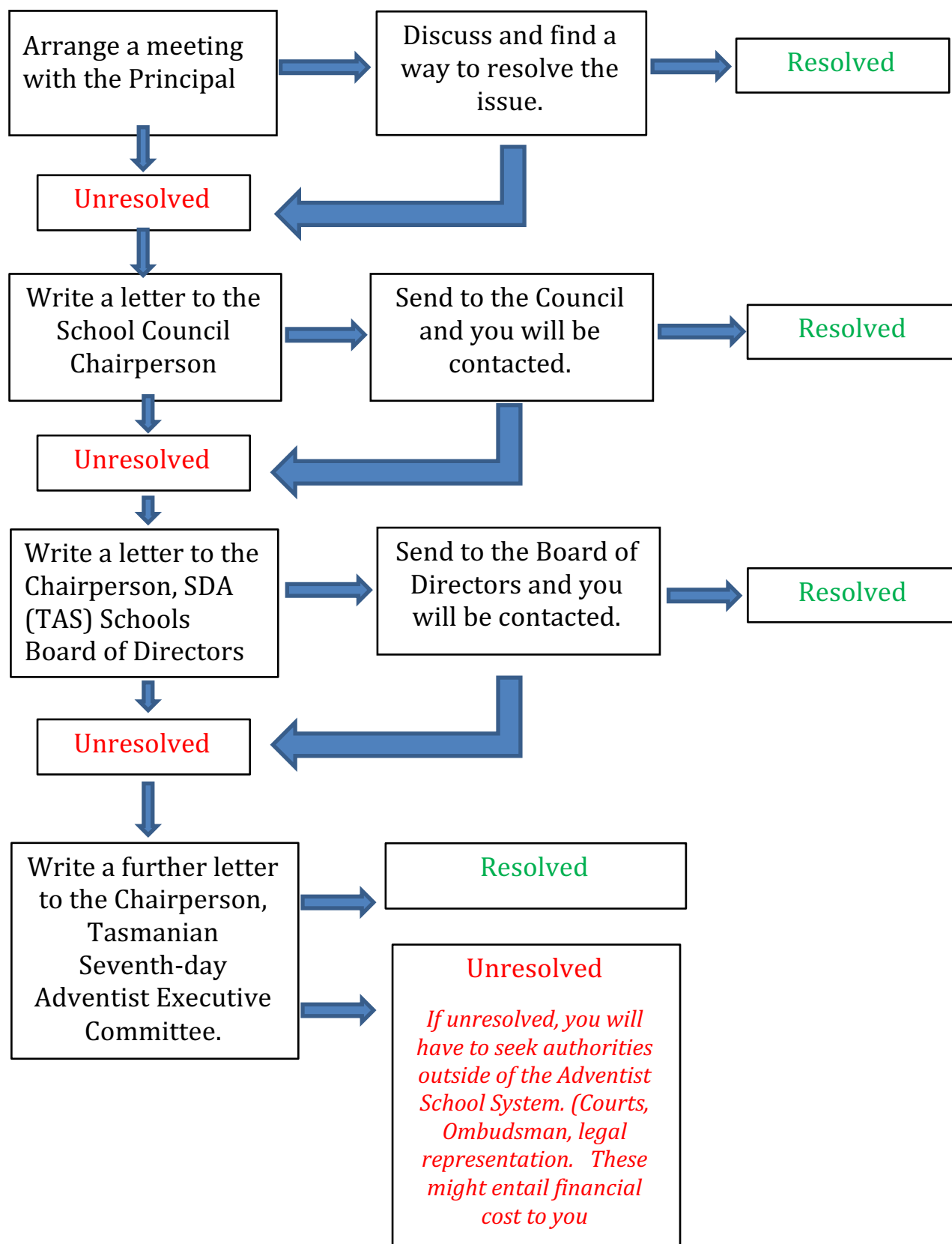
Mediation is an option at any stage if the complainant and the person to whom the complaint is directed so agree. Normally the mediation is facilitated by the Senior School Consultant.

If matters still remain unresolved you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation and other government commissions such as the Human Rights Commission etc. These might entail some financial costs to you.



## Flow Chart for COMMUNITY Complaints Process

\* All procedures allow for mediation at any stage of the process. Mediation is a jointly agreed process including choice of mediator who both parties are happy with.





## Information for Process for Complaints involving the Principal

At North West Christian School, we believe that the relationship between the home, community and school is a very important part of effective learning and community living.

Be assured that complaints in writing and subsequent actions will be fully documented. No one will be victimised as a result of making a formal grievance. You have the right to be represented by a support person in the formal process.

### Steps to take if you have a problem:

1. Identify the problem clearly before contacting the school. If there is more than one, list them to ensure you and the school clearly understand the issue.
2. Decide whether the problem is a **concern, enquiry or a complaint**. This helps in finding a solution. Even though complaints are confidential, if it is against a particular person, they will be informed and have a right to respond. Your complaint may be either verbal or in writing.
3. Make an appointment to meet with the Principal. The best way to arrange a convenient time is with the school office or with the Principal directly.
4. Try to stay calm when discussing the concern. Even if you feel upset, being calm will help you get your concerns across more clearly than if you are emotional and angry. It may help to take a support person with you. Remember staff members are committed to resolving any issues that parents have and will discuss actions that might be taken in regard to your concern.
5. If you are not satisfied with the Principal meeting and that your matter is of a very serious nature and has not been resolved, send your complaint in writing to *The Chairman of the School Council*. (**See address Page 182**)
6. If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you may send your complaint in writing to *The Chairperson, Board of Directors, Seventh-day Adventist Schools (Tasmania) Ltd.* (**See address Page 182**)
7. If matters still remain unresolved, you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation or other government commissions such as the Human Rights Commission. These might entail financial cost to you.

### See Flow Chart Page 180 to help clarify this process.

Mediation is an option at any stage if the complainant and the person to whom the complaint is directed so agree.

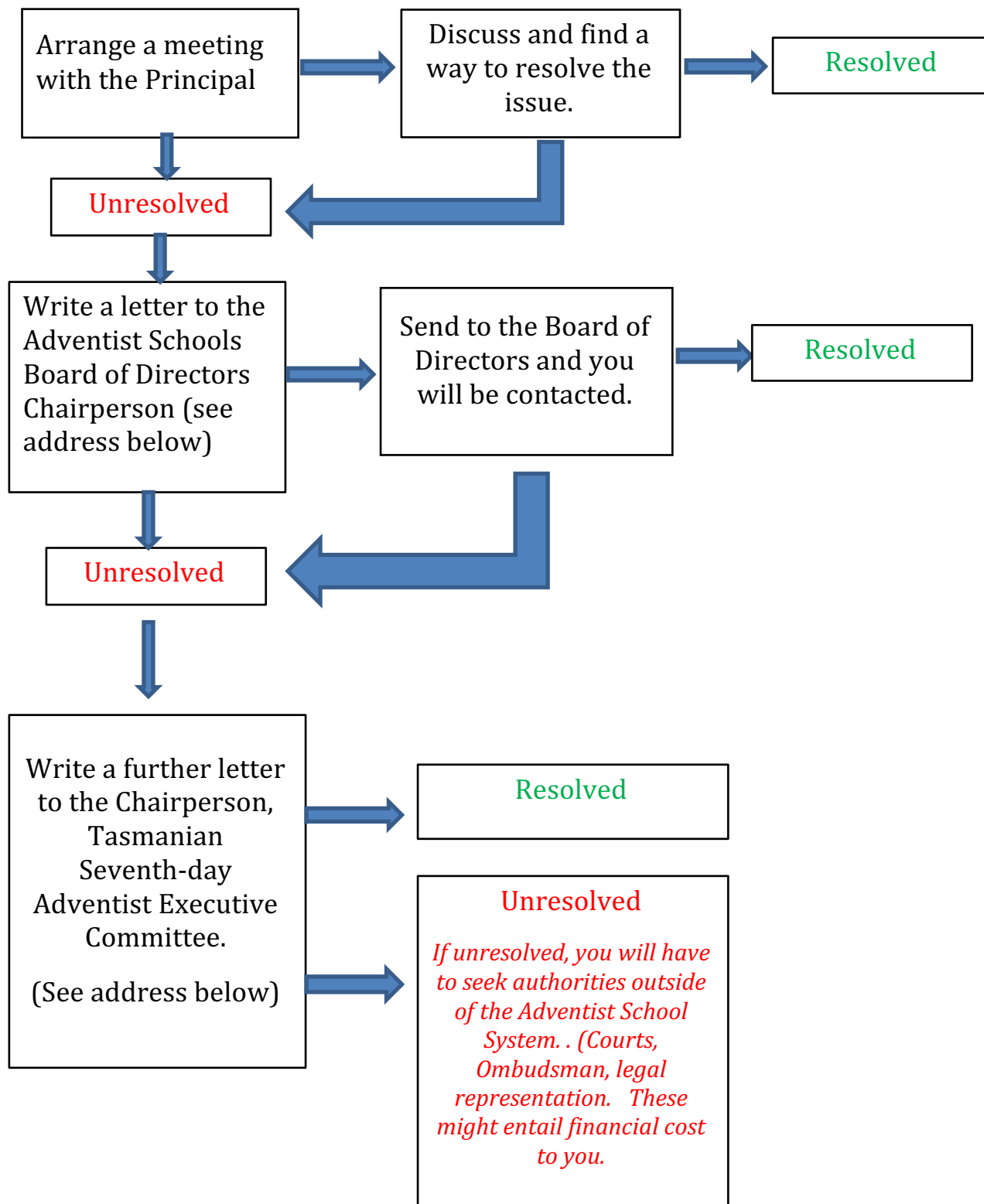
Normally the mediation is facilitated by the Senior School Consultant.

If matters still remain unresolved you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation and other government commissions such as the Human Rights Commission etc. These might entail some financial costs to you.



## Process for Complaints involving the Principal

\* All procedures allow for mediation at any stage of the process. Mediation is a jointly agreed process including choice of mediator who both parties are happy with.





## *North West Christian School Grievance Form*

First Name:	Surname:
Relationship with the School (Parent, staff, student):	Address:
Phone:                      Mobile:	Email:

Details of your complaint:
The action/s you have already taken to resolve the problem:
What action do you believe is needed to now solve the problem?

***For School Use Only***

Date received \_\_\_\_\_ Received by \_\_\_\_\_

Acknowledgement sent on this date \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

Referred to \_\_\_\_\_ for action. Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Contact details:



## **North West Christian School**

PO Box 117  
18 Ling Street  
Penguin, Tasmania, 7316  
Ph: (03) 64 372705  
Email: [nwcs@iinet.net.au](mailto:nwcs@iinet.net.au)

## **School Principal**

Att: Principal  
North West Christian School  
PO Box 117  
18 Ling Street  
Penguin, Tasmania, 7316  
Ph: (03) 64 372705  
Email: [nwcs@iinet.net.au](mailto:nwcs@iinet.net.au)

## **School Council Chairperson**

Att: School Council Chairperson  
North West Christian School  
PO Box 117  
18 Ling Street  
Penguin, Tasmania, 7316  
Ph: (03) 64 372705

## **Seventh-day Adventist Schools (Tasmania) Ltd Board of Directors**

157 Main Rd  
Moonah, TAS, 7009  
PO Box 253  
Moonah, TAS, 7009  
Ph: 03 6273 6277  
Fax: 03 6272 3024  
[gary.webster@adventist.org.au](mailto:gary.webster@adventist.org.au)

## **Seventh-day Adventist Church (Tasmanian Conference) Ltd Executive Committee**

157 Main Rd  
Moonah, TAS, 7009  
PO Box 253  
Moonah, TAS, 7009  
Ph: 03 6273 6277  
Fax: 03 6272 3024

This Policy was adapted by Hilliard Christian School & North West Christian School, as part of the Tasmanian Seventh-day Adventist Schools System. NWCS School Council: 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014, Reviewed April 2018. Ratified: SDA (Tasmania) Schools Board of Directors: 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2018, August, 2018