



GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

RATIONALE

The issues of dignity, equity and justice in relationships between all people within the College community are of fundamental importance. St Aloysius Catholic College has both a desire and a responsibility to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained by staff and students at all times, and that grievances are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation and Archdiocese of Hobart requirements.

Grievances occur when a staff member, parent or student complains that an action or decision has been taken (or not taken) at the College that he/she believes to be in breach of a relevant Act, Regulation or Order infringes upon the principles of merit or equity, or is otherwise unreasonable.

St Aloysius Catholic College recognises the right of staff, parents and students to register a complaint or grievance about any decision, behaviour, act or omission that they feel is unfair, discriminatory or unjustified.

Undisclosed or unresolved grievances create distress and can be a violation of a person's rights. Resolution of grievances at the local level, where appropriate, is the desired outcome.

PURPOSE

1. To provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment.
2. To resolve grievances fairly, efficiently and in accordance with requirements, and in a timely and effective manner.
3. To have a sound and fair basis of information dissemination, conciliation, investigation and decision-making, which involve the principles of due process and natural justice.

PRINCIPLES AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and dignity.
2. Everyone is aware of and has access to grievance procedures.
3. It is the Principal's responsibility to provide a healthy and positive school environment that is free from grievances such as discrimination and harassment. In doing so, all staff, parents and students will be made aware of their rights and responsibilities, including their right to have grievances resolved.
4. Staff, parents and students may choose to resolve grievances personally by talking with, or writing to, the person/s whose behaviour is of concern.
5. Staff, parents and students may choose to seek assistance, including assistance from the Principal. In such circumstances, the Principal may use local complaints resolution procedures, including private discussions, mediation, monitoring, training or counselling.

6. It is incumbent upon the Principal to act where unacceptable conduct is observed or brought to his/her attention. The Principal will exercise his/her judgement as to whether or not he/she will act upon anonymous complaints.
7. Staff may choose to seek advice from the Head of School Services, South who is located at the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office.
8. If a complaint is made against a person, that person will be informed of the nature and content of the complaint and have the right to respond.
9. All formal complaints, discussions, ensuing procedures and outcomes will be fully documented. Discussions of complaints are confidential.
10. A person who has made a complaint may withdraw it at anytime. If the complaint is in writing, the withdrawal will also be in writing.
11. Staff, parents and students are encouraged to lodge formal complaints in serious cases or when unwelcome behaviour persists despite advice to a respondent that his/her behaviour is causing problems and must cease. Formal complaints should be lodged in compliance with Archdiocesan policy.
12. The rights of complainants and respondents are upheld at all times, including the use of fair, confidential, impartial and dignified resolution procedures. No one will be victimised as a result of taking out a formal grievance.
13. Complaints will be received and managed in accordance with the principles of natural justice and that bias, prejudice, personal feelings and beliefs and pressure to conceal information in order to protect the reputation of parties involved will not be tolerated.
14. Any party to a dispute has the right to be accompanied by another person, in a support role, at any meetings convened to discuss resolution of the grievance.
15. If deemed appropriate and/or necessary, a process of mediation may be made available if a complaint is not satisfactorily resolved.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission and St Aloysius Catholic College's review cycles and at when emergency management procedures are under review.

Implemented: May 2006.
Amended: March 2008, February 2012.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

MAKING A COMPLAINT:

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

At St Aloysius Catholic College, we believe that the relationship between the home and the College is a very important part of ensuring that children are happy, secure and open to learning. We recognise that parents and teachers need to work closely together to provide the best educational opportunities for the children. We encourage you to discuss your child's progress with his/her teacher and to let us know if you have any concerns so that we might work together to resolve these as promptly and effectively as we can.

What to do if you have a problem:

- Try to identify the problem clearly before contacting the College. If there is more than one problem, list them to ensure that the extent of the problem is clear to the College.
- Decide whether the problem is a concern, enquiry or complaint. This will help in finding a solution.
- Make an appointment to meet with your child's class teacher/s. The best way to do this is to contact the College Office to arrange a mutually convenient time for a telephone call or a meeting.
- If you do not feel after your meeting that the matter has been resolved or if you have a complaint about a teacher or another staff member, make arrangements to meet with the Learning Centre Coordinator or Campus Director.
- Try to stay calm when discussing your concern. Even if you don't feel it, being calm will help you get your concerns across more clearly than if you're upset or angry. It may help to take someone with you.
- Remember, staff members are committed to resolving any issues that parents might have regarding their children and will discuss with you actions that might be taken in regard to your concern.
- If you still do not feel that the matter has been resolved or if your complaint is about a very serious matter, send your complaint to the Principal in writing.
- After your complaint has been dealt with by the Principal, if you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you should send your complaint in writing to the Head of School Services, South, who is located at the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office, PO Box 102, North Hobart, 7002.
- If the matter has still not been resolved, notify the Director of Catholic Education, stating your concerns. If no resolution has been achieved, the Director will arbitrate after thorough examination of the grievance and related issues.
- If matters still remain unresolved, you have the right to seek arbitration through courts, ombudsman, legal representation or other government commissions such as the Human Rights Commission, etc. These may entail some financial costs for you.

Note: The Schools Registration Board or the Secretary of the Department of Education do not deal with complaints within the Catholic Education System.

When you make a complaint:

- If a complaint is made against a person, that person will be informed of the nature and content of the complaint and will have the right to respond.
- Discussions of complaints are confidential.
- Complaints may be made verbally or in writing.
- All complaints, the actions taken to resolve them and the outcomes of those actions will be fully documented.

- A person who has made a complaint may withdraw it at any time. If the complaint is in writing, the withdrawal should also be in writing.
- No one will be victimised as a result of taking out a formal grievance.
- At the formal stage, a person who has made a complaint has the right to be represented and supported by another person e.g. a friend or other person of his/her choice as a support person.
- A process of mediation may be available if a complaint is not satisfactorily resolved.

ATTACHMENT: FLOW FOR PARENTS MAKING COMPLAINTS

Implemented: May 2006.

Amended: March 2008, February 2012.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

MAKING A COMPLAINT:

INFORMATION FOR STAFF

At St Aloysius Catholic College, we believe that the relationship between colleagues is a very important part of ensuring that children are happy, secure and open to learning. We recognise that all staff need to work closely together to provide the best educational opportunities for the students in our care. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding any other staff member of the College, we strongly encourage you to work together to resolve these as promptly and effectively as you can.

What to do if you have a problem:

- Try to identify the problem clearly before taking any action. If there is more than one problem, list them to ensure that the extent of the problem is clear.
- Decide whether the problem is a concern, enquiry or complaint. This will help in finding a solution.
- In the interests of resolving matters quickly and effectively, you are encouraged to informally discuss your concern/complaint with the person concerned.
- You may also wish to informally discuss your concerns with the Learning Centre Coordinator or Campus Director and seek advice and assistance.
- 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 their mutual consent.
- If you still do not feel that the matter has been resolved, if your complaint is serious or involves the Principal, telephone or send your complaint in writing to the Head of School Services, South, who will then contact you and make arrangements for you to discuss your grievance.
- If the matter has still not been resolved, notify the Director of Catholic Education stating your concerns in writing. If no resolution has been achieved, the Director will arbitrate after thorough examination of the grievance and related issues.
- If matters still remain unresolved, you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, ombudsman, legal representation and other government commissions such as Workplace Safety, Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Commissions. These might entail some financial cost to you.

Note: The Schools Registration Board or the Secretary of the Department of Education do not deal with complaints within the Catholic Education System.

When you decide to make a complaint:

- If a complaint is made against a person, that person will be informed of the nature and content of the complaint and will have the right to respond.
- Discussions of complaints are confidential.
- Complaints may be made verbally or in writing.
- All complaints, the actions taken to resolve them and the outcomes of those actions will be fully documented.
- A person who has made a complaint may withdraw it at any time. If the complaint is in writing, the withdrawal should also be in writing.
- No one will be victimised as a result of taking out a formal grievance.
- At the formal stage, a person who has made a complaint has the right to be represented and supported by another person, e.g. his/her union representative, work colleague, friend or other person of his/her choice as a support person.
- A process of mediation may be available if a complaint is not satisfactorily resolved.

ATTACHMENT: FLOW CHART FOR COMPLAINTS – STAFF IN PARISH SYSTEMIC SCHOOLS.

Implemented: May 2006
Amended: March 2008, February 2012.

MAKING A COMPLAINT: INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

At St Aloysius Catholic College, we believe that it is important that everyone feels happy and safe so that the best learning can take place. We believe that everyone, staff and students, need to work closely together to provide the best educational opportunities for you. If you have a problem, a concern or a complaint, we encourage you to speak to someone about it and we have provided some steps that you might work through to help you do this.

What to do if you have a problem:

- Try to identify the problem that is upsetting you. If there is more than one problem, list them so that you are clear about what you feel or need.
- If you feel you can, talk to the person with whom you are having a problem and if their behaviour is upsetting you, tell them to stop.
- If you do not feel that you could do this or if your talk with the person does not solve your problem, talk to a teacher about your concerns and ask them to help you deal with it. Your teacher will often be able to give you good ideas on how to cope with it and will help you. You should explain:

Who was involved

What happened

What you did

What you believe was unfair or unjust

- Try to stay calm when discussing your problem or concern. Even if you don't feel it, being calm will help you get your concerns across more clearly than if you are upset or angry. It may help to take someone with you.
- Work with the teacher to decide what should be done to help you.
- If you still do not feel that the matter has been solved, make an appointment to talk to the Pastoral Associate.
- If you still do not feel that the matter has been solved, make a time to talk to the Principal about your concern.

Remember:

- Sometimes the person helping you will need to speak to someone else so that the problem can be solved. You need to let that person know that you are comfortable with that.
- You can bring a friend, parent or teacher to support you when you need to talk about the problem.
- No one will be allowed to pick on you or hurt you because you are making a complaint.
- If you want to, you can write out your complaint in a letter instead of talking about it, but the person helping you will need to speak to you later.

ATTACHMENT: A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO MAKING A COMPLAINT

Implemented: May 2006.

Amended: March 2008, February 2012.

HANDLING COMPLAINTS:

AN INFORMATION GUIDE FOR STAFF

In handling complaints, St Aloysius Catholic College acts in accordance with the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission (TCEC) Complaints Processing Policy. Therefore, it is important that you are familiar with this document. Please speak with the Principal if you are unsure about the details of this policy.

Catholic schools have a responsibility to act wisely and justly in relation to issues of conflict that have the potential to cause a breakdown in the relationships between members of our College community.

We must always keep in mind when handling complaints, that regardless of how important or unimportant the issue might appear on the surface, for the persons involved, it is a source of unhappiness. Anyone who makes a complaint, therefore, must be treated with respect. Our response will be perceived as a measure of how we live up to the Gospel values that we espouse.

The prompt, respectful and just manner in which we handle complaints has a two-fold benefit for our College. It makes us aware of areas where we need to improve and can help us to build positive relationships with students, staff, parents and members of the wider school community.

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS:

- Always act promptly to investigate a complaint.
- Listen carefully to the complainant. Give them a chance to tell their story.
- Keep an open mind.
- Discuss the issues with the complainant in a calm and reasonable way.
- Make sure that they are given a copy of the College's Grievance Procedures and discuss the steps that can and should be taken.
- Be clear in your own mind about the appropriateness of your own involvement e.g. is this something that should be handed on to the Principal?
- If this is a complaint that you should handle, make sure that you know (or if you don't, can find out about) College policies and procedures related to the issue.
- Clearly explain to the complainant the actions that you will take to follow-up on the complaint.
- Complaints should only be discussed by those responsible for handling them. They should NEVER be the subject of casual conversation or gossip.
- Always keep a record of all the relevant details.
- It is a policy of the College that anonymous complaints will not be acted upon.

KEEPING RECORD OF COMPLAINTS:

It is important that adequate records of complaints are kept for the following reasons:

- So that subsequent enquiries and/or concerns can be located within their proper context i.e. in the 'big picture'.
- So that complaints can be tracked through the stages of action to resolution.
- So that patterns of complaints can lead to improvements in our policies, operations and processes.
- So that accurate information is available to those directly involved in investigating the issues and exploring solutions.

WHAT SHOULD BE RECORDED:

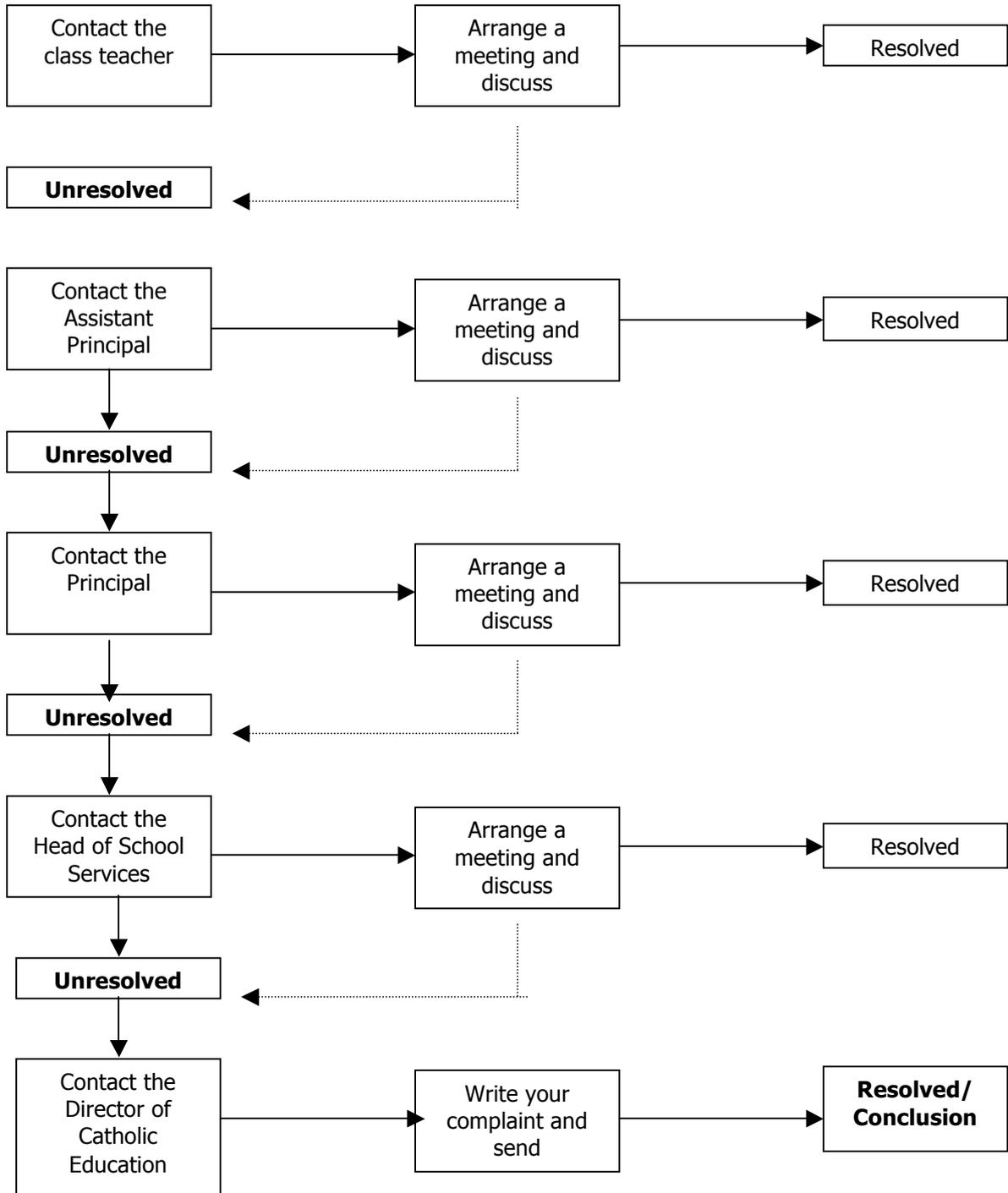
Notes of meetings, interviews, telephone calls, written documents such as letters, faxes, emails, etc.

All records should be dated and signed.

AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE:

Any oral or written communications gathered in a mediation process are strictly confidential to the parties involved. This information should not be made available to any other person without the specific permission of those parties. This confidentiality does not apply where there are threats of physical violence or where child abuse is suspected or reported.

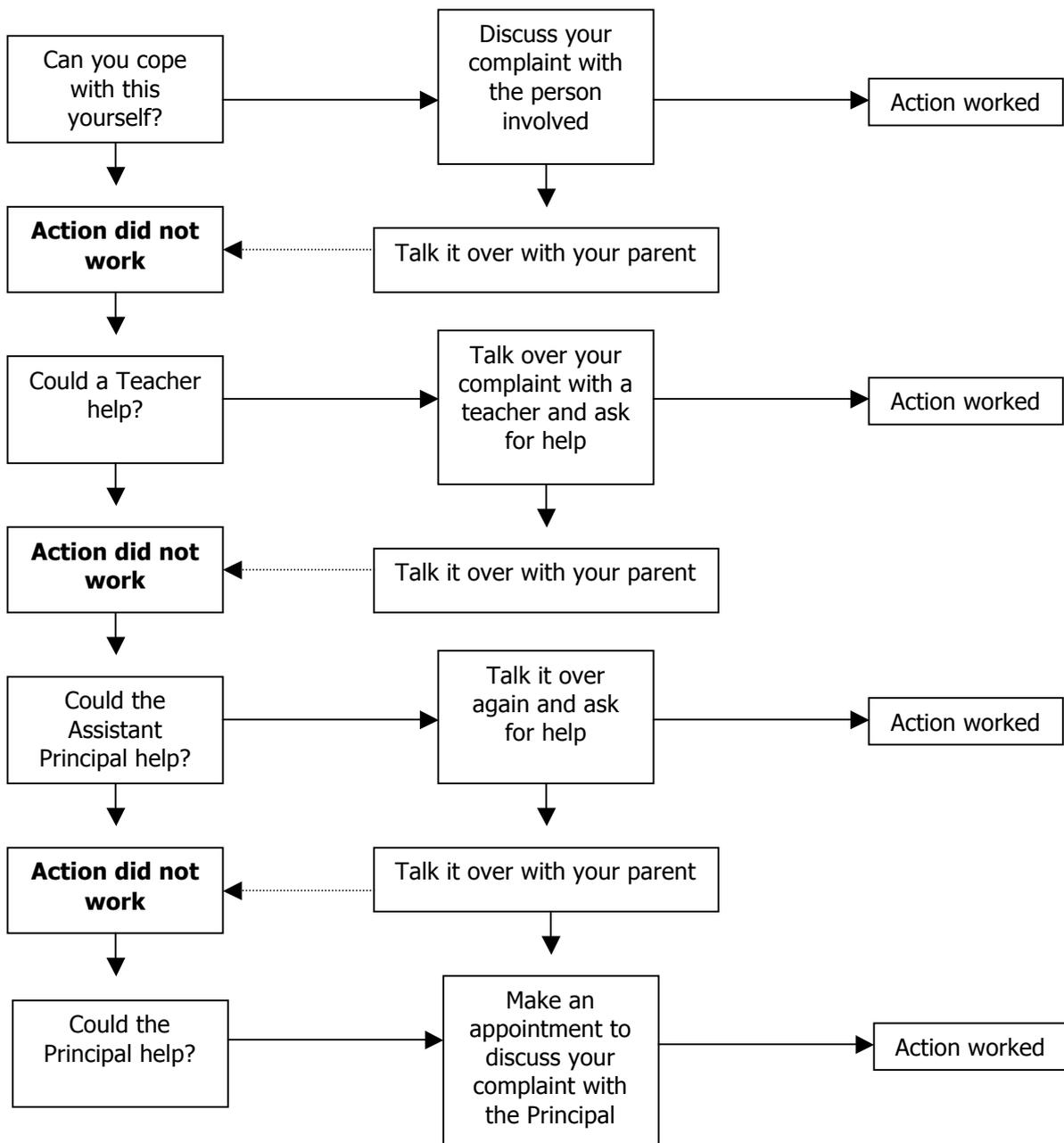
FLOW CHART FOR FAMILIES MAKING COMPLAINTS



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 cost to you.

Mediation is an option at any stage of the process if the complainant and the person to whom the complaint is directed so agree. Normally, mediation is facilitated by the Head of School Services.

A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO MAKING A COMPLAINT

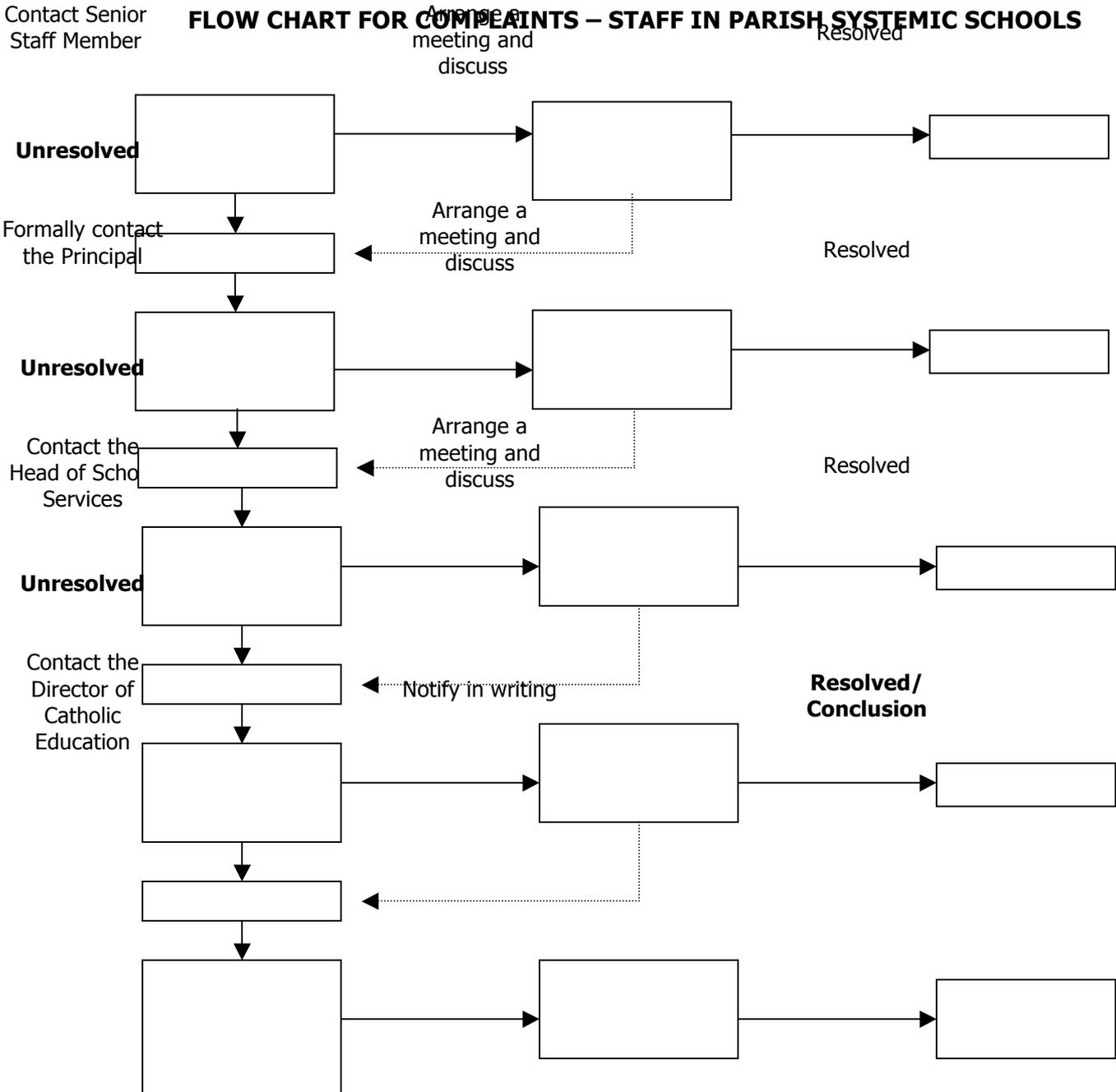


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Contact Senior Staff Member

FLOW CHART FOR COMPLAINTS – STAFF IN PARISH SYSTEMIC SCHOOLS

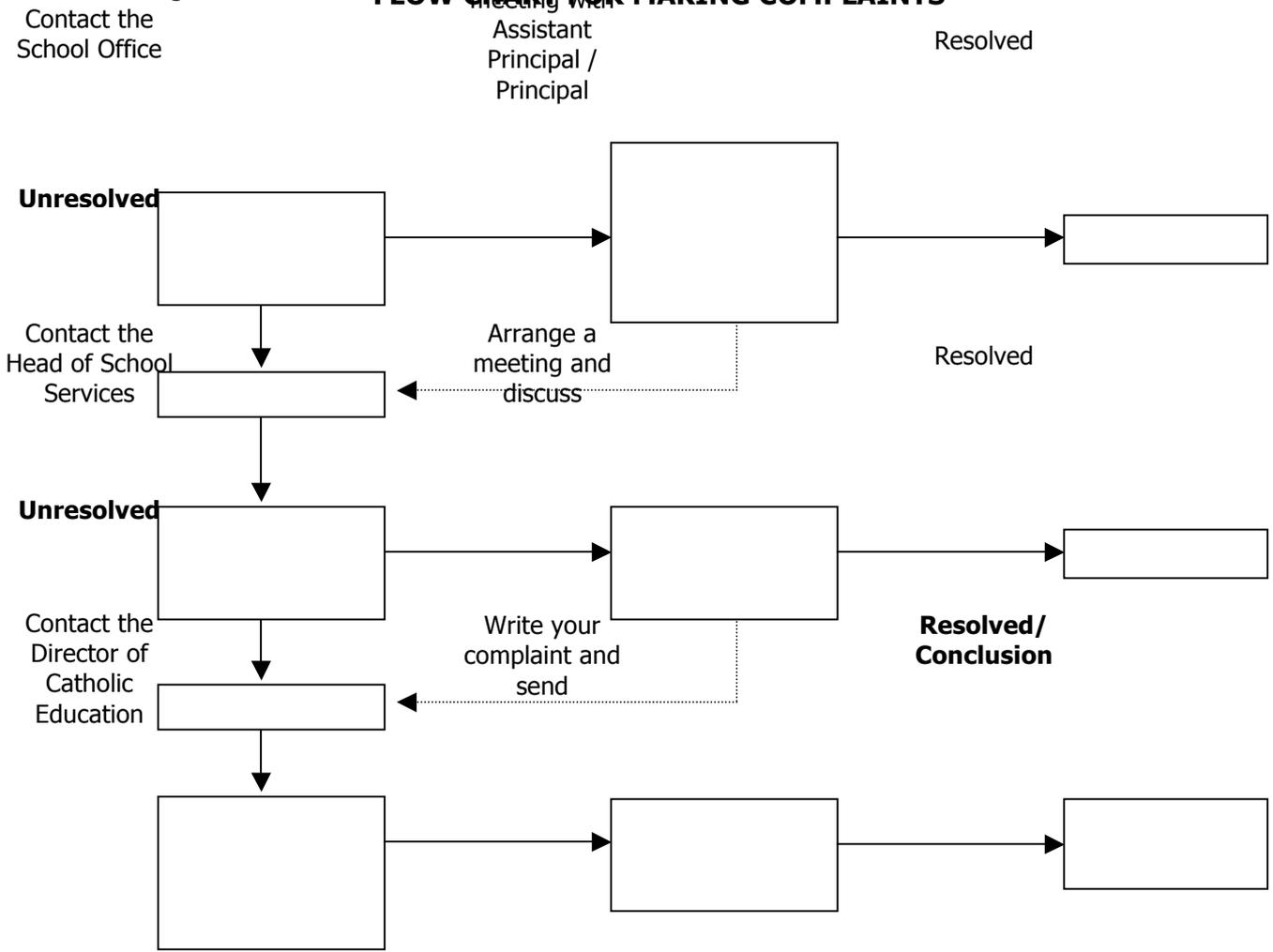


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FLOW CHART FOR MAKING COMPLAINTS



What action do you believe is needed to now resolve the problem?

Your signature: _____ Date: _____

For school use only:

Date form received: _____ Received by: _____

Date acknowledgement sent: _____

Acknowledgement sent by: _____

Complaint referred to: _____

Date: _____

Other notes: