

ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

GRIEVANCE POLICY and PROCEDURES

1. Rationale

As a community with a Catholic ethos, committed to Gospel values, St John's Catholic School has both a desire and responsibility to ensure that our environment is a welcoming and inclusive one where everyone can feel accepted and valued. However, in any normal community, there are times when people raise concerns or complaints. Frequently such problems are minor and are resolved informally; sometimes there are occasions when a person wishes to make a formal grievance. The following procedures set out the ways in which we, as a Catholic Community, will respond to and resolve complaints. This policy is based on the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office Policy on School Grievance.

1. Purpose

The purpose of the policy and its accompanying procedures is to provide those associated with the St John's Catholic School Community the opportunity to resolve issues, which adversely affect them and/or matters about which they are aggrieved. An essential principle of the Grievance Policy and Procedures is that where possible grievances and disputes should be resolved between the persons concerned. The procedures are intended to prevent personal conflicts becoming entrenched and to resolve disputes without delay and in a conciliatory, informal and effective manner. The procedures provide a fair and consistent method of resolving grievances at St John's Catholic School.

2. Scope

This policy and procedures applies to:

- All employees and volunteer workers at St John's Catholic School and to all grievances, disagreements or disputes between any employees or volunteers in the St John's Catholic School workplace.
- Students, parents, carers and guardians of St John's Catholic School students.
- The general community.
- With regards to the Education Act this policy and the accompanying procedures includes the entire school community i.e. staff, parents, students, volunteers, contractors, suppliers and neighbours.

3. Definitions

A **grievance** is defined as any current decision, act or omission regarding matters arising from processes involving St John's Catholic School, which is considered to be in breach of any of the School's policies and procedures. It includes any disagreement, unresolved difficulty or negative feeling between any employees or volunteers in the workplace or members of the school or wide communities, which if left unresolved will be detrimental to ongoing relationships associated with the various roles and functions within the school.

Conciliation is defined as a process where an independent person, agreeable to and accepted by all parties in dispute, works with those parties to reach reconciliation or at least a resolution that both are in accord with. **Conciliation and mediation can occur at any stage of the grievance process.**

4. Guiding Principles

This policy and procedures meets the legal requirements set out by the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995, the Anti Discrimination Act 1998 and the Privacy Act. It also complies with the Anti Discrimination and Harassment Policy and the Workplace Health and Safety Policies of the Archdiocese of Hobart. This policy and procedures is also a requirement under the Education Act.

5. General Principles

- a. All employees, volunteers and members of the school and wider community are entitled to fair and consistent treatment and prompt consideration of complaints.
- b. Any disputes or grievances will be taken seriously, handled professionally and confidently in order to achieve a speedy resolution.
- c. It will be ensured that all employees, volunteers and members of the St John's Catholic School Community have a clear understanding of the steps involved within this policy and procedures.
- d. The St John's Catholic School Community is committed to forming and maintaining harmonious and cooperative relationships at all levels within the school.
- e. Grievances should be discussed and resolved within a general framework of cooperation, which emphasises respectful communication and empathy with the perceptions of others.
- f. Grievances should be handled as far as possible within the confines of the school.
- g. Resolution of grievances should occur as soon as the situation has been identified, as this will minimise the negative effects of ongoing problems in the workplace.

Catholic School Grievance Procedures

Information for Staff

Making a Complaint

At St John's Catholic School, we believe that positive relationships between colleagues are essential for the good of our community. We recognise that 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 member of the school community, we strongly encourage you to work together to resolve these as promptly and effectively as possible.

What to do if you have a problem (Conciliation and mediation can occur at any stage of the grievance process):

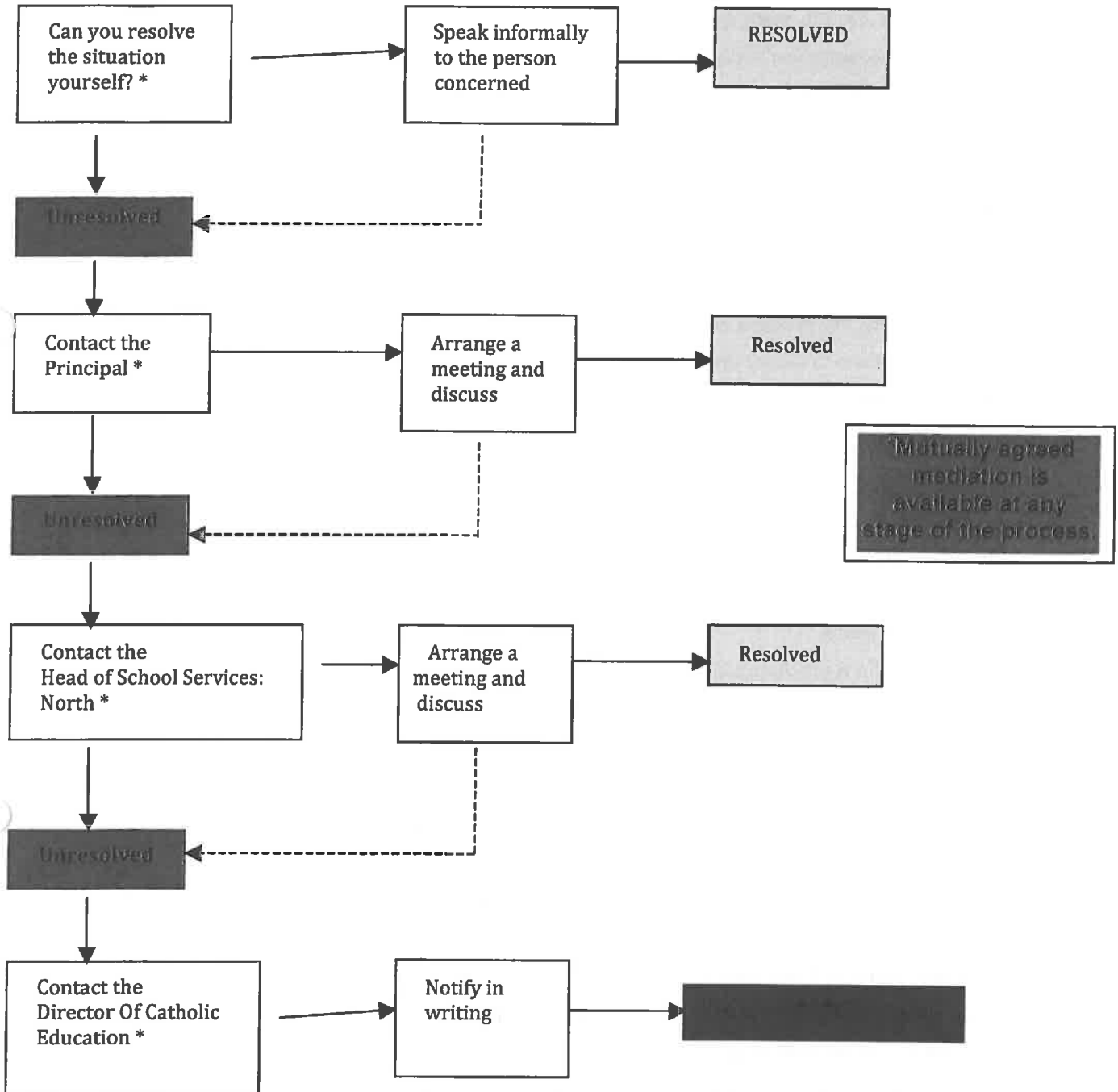
- Decide whether the problem is a concern, inquiry or complaint. This will help in finding a solution.
- In the interest of resolving matters quickly and effectively, you are encouraged to informally discuss your concern/complaint with the person concerned.
- Try to identify the problem clearly before informally contacting the Principal. If there is more than one problem; list them to ensure that the extent of the problem is clear to the Principal.
- If informal strategies do not resolve the issue(s), make your complaint formally, in writing, to the Principal. Where the Principal advises, mediation can be arranged between the parties concerned on their mutual agreement.
- 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 for St John's Catholic School 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 a 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 Human Rights Commission etc. These might be at some financial cost to you.

Note: Mutually agreed mediation is available at any time throughout the process. Neither The School Registration Board nor the Secretary of the Department of Education deal with complaints within the Catholic Education System.

When you make a complaint:

- If a formal 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.
- Discussions of complaints are confidential.
- Complaints may be made verbally and then in writing.
- All complaints, the actions taken to resolve them and 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 eg his/her union, work colleague, friend or other person of his/her choice as a support person.
- A process of mediation is available if a complaint is not satisfactorily resolved.

STAFF GUIDE FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT



Mutually agreed mediation is available at any stage of the process.

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

St John's Catholic School Grievance Procedures

Information for Parents

Making a Complaint

At St John's Catholic School, we believe that the relationship between home and school 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 their 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:

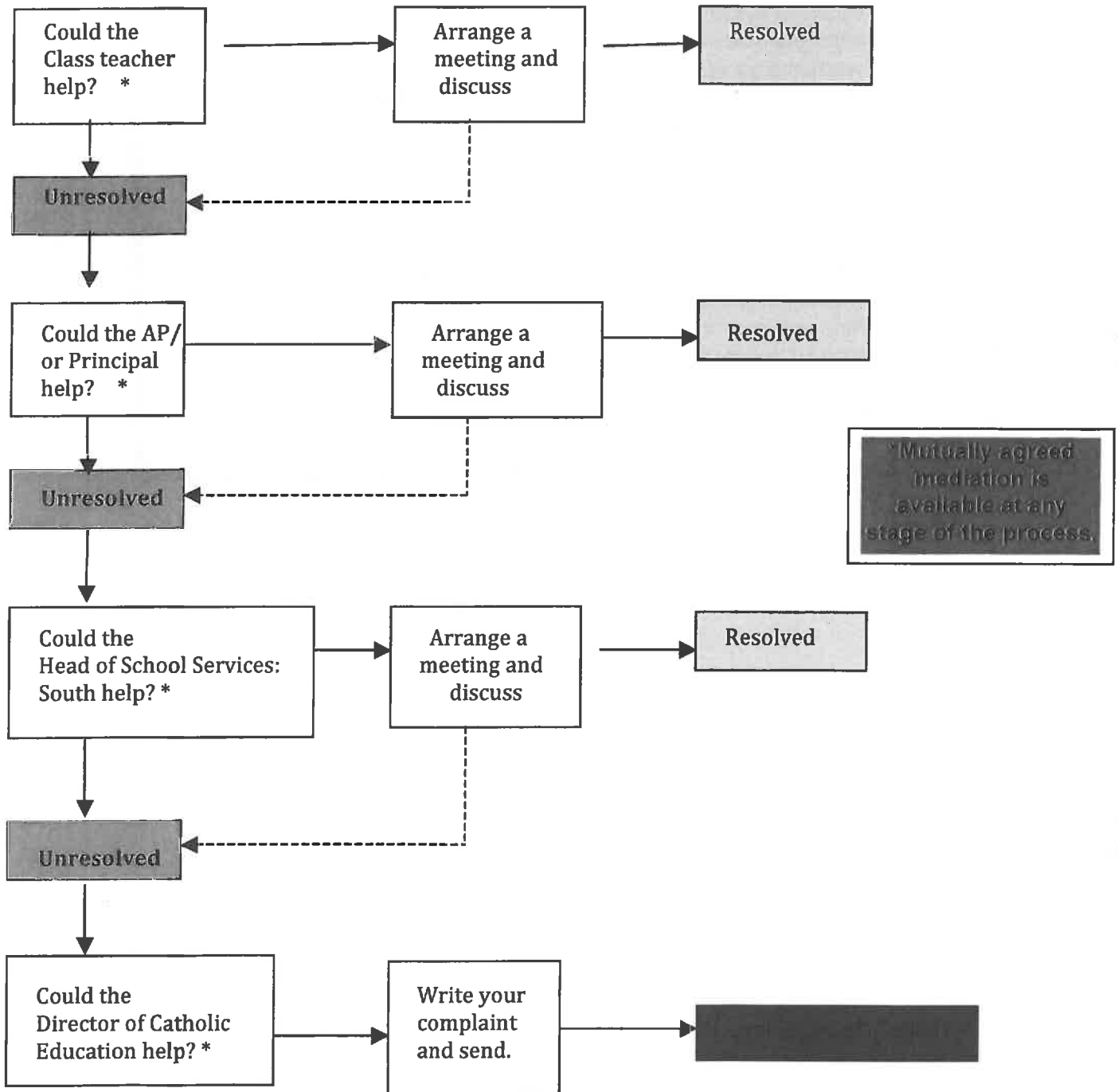
- Decide whether the problem is a concern, inquiry or complaint. This will help in finding a solution.
- Try to identify the problem clearly before contacting the school. If there is more than one problem; list them to ensure that the extent of the problem is clear to the school.
- Make an appointment to meet with your child's class teacher. The best way to do this is to contact the teacher either verbally or in writing to arrange a mutually convenient time for a telephone call or meeting.
- If after your meeting you do not feel that the matter has been resolved, or if you have a complaint about the teacher or another staff member, make arrangements to meet with the Principal.
- Unresolved or very serious matters are initially best addressed by writing to the Principal and arranging a meeting.
- Try to stay calm when discussing your concern. Even if you don't feel it, being calm will help you to get your concerns across more clearly than if you are upset or angry. It may help to take someone with you.
- Remember, the staff 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 in writing to the Head of School Services: South for St John's Catholic School at the Catholic Education Office.
- 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 a 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 Human Rights Commission etc. These might be at some financial costs to you.

Note: Mutually agreed mediation is available at any time throughout the process. Neither The School Registration Board nor the Secretary of the Department of Education deal with complaints within the Catholic Education System.

When you make a complaint:

- If a formal 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.
- Discussions of complaints are confidential.
- Complaints may be made verbally and then in writing.
- All written and serious complaints, the actions taken to resolve them and 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, eg: his/her union, work colleague, friend or other person of his/her choice as a support person.
- A process of mediation is available if a complaint is not satisfactorily resolved.

A PARENT'S GUIDE FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT



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St John's Catholic School Grievance Procedures

Information for Students

Making a Complaint

At St John's Catholic School, we believe that it is important that everyone feels happy and safe at school so that the best learning can take place. We believe that everyone, staff, students and parents 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.

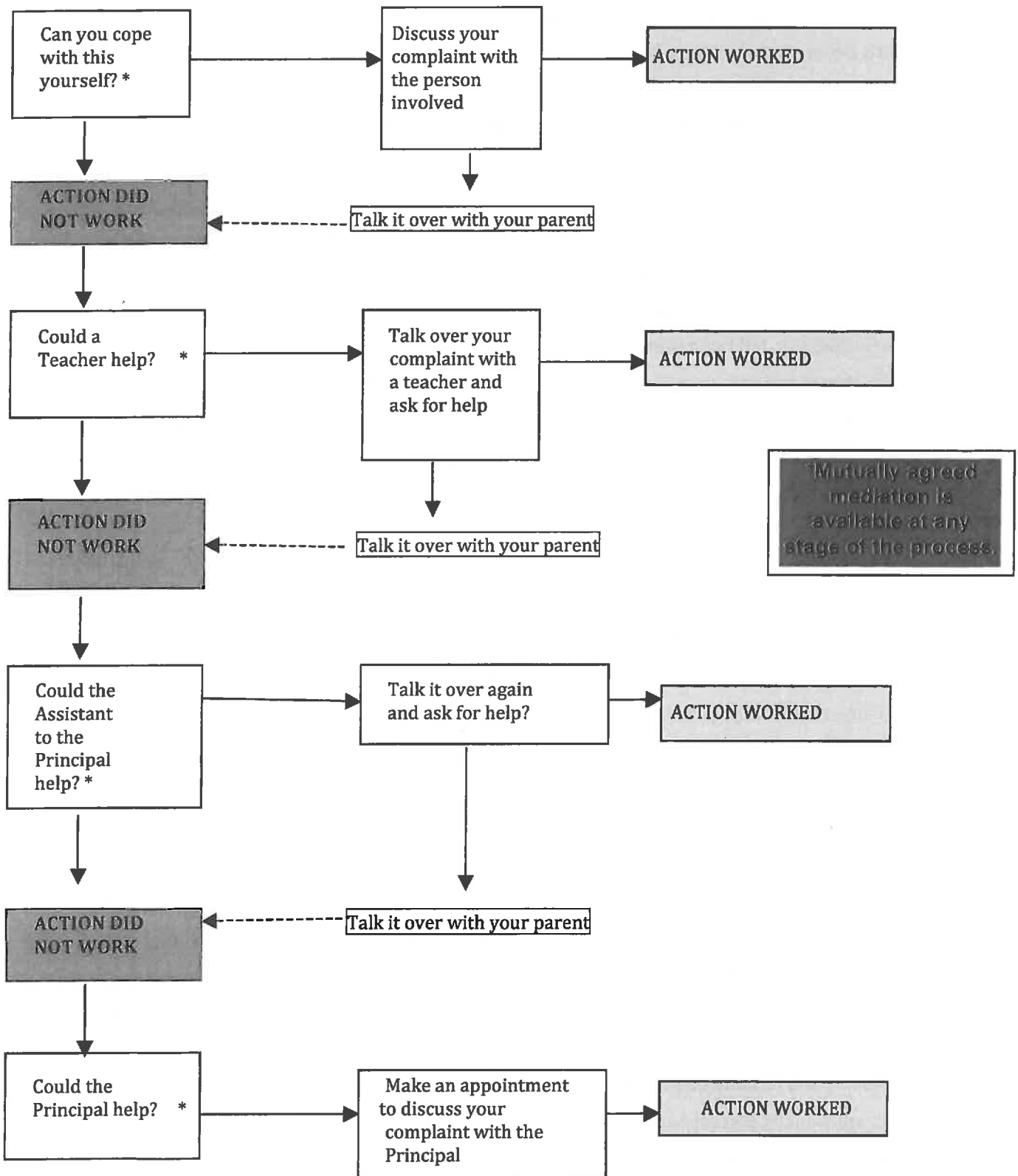
What to do if you have a problem:

- 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 you are having the problem with 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 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 an Assistant to the Principal or the Principal.

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 okay about that.
- You can bring a friend, parent or a 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 made 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.

A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO MAKING A COMPLAINT



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

St John's Catholic School Grievance Procedures

Information for the Community

At St John's Catholic School, we believe that open, friendly and constructive relationships with our community are vital to our growth and the good of our community. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding any member of the school community, we strongly encourage you to contact us so that we can work together to resolve these as promptly and effectively as possible.

What to do if you have a problem (Conciliation and mediation can occur at any stage of the grievance process):

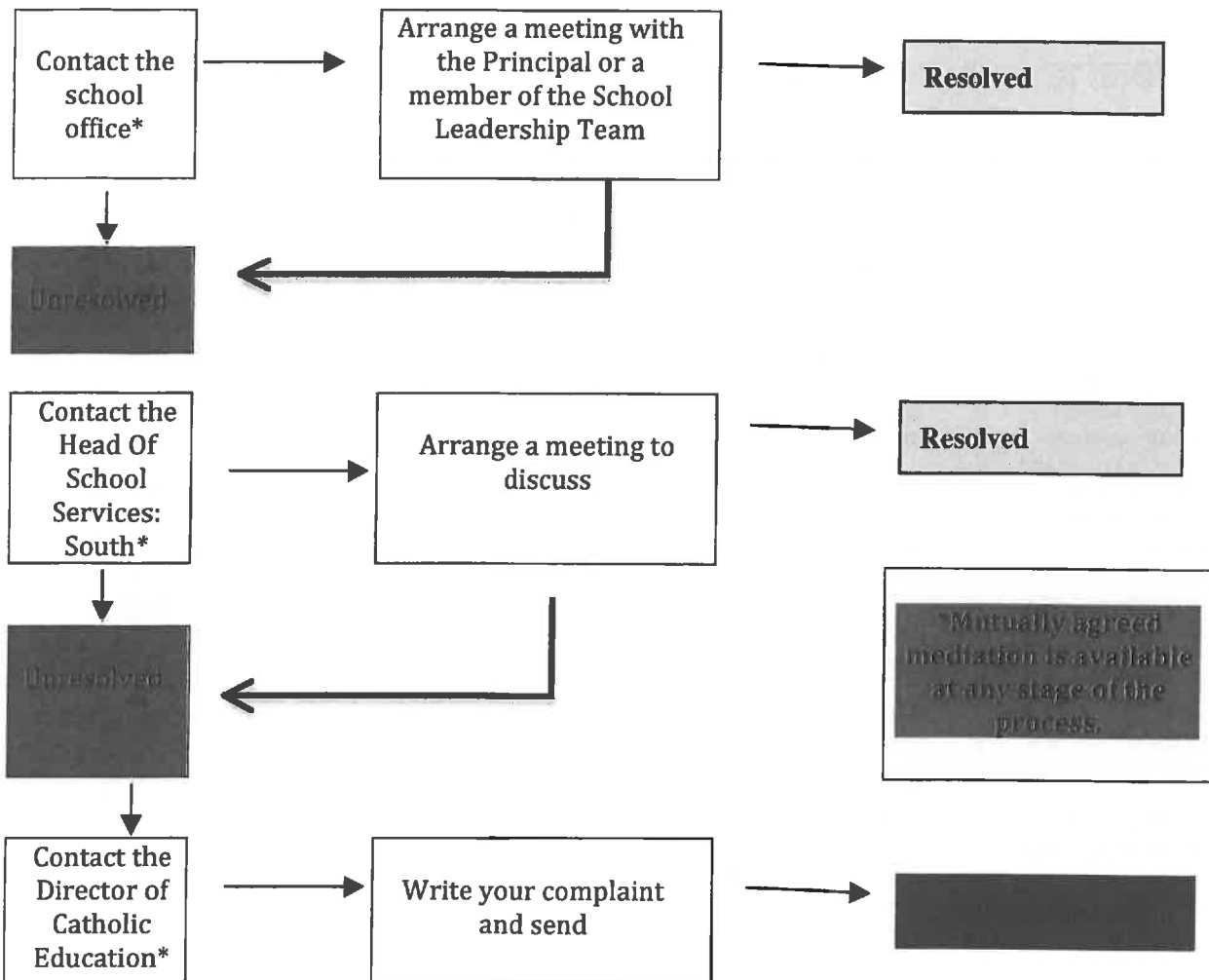
- Try to identify the problem clearly before informally contacting the Principal or any member of the School Leadership Team. If there is more than one problem; list them to ensure that the extent of the problem is clear to the Principal.
- Decide whether the problem is a concern, inquiry or complaint. This will help in finding a solution.
- Make an appointment to meet with the Principal. The best way to do this is to contact the school office to arrange a mutually convenient time for a meeting or telephone conversation.
- If informal strategies do not resolve the issue(s), make your complaint formally, in writing, to the Principal. Where the Principal advises, mediation can be arranged between the parties concerned on their mutual agreement.
- 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 St John's Catholic School 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 a 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 Human Rights Commission etc. These might be at some financial cost to you.

Note: Mutually agreed mediation is available at any time throughout the process. Neither The School Registration Board nor the Secretary of the Department of Education deal with complaints within the Catholic Education System.

When you make a complaint:

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- Complaints may be made verbally and then in writing.
- All written and serious complaints, the actions taken to resolve them and 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, eg: his/her union, work colleague, friend or other person of his/her choice as a support person.
- A process of mediation is available if a complaint is not satisfactorily resolved.

Flow Chart For Making Complaints: Community



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

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES: SUMMARY

STUDENTS	PARENTS	STAFF	COMMUNITY
Mutually agreed mediation is available at any time throughout the process			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you feel you can, talk to the person who is upsetting you and tell them to stop. 2. If you cannot do this or if the person does not listen, talk to your parent(s) and/or a teacher you trust and ask them to help you work through the problem. 3. If the problem is still not worked out, talk to an Assistant to the Principal, telling him/her everything you have done so far and ask for his/her help. 4. If the problem remains, make an appointment to speak to the Principal about your complaint. <p>Remember: Often parents can help when young people are unsure of what to do. It is a good idea to ask for support and advice when problems arise rather than keep it all to yourself.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrange a time through the school office to speak to the person concerned. Remember, if the concern is about your child, the class teacher is the first person you should talk to about the problem 2. If this does not resolve your concern, make an appointment to discuss it with the Principal. 3. Only after you have discussed the issues with the Principal, should you contact the Head of Services: South and make a time to discuss complaints or concerns with him/her. 4. If the matter remains unresolved, your complaint should be made in writing to the Director of Catholic Education. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Speak to the person concerned informally and privately. 2. If this does not resolve the issue, make an appointment to take your grievance to the Principal. If deemed appropriate, mediation at this stage may be arranged at the mutual agreement of all involved. 3. If still unresolved, or if the complaint involves the Principal, contact the Head of Services: South either by telephone or in writing. He/she will then make arrangements to contact you. 4. If these actions do not resolve your grievance, notify the Director of Catholic Education in writing, detailing your grievance and the actions taken so far. 5. Further to this, you have the right to seek arbitration through the courts, relevant Government commissions or the Ombudsman 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrange a time through the school office to speak to member of the School Leadership Team*. 2. Only after you have discussed the issues with the Principal, should you contact the Head of Services: South and make a time to discuss complaints or concerns with him/her. 3. If the matter remains unresolved, your complaint should be made in writing to the Director of Catholic Education. <p><i>* The School Leadership Team comprises the Principal and teachers with Positions Of Responsibility, including any Assistant to the Principal.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please note: The School Registration Board and the Department of Education do not deal with complaints regarding the Catholic Education System. • If matters remained 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. this might entail some financial cost to you. 			

This policy and accompanying procedures will be reviewed as part of the St John's Catholic School policy review cycle and at times when Diocesan procedures are under review.

Implemented