
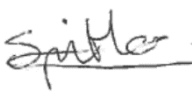


## **Compliment and Conflict Policy**

| POLICY DATES: JOHN CALVIN SCHOOL COMPLIMENT AND COMPLAINT |                             |           |   |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------|---|
| Formulated  | March 2023                  |           |   |
| Implemented   | 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2023 | Reviewed  |   |
| Next Review Due   | APRIL 2025                  |           |   |
| POLICY AUTHORISATION                                      |                             |           |   |
| Principal   | Daniel Coote                | Signature |    |
| Board Chair   | Stefan Pitlo                | Signature |  |

## Purpose

John Calvin School welcomes feedback from all members of the school community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised, seriously. This policy is designed to assist you to understand how to make a complaint.

## **Policy Statement**

The Free Reformed School Association, operating the John Calvin School, is an active Christian community which acknowledges the lordship of Jesus Christ in all its relationships. The Association is committed to ensuring a harmonious, fair and just working and learning environment.

Compliments, complaints and other forms of feedback provide valuable information on levels of client satisfaction and provide the Free Reformed School association with an opportunity to improve upon all aspects of service. Feedback is to be taken seriously and to be seen as an opportunity for improvement.

Feedback that is recorded and handled effectively will provide valuable information in identifying areas for improvement, coordinating a consistent approach for resolution, reducing the potential for future complaints and allow for reporting and efficient allocation of resources.

Resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity in a way that respects and values the person's feedback, can be one of the most important factors in recovering the person's confidence with the organisation and its services. It can also help prevent further escalation of the complaint. A responsive, efficient, effective and fair complaint management system can assist an organisation to achieve this.

## **Definitions**

*Complaint* – Australian Standard AS/NZS ISO 10002:2014 *Guidelines for Complaints Management in Organisations* defines a complaint as 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'.

*Compliment* – a compliment is an expression of praise, encouragement or gratitude about a service that is funded, regulated or provided. It may be about an individual staff member, a team or a service.

## **Guiding principles**

An effective feedback, compliment and complaint handling system addresses the principles of visibility and accessibility, responsiveness, assessment and investigation, feedback, improvement focussed and service excellence.

An approach to compliments and complaints management supports:

- people<sup>1</sup> understanding their rights and responsibilities
- information on the compliment and complaint management process being easily accessible

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'people' is used to refer to staff and service users or clients (students) who receive a service from the Free Reformed School Association.

- increased satisfaction of clients in the management of their compliments and complaints
- the recording of data to identify emerging and existing trends or systemic issues
- staff to demonstrate an awareness of feedback, compliment and complaint management processes
- staff to develop the range of skills and capabilities required to manage compliments, complaints and feedback
- an organisational culture that is focused on effective, person-centred complaints resolution and utilising feedback for continuous improvement.

### **Visibility and accessibility**

The compliments and complaints management process will be visible and accessible to individuals and:

- explain how and where to make a compliment or complaint, including an anonymous complaint
- ensure the website and service sites have information on how to lodge a compliment or complaint
- consider specific needs of the individual or barriers they may experience
- explain alternative complaint resolution pathways when the complaint is first lodged and when it is closed
- explain how the Free Reformed School Association will manage a complaint and the expected timeframe for resolution
- support individuals to identify and seek their preferred outcome.

### **Responsiveness**

The compliments and complaints management process will be responsive and provide mechanisms and strategies to:

- promote service user rights, particularly those with special support needs, so they can actively participate in the compliments and complaints process
- inform and train staff to use the compliments and complaint management system
- support the individual to seek the most appropriate resolution
- ensure there is clarity about the requested outcome
- provide a respectful, valuing and informative acknowledgement
- actively listen, empathising and acknowledging when the service was not the best it could have been
- monitor time frames for resolution
- communicate with all relevant parties about the progress of the resolution of the complaint.

### **Assessment and investigation**

The compliments and complaints management process will have mechanisms to:

- assess complaints for severity, safety, complexity, impact and the need for immediate action
- collect adequate and appropriate information
- protect the privacy and confidentiality of the information
- determine who and at what level the complaint should be dealt with
- enable complaints to be considered independently, fairly and objectively.

## **Feedback**

The compliments and complaints management process will provide mechanisms and strategies to:

- explain what happened and why, what will be done to fix the issue, and who will do it, how we will communicate our progress and how we will check things are on track
- explain the reasons for the decision
- provide an apology where the Free Reformed School Association has failed to meet its service obligations<sup>2</sup>
- where an apology is provided, ensure it is sincere, and accepts responsibility for what occurred and the impact
- explain the circumstances without making excuses, and summarise the key actions that will be taken
- provide regular updates to the complainant if the resolution is delayed
- notify the complainant of alternative complaint resolution pathways and review mechanisms
- follow up with complainants to determine the effectiveness of the outcome, where appropriate.

## **Improvement focussed**

The complaint management system will provide mechanisms and strategies to gather and record feedback and other information to:

- meet any statutory, policy or procedural reporting requirements
- improve the training and capabilities of complaint management staff
- analyse the complaint data and identify complaint trends for performance improvement
- monitor the time taken to resolve complaints
- notify service providers as part of a continuous quality improvement approach.

## **Service excellence**

The compliment and complaint management system and resolution process is a part of a quality culture where compliments and complaints are an opportunity for improvement through:

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<sup>2</sup> *Wrongs Act 1958* – section 14J provides that in the case of civil proceedings where the death or injury of a person is an issue, or is relevant, an apology does not constitute either an admission or liability, or an admission of unprofessional conduct, carelessness, incompetence or unsatisfactory professional performance.

- positive attitudes towards dealing with feedback, compliments and complaints and respect for the person who has raised the matters
- values that reinforce the commitment of the Free Reformed School Association to quality service delivery and encouragement for provision of feedback on what is and what isn't working
- a clear statement that no one will be adversely affected as a result of making a complaint or a complaint being made on their behalf
- a policy that enables the compliment and complaint management system to address and investigate issues relating to all employees, including senior management.
- data analysis to identify and explore trends that highlight opportunities to improve service delivery and complaint handling
- a commitment to continued training and development of the capabilities of compliment and complaint management staff
- a commitment by the Free Reformed School Association's leadership to an effective compliments and complaints management process as part of a robust quality improvement framework.

Note: For the purpose of this document, a privacy incident / complaint / breach that relates to child abuse, grooming or other harm, whether substantiated or unsubstantiated, is managed according to existing Child Protection Policy.

## **Compliment and complaint management process**

The compliment and complaint management process can be simplified into five steps:

### **1. Receive**

- Listen – openly to the concerns being raised by the complainant.
- Ask – the complainant what outcome they are seeking.
- Inform – the complainant clearly of the complaint process, the time the process takes and set realistic expectations.
- Accountable – be empathic towards the affected person and action all commitments made.
- Assess – create a prioritisation framework to identify situations which pose an immediate threat or danger or require a specialised response.
- Refer to the Compliment and Complaint form template to assist in recording key information at the time of first contact.

### **2. Record**

- Record – all information that is relevant to the compliment or complaint, in its original and simplest form.
- Store – in a compliment or complaint management system that also allows for data analysis.
- Protect – we use a system that restricts access to clients who are involved in managing the compliment or complaint.

### **3. Acknowledge**

- Acknowledge – receipt of the complaint early to build a relationship of trust and confidence with the person who raised the complaint.
- Anonymity – a person may request to remain anonymous in their lodgement and therefore contact may not be possible or expected.
- Desired outcomes – provide realistic expectations and refer the matter to other organisations where identified as being more suitable to handle.
- Conflict of interest – avoid this by appointing a person unrelated to the matter as an investigator.
- Time frames and expectations – provide these to the complainant where possible.

### **4. Resolve**

- Involve the complainant – keep them informed of the progress of the complaint and discuss any disparities identified in the information held.
- Additional information – request when required but apply a timeframe that limits when it is to be provided.
- Extensions in time – consider only where necessary and always communicate any additional time requirements to the complainant with an explanation of the need.
- Record – continue to record all decisions or actions of the complaint investigation in the compliment and complaint management system.
- Focus – when investigating, focus on the identified complaint matters only. A complaint is not an opportunity to review the whole case.

### **5. Communicate resolution**

- Outcome – Where possible, discuss the outcome verbally with the complainant before providing written advice and allow them the opportunity to make further contact following receipt of the written advice.
- Recourse – include what further action may be available to the complainant at the conclusion of the complaint investigation. An action of recourse may be to escalate the matter further with an external agency or for a further review within the Free Reformed School Association.
- Further reviews – providing a minimum of one further review will enable the first investigation to be reviewed for soundness and allow additional information not available in the first complaint to be included.
- Opportunities – develop a mechanism or process by which complaint outcomes can be relayed to the appropriate area within the Free Reformed School Association.
- Feedback – develop a process that allows for a review of the complainant's experience of the complaints process by encouraging and enabling feedback on the process by which their complaint was dealt with.
- Support - is available within the Free Reformed Churches of Tasmania or for independent advice or support from organisations such as:  
Christian Counsellor Association of Australia (CCCA)

## **6. Confidentiality**

- Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and, if relevant to a person against whom a complaint is made. The school is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process. Personal identifiable information about a complainant will only be made available for the purpose of addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) will be actively protected from disclosure.

### **Informal Complaint (concern) Resolution**

The vast majority of issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. We therefore ask that, where appropriate, you first raise your concern directly with the relevant staff member, or in the case of a student, with a neutral adult. Even if the issue is resolved informally, issues are to be logged in a complaint register as a concern so we are able to identify any systemic issues arising, and take appropriate rectification action.

### **How do I make a Formal Complaint?**

If you have been unable to resolve a concern informally, or simply wish to make a formal complaint you can do so by any of the following means:

1. Sending an email/letter to school leadership team.
2. Writing a letter to the school addressed to "The school leadership team".
3. Telephoning the school and asking to speak to the student's teacher.

All formal complaints will be logged into our complaints register system and managed in accordance with the following procedure.

#### **Our Internal Complaints Handling Process**

Step 1 – All formal complaints are logged and screened by the school leadership team, or in the case of complaints against the Principal by the Chair of the School Board.

Step 2 – All valid complaints will be acknowledged in writing, as soon as practicable, and allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is our policy, where possible, to resolve all disputes within 14 days.

Step 3 – The school leadership team will investigate the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.



Step 4 – Following the determination, if appropriate, the school leadership team will formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

Step 5 – Internal reviews: If the initial response is not acceptable the matter will be reviewed internally by the Principal or the Principal's delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Principal or their delegate seek to resolve all disputes within 14 days from the date that the review process is initiated. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal, or their delegate, is accepted.

Step 6 - All complaints received will be entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

Step 7 - If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives.

See Appendix A for parent concern/complaint procedure

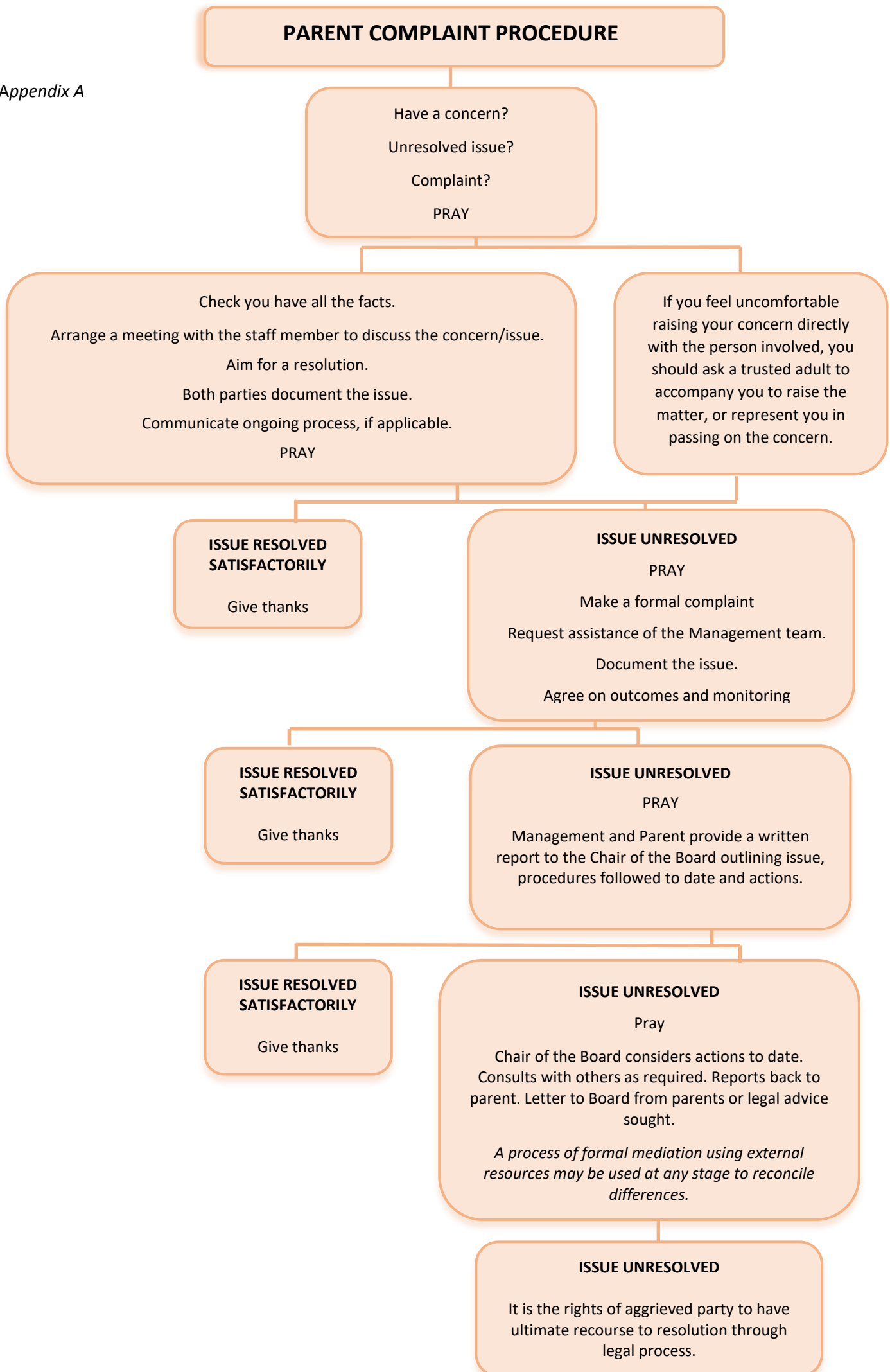
See Appendix B for student concern/complaint procedure

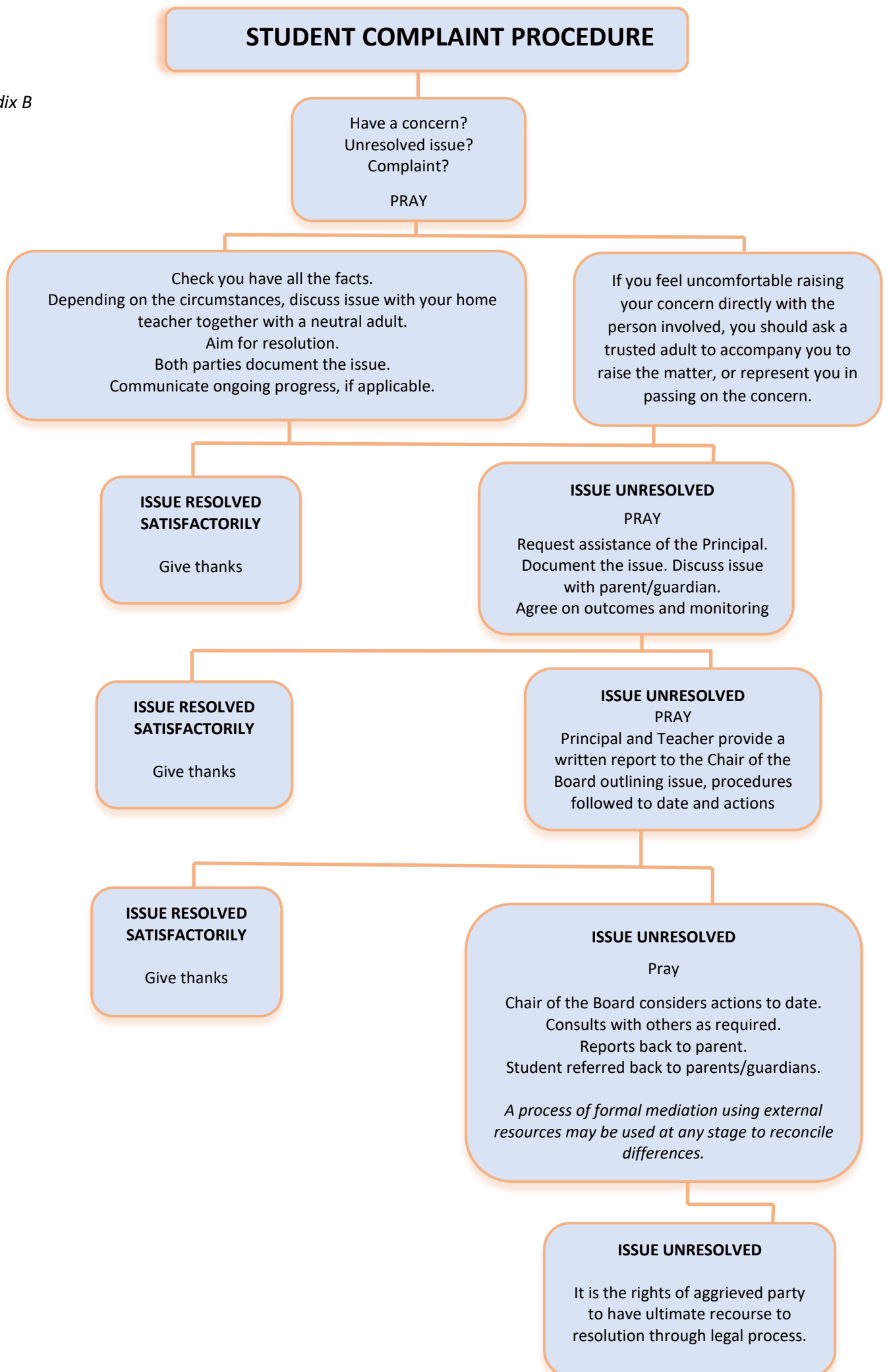
See Appendix C for staff concern/complaint procedure

See Appendix D for community member concern/complaint procedure

See Appendix E for board member concern/complaint procedure

See Appendix F for parent causing a concern/complaint procedure





# STAFF COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Appendix C



# COMMUNITY MEMBER COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Appendix D

