



COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. COMMENCEMENT, VARIATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 1.1. This policy commences operation on 12 May 2021 and replaces all previous Complaints policies of the School. This policy is subject to variation by Tintern Grammar from time to time.
- 1.2. Any amendment to this policy will be communicated to all employees, students and families.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1. This policy covers complaints made against the School (Tintern Grammar) in general, specific staff members, or school processes
- 2.2. The policy assumes that initial contact has already been made to discuss concerns that a student or a family has, prior to initiating a formal complaints process; for example, with a specific subject teacher or pastoral mentor or the staff member who is nominally responsible for a particular process.
- 2.3. This policy is NOT intended for formal complaints made regarding the Principal – complaints regarding the Principal are to be lodged under conditions of strict confidentiality with the HR Manager of Tintern Grammar and are governed by a policy specifically written for the purpose – Equal Opportunity and Bullying Policy.

3. INTENT

- 3.1. Tintern Grammar undertakes to ensure procedural fairness is exercised when reviewing all complaints and aims to resolve complaints in a fair and timely manner.
- 3.2. Tintern Grammar will ensure that, in all stages outlined in the Complaints Policy, accurate and confidential record-keeping processes regarding a complaint will occur at all times to both support and protect the complainant.
- 3.3. Information relating to the complaint will be discussed with staff not specifically involved only on a “need to know” basis; students and parents/guardians should be reassured that strict confidentiality will be applied during all stages of the complaints process. In line with the Tintern Grammar Privacy Policy, the School undertakes to ensure all complaints will remain confidential in nature and the School further commits to ensuring the support and protection of complainants to ensure they are not victimised or discriminated against, as a result of lodging a complaint.
- 3.4. Tintern Grammar undertakes to ensure that the lodging of a complaint of any significance will trigger a review by the School’s Executive team of the relevant procedure(s) or policy(ies) that relate to the area of complaint
- 3.5. The Tintern Grammar Executive Team also undertakes to regularly review the Complaints Policy; specifically reviewing the management and resolution of all formal complaints investigated during the year on the School’s strategic planning days, which occur at the end of each year.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following steps summarise the expected outline of the processes involved in an official complaint. The steps are summarised in a flowchart at the end of the summary steps. The flowchart indicates the applicable timeframe timeline for each stage of the process.

4.1. Preliminary Query or Concern

- 4.1.1. Students or Parents/Guardians should, in the first instance, directly approach the relevant member of staff (subject or pastoral) with whom the issue has arisen. Where a student or parent/guardian has a complaint relating to teaching practice, assessment and/or reporting they should, in the first instance, approach the subject teacher. Where a student or parent/guardian has a complaint relating to pastoral matters, behaviour and or discipline or matters relating to other students they should, in the first instance, approach the Pastoral Mentor.

- 4.1.2. Where the complaint is not resolved to the student’s or parent’s/guardian’s satisfaction, a formal written complaint should be lodged with the Head of Faculty or the Year Level Co-ordinator using the School’s Complaint guidelines – this is attached to the Policy and is also available through the Head of Faculty, the Year Level Co-ordinator or the Head of School.

4.2. Formal Notification to the School

- 4.2.1. A meeting will be arranged with the student and/or their parent/guardian with the appropriate senior staff member. Alternatively, the student or parent/guardian may contact the Head of Faculty or Year Level Co-ordinator directly and present their complaint in person in a meeting. The senior member of staff shall then record details of the complaint using the official Complaint Guidelines.
- 4.2.2. If the complaint is resolved to the student’s or parent’s/guardian’s satisfaction, in the first instance, a record shall be made in the School’s Pastoral Module of the Portal. As appropriate, relevant School personnel will be informed if a change to current policy and/or practice is recommended to avoid similar concerns on this matter.
- 4.2.3. Further redress may be sought in the event that concern or dissatisfaction remains through review of the decision by the Head of Faculty or by the Year Level Co-ordinator. The student/parent/guardian may seek to have the decision reviewed by the Head of School.

4.3. Executive Staff Review

- 4.3.1. Head of School will arrange for a meeting with the student and/or the parent/guardian
- 4.3.2. If, following this meeting, the complaint is resolved to the student’s/parent’s/guardian’s satisfaction at this stage, a record will be made in the School’s Pastoral Module of the Portal. As appropriate, relevant School personnel will be informed if a change to current policy and/or practice is recommended to avoid similar complaints on this matter.
- 4.3.3. Further redress may be sought in the event that concern or dissatisfaction remains through review of the decision by the Head of School. The student/parent/guardian may seek to have the decision reviewed by the School’s Vice Principal.
- 4.3.4. The Vice Principal will arrange for a meeting with the student and/or the parent/guardian.
- 4.3.5. If, following this meeting, the complaint is resolved to the student’s or the parent’s/guardian’s satisfaction, a record will be made in the School’s Pastoral Module of the Portal. As appropriate, relevant School personnel will be informed if a change to current policy and/or practice is recommended to avoid similar complaints on this matter.
- 4.3.6. Further redress may be sought in the event that concern or dissatisfaction remains through review of the decision by the Vice Principal. The student/parent/guardian may appeal the decision to the Principal. The appeal may be presented either in person or in writing.

4.4. Principal’s review and external avenues for appeal

- 4.4.1. The Principal will make the final decision, having consulted with all relevant staff and with the student and/or the parent/guardian
- 4.4.2. The student/parent/guardian will receive a copy of the final decision in writing, which will include reasons for the Principal’s decision
- 4.4.3. If the complaint is resolved to the student’s/parent’s/guardian’s satisfaction, a record will be made in the School’s Pastoral Module of the Portal. As appropriate, relevant School personnel will be informed if a change to current policy and/or practice is recommended to avoid similar complaints in the future

4.4.4. If the complaint is not resolved following appeal to the Principal, the student or parent/guardian may seek redress through an “independent third party”; choices of an “independent third party” will depend on the circumstances of the original complaint and will initially be proposed by the Principal.

5. SUMMARY FLOW CHART

5.1. Of process – with appropriate timeline indicated as a guideline to the student/parent/guardian. See Appendix A

6. RELATED TINTERN GRAMMAR POLICIES

6.1. Equal Opportunity & Bullying Policy

6.2. Privacy Policy

7. ADDITIONAL AVENUES OF SUPPORT

For mediation and redress may, depending on the cause or nature of the complaint, include:

7.1. The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)

7.2. The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

7.3. The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)

7.4. The International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO)

7.5. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)

7.6. The Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC)

8. APPROVAL

8.1. Policy Approved By: Tintern Grammar Executive

8.2. Date Approved: 12 May 2021

8.3. First Published: November 2018

8.4. Version: 2.0

8.5. Reviewed By: Vice Principal

8.6. Review Date: May 2024

8.7. Review Cycle: 3 years

APPENDIX 1: FORMAL COMPLAINTS GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are to serve as instructions to students/parents/guardians to formally raise a complaint regarding any matters pertaining to school operations and should be used to guide communications to them if they wish to pursue a formal complaint after informal procedures have not resolved the matter.

These should be communicated to the students/parents/guardians in an email to ensure relevant information is captured to assist the school with responding and acting appropriately.

Complaints should be communicated in writing and have the following:

1. Clearly communicate the nature of the complaint and any supporting evidence
2. Steps that have occurred to this point in response to the event such as phone calls, emails, meetings or actions to attempt to resolve the issue
3. What student/parent/guardian would like to see happen to resolve the issue

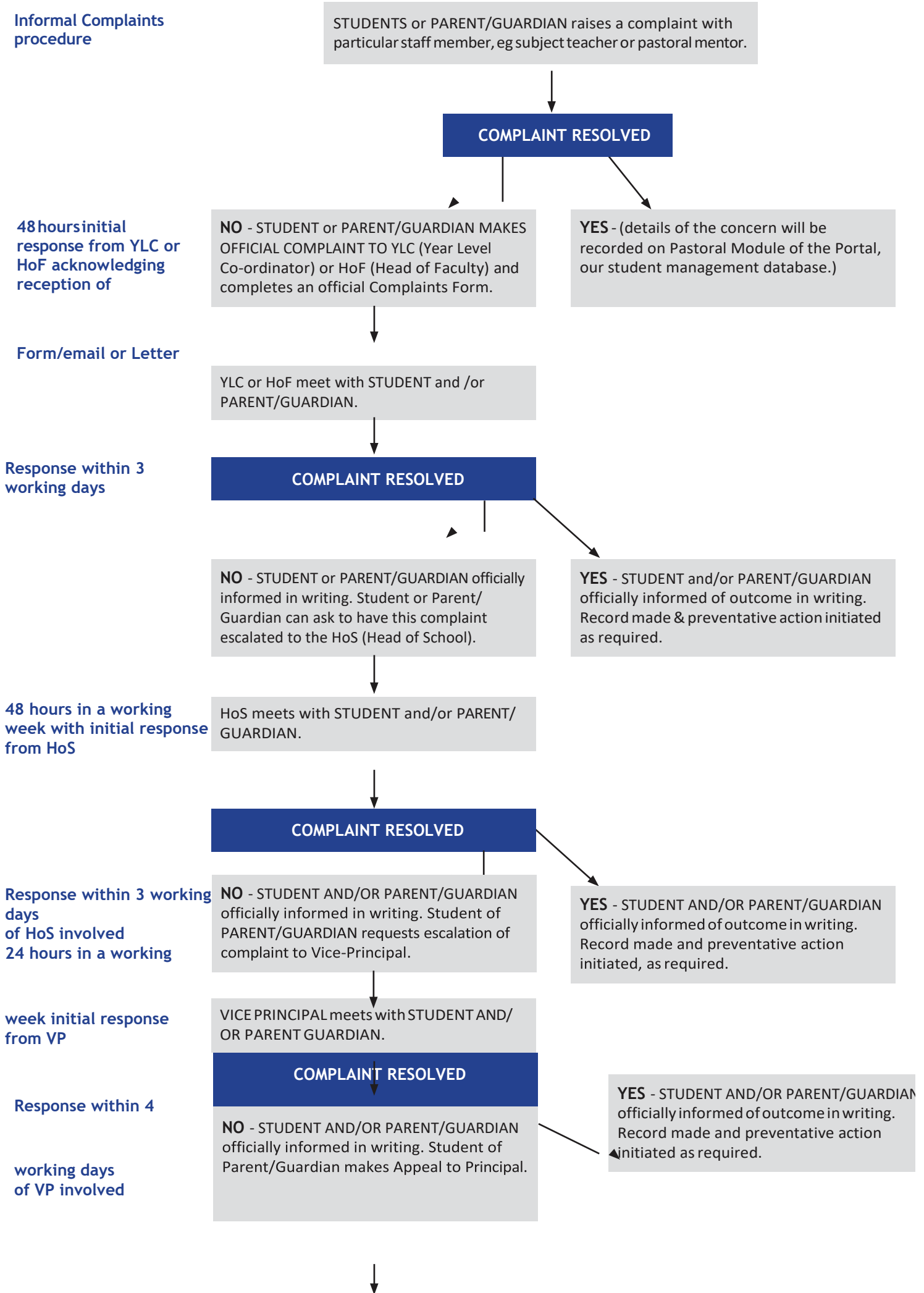
In communicating, these instructions, please reassure the student/parent/guardian that the complaint is being taken seriously and treated with confidentiality.

Inform them that the matter may need to be discussed with other relevant staff such as, Year Level Co-ordinator, Head of School or Vice Principal/Principal.

Let the student/parent/guardian know they will be notified in writing of the outcome of the complaint.

TIMELINE

Informal Complaints procedure



48 hours initial response from YLC or HoF acknowledging reception of

Form/email or Letter

Response within 3 working days

48 hours in a working week with initial response from HoS

Response within 3 working days of HoS involved
24 hours in a working

week initial response from VP

Response within 4

working days of VP involved

24 hours in working week initial response from Principals Office - scheduling a meeting

Response within 5 working days of Principal being advised

