



Divine Mercy College
326 Yangebup Road Yangebup WA 6164

Reg. Standard	Student Safety
Version	2
Written	2025
Next Review Date	2026

COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

Divine Mercy College (DMC) is committed to fostering a positive, safe, and supportive learning environment. We value open communication and take all feedback, concerns, and complaints seriously. This policy establishes a fair, transparent, and accessible framework for resolving complaints, ensuring that all members of our community—students, parents, staff, and volunteers—are heard and respected.

The primary goal of this process is to achieve a timely and equitable resolution at the most appropriate level, with the well-being of students as our utmost priority.

The Registration Officer centrally records all resolved complaints in the Complaints Register for the purpose of administrative bookkeeping, pattern analysis, and continuous improvement.

Guiding Principles

Our complaints process is underpinned by the following principles:

1. **Accessibility:** The policy is publicly available on the school website, in student diaries, and in the Parent & Student Handbook. Information is provided in a child-friendly manner.
2. **Impartiality & Fairness:** All parties are treated with respect and afforded procedural fairness. Investigations are unbiased, evidence-based, and culturally safe.
3. **Confidentiality:** Complaints are handled with discretion. Information is only shared with those directly involved in the resolution process, except where law or safety requires disclosure. Students are informed of the limits of confidentiality.
4. **Timeliness:** Complaints are acknowledged promptly and addressed within a reasonable timeframe.

5. **Support:** Complainants, especially students, are encouraged to have a support person or advocate present.
6. **No Retaliation:** The school prohibits any form of retaliation against individuals who raise a complaint in good faith.
7. **Continuous Improvement:** The Complaints Register is reviewed periodically to identify patterns and inform continuous improvement.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body	Receives reports from the Principal on serious complaints or emerging patterns identified from the Complaints Register. Oversees systemic reviews to improve policies and practices.
Principal	Ultimately responsible for the implementation of this policy and the resolution of complaints. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that a summary record of all resolved complaints is provided to the Registration Officer for bookkeeping. The Principal must immediately report any serious complaints (e.g., relating to child safety, major misconduct) to the Board Chairperson.
Coordinators and Staff	Must act on complaints promptly, follow the process outlined below, and maintain confidentiality. They are responsible for resolving issues where possible and escalating them to the Principal when necessary.
Registration Officer	Acts as the administrative keeper of the Complaints Register. At the end of each term, the Registration Officer meets with the Principal to log all resolved complaints from that term into the register. This role is for data entry, record-keeping, and pattern identification.
Parents, Students, and Volunteers	Are expected to raise concerns respectfully through the established channels and maintain the confidentiality of the process.

The Complaints Process

Process for Parents and Guardians

Step 1: Informal Resolution

Discuss your concern directly with the relevant staff member (e.g., classroom teacher) at a mutually agreeable time. Most issues are resolved effectively at this stage.

Step 2: Formal Investigation by Principal

If the issue remains unresolved, **and the complaint is NOT about the Principal**, contact the Principal to request a formal meeting. The Principal will investigate, which may involve speaking to relevant parties. A written record of the meeting and any agreed outcomes will be made.

If your complaint is regarding the Principal, please proceed directly to Step 3.

Step 3: Escalation to Governing Body

If the complaint is about the Principal or remains unresolved after Step 2, submit a written complaint outlining all details to the Board Chairperson.

Mr Darius Kwiatkowski

Chairperson, Divine Mercy College

326 Yangebup Road, Yangebup WA 6164

Email: darpol1@tpg.com.au

The Board will review the matter and may appoint an independent mediator.

Step 4: External Review

If a resolution is still not reached, both parties may agree to engage an independent arbiter (e.g., appointed by AISWA). Complaints may also be referred to the Director General of the Department of Education.

The Director General

The Director General of the Department of Education oversees the School's compliance with registration standards, including the effectiveness of its complaints handling system. Students, parents, or community members may reach out to the Director General with concerns about the School's complaint management process, and further details can be found on the Department of Education website. However, while the Director General can assess potential breaches of registration standards, they lack the authority to directly intervene in a complaint or alter the School's decisions.

Process for Students

Students are encouraged to raise concerns with any staff member they trust. They can bring a support person and may complain anonymously via the suggestion box.

Step 1: Raise with a Trusted Adult

Speak to any teacher, coordinator, or staff member. All complaints, even seemingly minor ones, will be taken seriously. The staff member will listen and work with you to find a solution and must notify the Registration Officer.

Step 2: Investigation and Resolution

The staff member will investigate appropriately. The outcome will be explained to you clearly. Your safety and wellbeing are the priority.

Step 3: Escalation

If the issue is major or not resolved, the staff member will confidentially escalate it to the Principal. The Principal will involve parents/guardians as appropriate and investigate further to reach a resolution.

Step 4: External Referral

In matters concerning student safety or welfare, the school has a legal and ethical obligation to report the issue to external authorities (e.g., WA Department of Communities). This will be explained sensitively and supportively.

Process for Staff

Step 1: Direct Discussion

Address the issue directly with the colleague involved at a mutually convenient time, aiming for a professional resolution.

Step 2: Report to Coordinator

If unresolved, report the matter formally to your direct Coordinator. **If the complaint is about the Principal, proceed directly to Step 4.**

Step 3: Investigation by Principal

The Principal will investigate the formal complaint, meeting with all parties involved.

Step 4: Escalation to Governing Body

If the complaint involves the Principal or remains unresolved, submit a written complaint to the Board Chairperson (details above).

Step 5: Independent Arbiter

If unresolved, a mutually agreed independent arbiter (e.g., from AISWA or a union) may be engaged.

Record Keeping and Review

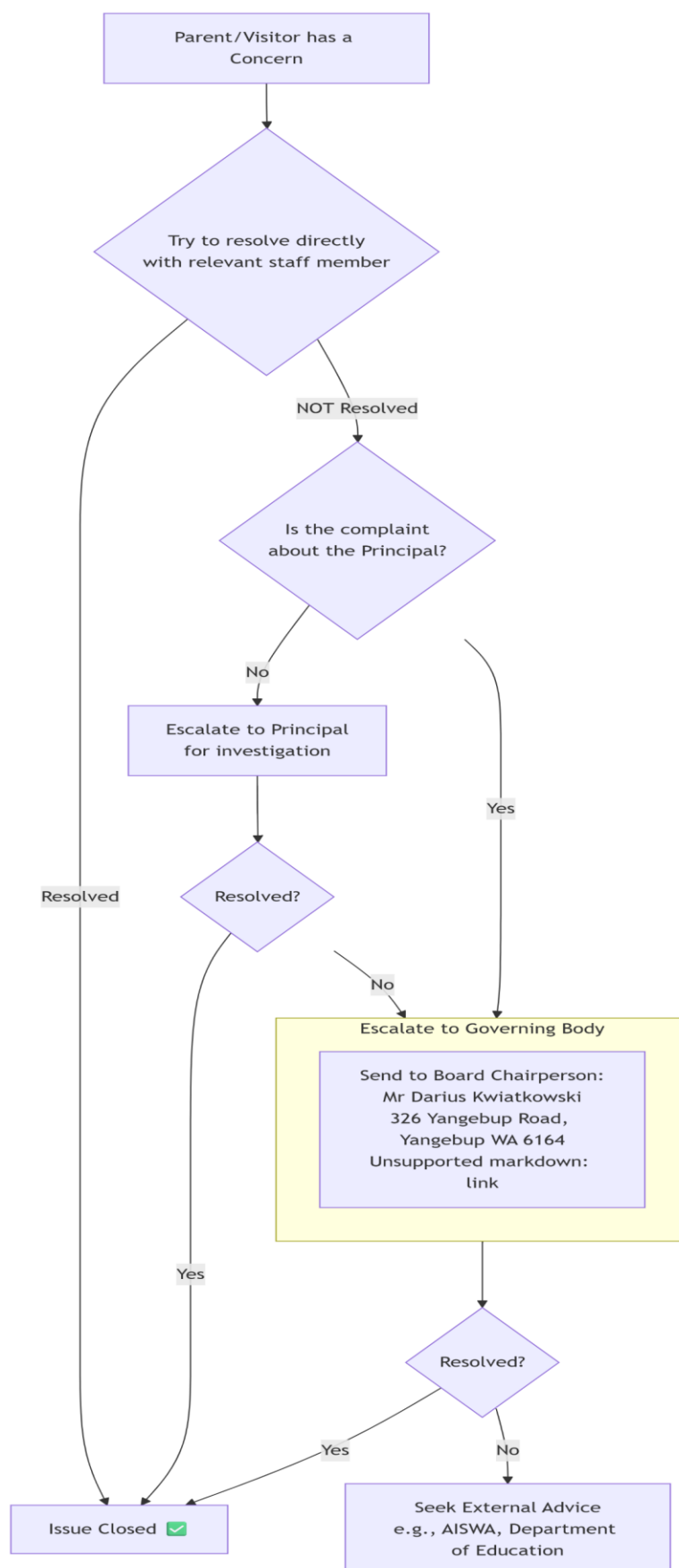
- **Administrative Logging:** At the end of each term, the Principal and Registration Officer meet. The Principal provides details of all complaints resolved during the term. The Registration Officer logs these details into the Complaints Register.
- **Content of Register:** The register is a log for tracking and includes: Date of Complaint, Nature of Complaint, Parties Involved, Investigator, Outcome, and Date Closed.
- **Pattern Analysis:** The Principal and Registration Officer review the register to identify any patterns or frequent issues.
- **Reporting to Board:** The Principal is responsible for reporting any serious complaints immediately. Based on the periodic review of the register, the Principal will also report any concerning patterns or systemic issues to the School Board for review and action.

Review History

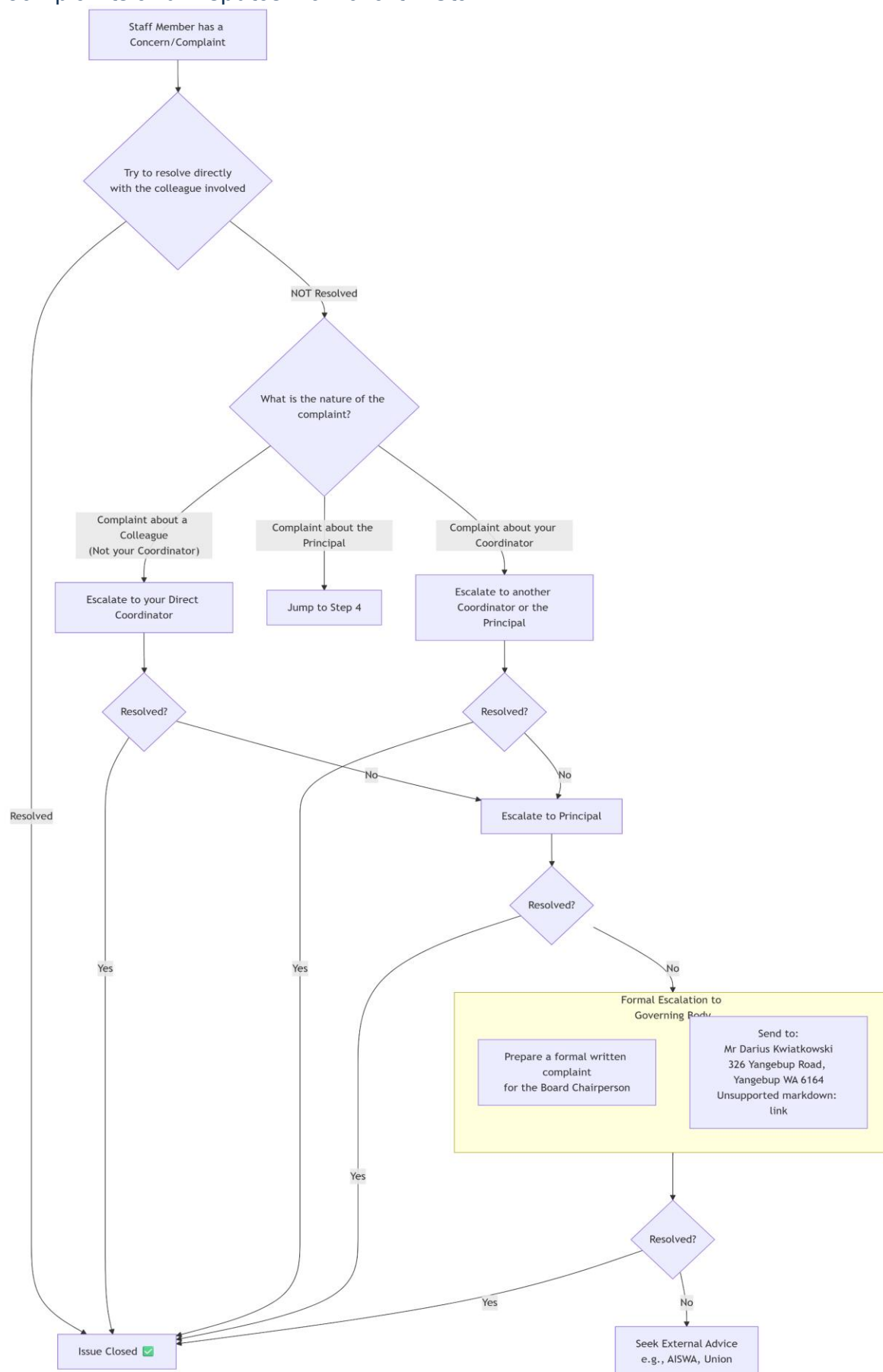
Version	Date released	Next review	Summary of Changes	Author
1	2015	2027	Document Created	Executive Leadership Team
2	2025	2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Apply to new template➤ Clarified Record-Keeping Process➤ Added the role of the Director General	Yan Lau

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved structure and clarity ➤ Added new flowchat 	
--	--	--	--	--

Complaints and Disputes Flow-chart – Parents/ Visitors



Complaints and Disputes Flow-chart – Staff



Having a Problem? We're Here to Help.

Step 1: Raise with a Trusted Adult

Talk to any teacher, coordinator, or staff member. You can bring a support person or use the suggestion box.



Step 2: Investigation & Resolution

The staff member will listen, take it seriously, and explain the outcome clearly. Your safety and well-being come first.



Step 3: Escalation

If the issue is not solved or is serious, the Principal will investigate and may involve your parents/guardians.



Step 4: External Referral

If it's about your safety or welfare, the school must report to outside authorities. This will be explained to you.

Remember:

- ✓ You can talk to ANY adult in the school you feel safe with.
- ✓ No problem is too small. We care about big worries and small ones.
- ✓ You will not get in trouble for telling the truth and asking for help.
- ✓ It's OK to bring a friend with you for support.