



## **GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA**



## **Scripture Teaching Complaints and Procedures**

**August 2018**

**GO6**



**PRAYER OF ST EPHRAIM**

*Lord and Master of my life, give me not a spirit of idleness, meddling, love of power and idle talk.*

*But grant me, your servant, a spirit of soberness, humility, patience and love.*

*Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults, and not condemn my brother: for blessed are you to the ages of ages. Amen.*

## Contents



PART 1 – COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES FOR SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	1
PART 2- COMPLAINTS POLICY	3
PART 3- STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED IN DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS	4
APPENDIX A	6
COMPLAINTS RECORDING FORM	

# GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

## PART 1 – COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES FOR SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The purpose of this document is to provide an indication of the complaints procedures for Special Religious Education or Scripture Teaching as it is better known.

For some years, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese already has in place a simple complaints procedure that is readily accessible.

It has operated in two ways. The first is the informal process through direct contact with the Scripture Teacher where any local issues can be dealt with directly and expeditiously.

The second process is the formal complaint that can be made directly to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. This operates through the web-site of the Archdiocese. It is available to all at [http://www.greekorthodox.org.au/?page\\_id=3854#1443147191741-ac8ae25c-9aff](http://www.greekorthodox.org.au/?page_id=3854#1443147191741-ac8ae25c-9aff)

The text box below sets out the existing details listed on the Scripture Classes web-page of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. These had already been in place for several years.

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE:

Our complaints process is designed to encourage the fast and efficient resolution of your issue.

For non-urgent matters we encourage that you send us an e-mail explaining your complaint, if this is not possible, or if it is urgent, please call the Archdiocese as soon as possible.

During the course of your complaint, we will aim to tailor any proposed resolutions to provide a fair and reasonable outcome to all parties involved. We will aim to deliver our mutually agreed resolution to you within 10 business days, or 2 business days where the complaint is urgent.

Please follow the steps below to raise your complaint. In the event that you require assistance with making a complaint, please do not hesitate to call us.

#### • NON-URGENT COMPLAINTS

If your complaint is of a non-urgent nature, then please send us an e-mail explaining the situation to [webmaster@greekorthodox.org.au](mailto:webmaster@greekorthodox.org.au).

You may also contact us using the via the website's **Contact Us** facility

Please fill out your Full Name, E-mail Address, and the State and Area that you reside in. For Subject, please indicate that it is related to "Special Religious Education (SRE)".

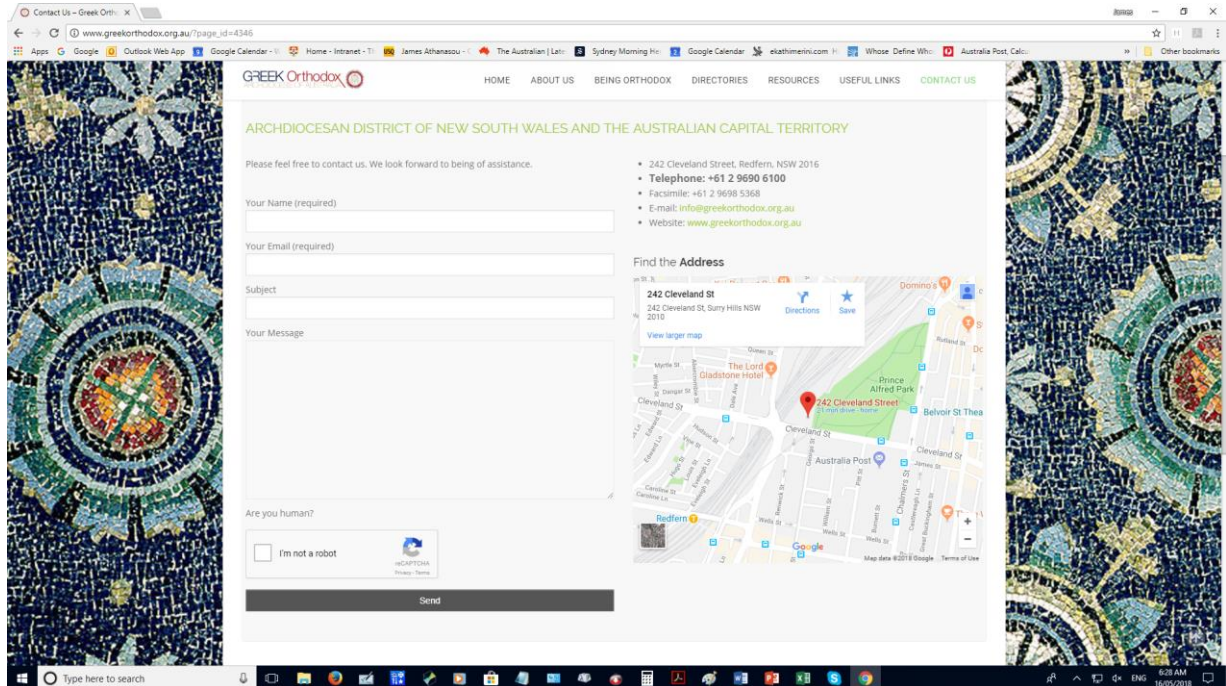
In the message, please provide a detailed description of the complaint, including the date and time, the school or place, and the people involved. The more information we have, the easier and quicker the complaint will be processed and resolved.

#### • URGENT COMPLAINTS:

If you believe your complaint is urgent, please **call** the Archdiocese directly, or **visit us**, as soon as possible.

Source: [http://www.greekorthodox.org.au/?page\\_id=3854#1443147191741-ac8ae25c-9aff](http://www.greekorthodox.org.au/?page_id=3854#1443147191741-ac8ae25c-9aff)

The policy of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese is to attend to any concern on the same day it is notified.



The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese contact us facility on [http://www.greekorthodox.org.au/?page\\_id=4346](http://www.greekorthodox.org.au/?page_id=4346)

Part 2 of this document sets out some details derived from material circulated by the Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools, of which the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese is a member. This outlines some broader aspects of a complaints policy and is for general information.

## **PART 2- COMPLAINTS POLICY**

As an approved provider it is expected that Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers always maintain the highest level of conduct to resolve any issues.

There is an expectation for Scripture Teachers to resolve issues at a local level first, with courtesy and respectfulness.

The following details of this policy refer to the way issues can be resolved.

### **Concerns about the Greek Orthodox curriculum**

The input of parents and others into the content and delivery of lessons is important. They are stakeholders in the Greek Orthodox education.

Parents (or others) should be informed that the curriculum is centralised and authorised through the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. The specific dogma of the program is based on the Orthodox Christian Faith.

They should be informed about the underlying philosophy of the curriculum and the safeguards that are already in place to ensure that the content is relevant, accurate and age appropriate.

Any specific concern of parents/guardians/children about a topic covered in the curriculum is addressed firstly at the local level by the Scripture Teacher or the Parish Priest.

### **Concerns about the Greek Orthodox Scripture Teacher**

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese takes seriously any concerns a parent or school may have in regard to reportable conduct or allegations of abuse attributed to a Scripture Teacher.

Any specific concern of parents/guardians/children about a teacher is addressed firstly at the local level by the Scripture Teacher or the Parish Priest.

The Archdiocese will follow procedures in regard to any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities.

It is also expected that the Department of Education will follow its procedures in regard to any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities. The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese will assist the Department of Education to the fullest extent and will comply with any directive from the Department of Education.

### **Concerns about the conduct of a student or a parent or a professional classroom teacher**

These matters will be raised with the school's Special Religious Education Coordinator.

There is an expectation that the school will follow its procedures in regard to any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities.

The Scripture Teacher and the school will work co-operatively to address any problems relating to positive behaviour for learning.

### **Concerns about the implementation of special religious education at a local school.**

Special religious education is considered to be a community education program. It is a cooperative endeavour between the school and the Church that recognises the importance of religious education in the development of a student.

Accordingly, there has been a spirit of cooperation and an expectation that a school will fully co-operate with any reasonable demands.

For its part, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Approved will follow the Department of Education *School Community and Consumer Complaint Procedures* [https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/School-complaint-procedure AC.pdf](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/School-complaint-procedure_AC.pdf)

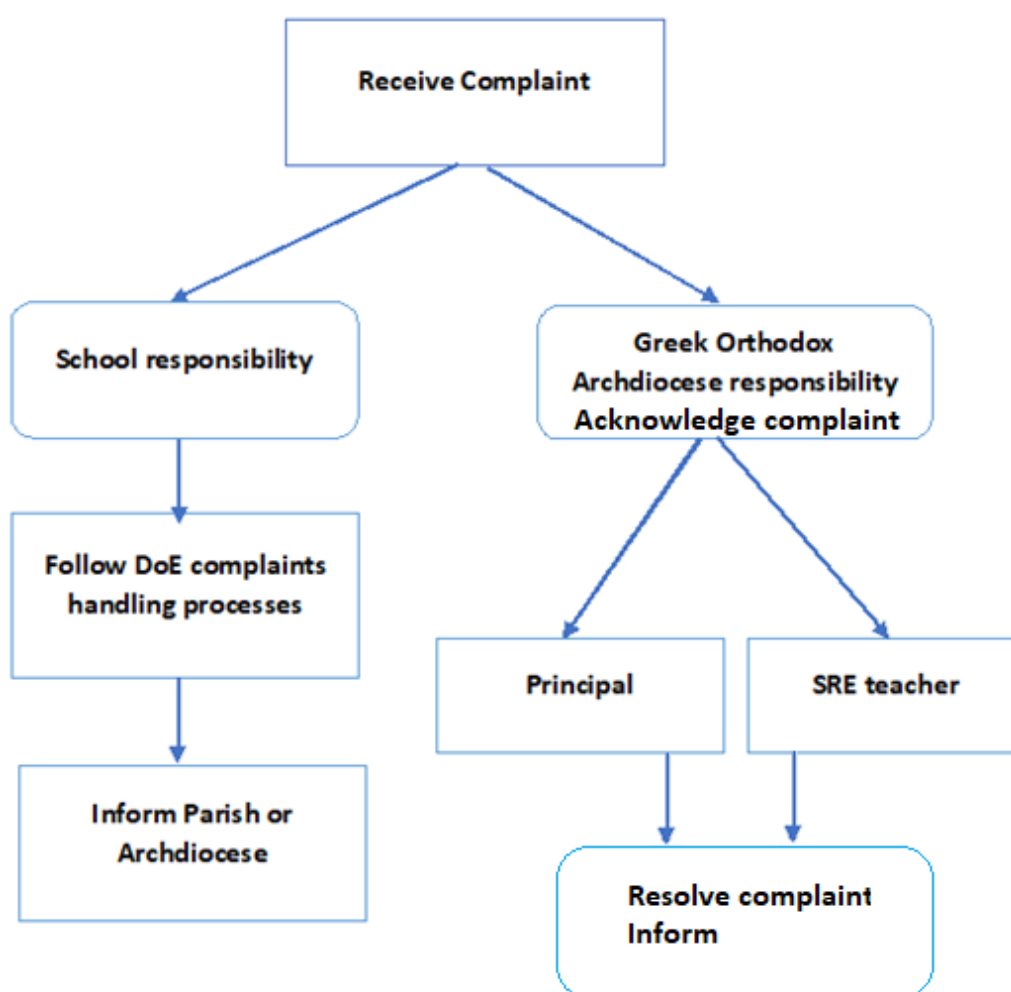
## PART 3- STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED IN DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

This section sets out the general steps to be followed in dealing with any issue or complaint. It sets out guidelines but is not prescriptive as each instance will vary in its content, context and extent. The guidelines are endorsed by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and are derived from those issued through the Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools.

The Department of Education and school's community and consumer complaints procedure is set out in [https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/School-complaint-procedure\\_AC.pdf](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/School-complaint-procedure_AC.pdf)

A standard complaints form has been developed by the through the Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools and will be used to record complaints. This is outlined in Appendix A.

Complaint flowchart



### Acknowledge complaint

Teachers should acknowledge a complaint from a principal as soon as possible, ideally within one working day. This can be done in person, by telephone, email or formally in writing. Where the acknowledgement was made verbally, it should be documented in writing.

Let the principal know that they will be kept up to date with the progress.

Keep the matter as confidential as necessary by only sharing information with those who need to know about the complaint issues.

Listen carefully to the issues and, if at all possible, resolve the complaint directly at the local level.

### **Gather information**

Gather enough information to allow a proper assessment of concerns as quickly as possible. The information to be gathered could include: Special Religious Education Procedures; Relevant Department of Education policies and procedures e.g. Code of Conduct; SRE curriculum teacher's manual; Information from the approved providers' SRE manager/coordinator

### **Resolve**

Complaints should be finalised as soon as possible and no later than 20 working days. Keep the principal updated on the progress of the complaint. If a delay is anticipated, inform the principal and provide reasons for the delay.

Consider any reasonable outcomes suggest by the principal.

Outcomes will depend on the circumstances of each complaint and take into account the role of Scripture Teachers as volunteers in a school and subject to the Department's policies and procedures and the principal as its appointed site manager.

### **Inform**

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia will provide information about the outcome to the principal. This will explain:

- The outcome of the complaint and any action to be taken, by whom and when
- The reasons for the decision
- Any internal or external options for review

If a Scripture Teacher is the subject of a complaint, he/she will be provided with information about the outcome.

### **Ongoing responsibilities**

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese has ongoing responsibilities to:

- Respond to and manage a complaint from a principal;
- Prevent people making complaints being treated unfairly;
- Maintain privilege or confidentiality about complaints at all times;
- Support those involved.

### **Acknowledgement**

The cooperation and support of the All-Faiths Special Religious Education and the inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools is gratefully acknowledged.





APPENDIX A: COMPLAINTS RECORDING FORM

**Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia Complaint Recording Form**

General Information					
[ ]parent [ ]student [ ]member of the public [ ]other					
Title	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr	<input type="checkbox"/> Mrs	<input type="checkbox"/> Ms	<input type="checkbox"/> Miss	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Name					
Address				Postcode	
Email address					
Telephone number					
Mobile phone number					
Preferred contact method:	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter	<input type="checkbox"/> Email	
Complaint details					
Has a complaint about this issue been lodged before	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No		
	If yes, when:				
Complaint summary					
What happened; When it happened; Where it happened; Who was involved					
What would they like to happen to resolve the complaint					

Attach any documentation that supports the complaint

Action officer and notes: