



**POLICY TITLE: GRIEVANCE POLICY**

**BOARD APPROVAL DATE: 16 February 2010**

**SIGNED BY CHAIR:**

**BOARD REVIEW DATE: February 2012**

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**OVERVIEW:**

Rockingham Montessori School is committed to encouraging feedback and managing parental and/or student concerns about management and educational issues as they arise from time to time. The aim of this policy is to provide everyone with a clear understanding of how problems that arise will be dealt with.

Dispute resolution is fundamental to self development.

**RATIONALE:**

Rockingham Montessori School strongly encourages constructive feedback from the school community as it may assist in improving the school and ultimately the outcomes for its students.

The School recognizes that some within the School community may disagree with the actions, priorities, procedures and environments of the school from time to time.

**OBJECTIVES:**

The School is committed to:

- Creating an environment that welcomes feedback and has a clearly defined pathway for dealing with grievances;
- Attempting to resolve conflicts to the mutual satisfaction of the School and the complainant; and
- Demonstrate that a fair and equitable grievance handling process has been followed.

**APPLICABLE ISSUES:**

Complaints are usually made in person, by telephone, by letter or email. However the complaint is communicated, the receiver of the complaint should:

- Confirm with the complainant that their issue is something **requiring resolution** and not simply a communication of information (eg. “I don’t like the colour of the wall” is a communication of information, whereas “I find the colour of the wall offensive and want it changed” is a complaint requiring resolution).
- No attempt should be made to resolve the complaint directly
- Refer the complaint to the Teacher in Charge or Secretary of the Board of Governors (“the Secretary)

### **COMMUNICATING COMPLAINTS:**

Parents and students are encouraged to submit all complaints, in writing by letter or by email, to either the Teacher in Charge or the Secretary.

If a complaint is received verbally in the front office or to a Teacher, then the Office Staff or Teacher will refer the complainant to the Teacher in Charge.

The Teacher in Charge or the Secretary will record the complaint in the complaints register. An acknowledgement of the receipt of the complaint will be issued either verbally or in writing (ultimately **always** in writing) to the complainant within 5 working days.

**All** complaints received will be treated with the **strictest confidence**.

### **DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS:**

Early intervention, independent, fair and impartial investigation is essential for the resolution of all grievances whether they be educational, managerial or personal. Some matters are simple and a brief discussion with the person responsible will be sufficient to achieve a positive outcome, others may be more complex and require detailed investigation before a resolution is forthcoming.

Not all complaints can be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant. In such cases, there must be an end to the process at some point. This will be determined by the School. It should always be demonstrable, should this occur, that the complaint has been fully and fairly dealt with.

If required, a mediator could be engaged. Consistency of treatment may be a factor in dealing with complaints with similar attributes. Guidance may be sought from other sources such as the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA), relevant education legislation, other Montessori Schools or the Catholic Education Office.

Should the complaint come from a member of the Board of Governors then that member would not be involved in any discussion relating to the complaint other than as the complainant.

### **LEVELS OF RESPONSIBILITY:**

- **The Board of Governors is responsible for:**
  - Developing and adopting the policy
  - Investigating independently and respectfully any instance where a dispute is tabled
  - Ensuring that there is no conflict of interest

- Engaging a mediator should that be required
  - An annual review of the complaints register
  - Providing the ultimate decision when dealing with a complaint and communicating that to the complainant in a respectful and timely manner where the Teacher in Charge and/or the Secretary have been unable to satisfactorily resolve a matter in dispute.
- **The Teacher in Charge and the Secretary are responsible for:**
    - Fairness, impartiality and respect in investigating any dispute
    - Dealing with the complaint in the strictest confidence
    - Early intervention and setting a timeline for resolution to ensure prompt investigation and response
    - Ensuring there is no conflict of interest and if so handling it appropriately
    - Arranging meetings between the complainant and the person/people to whom the complaint is leveled
    - Careful assessment of the dispute
    - Careful assessment of the resolution
    - Maintaining thorough, written, records of any meetings, noting all interactions between all parties
    - Ensuring all information is handled responsibly
    - Communicating to the appropriate people any learnt outcomes from the complaint and resolution process
- **School Staff are responsible for:**
    - Identifying whether a communication from a member of the school community is a complaint requiring a resolution or simply a communication of information
    - Referring complaints to the Teacher in Charge or the Secretary
    - Fairness and impartiality if investigating any complaint
    - Maintaining strict confidence when involved in the investigation of any complaint
    - Ensuring all information is handled responsibly
    - Early intervention in all conflict
    - Meeting with the Teacher in Charge and the complainant if required
    - Maintaining thorough written records relevant to a complaint
    - Ensuring personal information is handled responsibly
- **Complainants are responsible for:**
    - Ensuring complaints are directed to the Teacher in Charge or the Secretary of the Board of Governors
    - Maintaining appropriate levels of behavior when communicating grievances verbally to staff
    - Accurate reporting of any query or dispute
    - Assisting with the investigation of a complaint
    - Attending meetings called with respect to resolving a complaint

## **APPENDICES**

1. Complaints Register Template

## **RELATED AND SOURCE DOCUMENTS:**

1. Beehive Montessori School Complaints/Feedback Policy