

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Introduction

Child Side School is committed to encouraging feedback and a solutions-based approach to any problems, issues, concerns and complaints.

Scope and Application

This policy applies to all and everyone at Child Side School and is embedded in the culture and educational approach and practice of Child Side School. This policy will be reviewed and amended in accordance with Child Side School Policy on Policies and Policy Guidelines and Procedures Contents Schedule.

The use of the word child/children in this policy refers to students in the context of the school environment.

Related Legislation/Guidelines

- Guide to Registration Standards and Other Requirements For Non-Government Schools: Standard 9
- Privacy Act
- Are You Listening? Guidelines for making complaints systems accessible and responsive to children and young people
- Australian Government National Office for Child Safety Complaint Handling Guide

Related Policies/Guidelines/Documents

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Child Code of Conduct – Kindergarten – Yr6
- Young Adolescent Code of Conduct
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Guiding Children's Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Behaviour Policy
- Child Feedback and Solution Seeking Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- Child Side School Child Safe Organisation Framework

Policy Statement

Child Side School culture supports open communication and a solution-based focus when working with people whereby everyone's voices are heard in a respectful and supportive environment and solutions are sought wherever possible. Educators, School Leadership Team and the Governing Council are available to respond to issues as they arise so that solutions can be found promptly in an attempt to reduce the need for the more formal grievance process contained within this policy being used. All complaints and grievances are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly ensuring that procedural fairness and cultural sensitivity is followed. The process ensures that reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

The school regularly communicates and provides information to parents, children, employees and volunteers, based on the National Child Safe Organisation key principles including; Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused and implementation of the principles is regularly reviewed and improved.

This information is contained in the Child Side School Child Safe Organisation Framework and various policies available on the school website, provided to parents, staff and volunteers at the time of engagement and regularly communicated via the school communications app. All of these principles are woven into the curriculum through processes detailed in the document.

Grievances and complaints will be analysed to identify causes and systematic failures in order to guide continuous improvement.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Communication Procedure
Appendix 2	Grievance Guidelines
Appendix 3	Grievance Flowchart

Version Management

[illegible]

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE

We aim for clear, constructive communication in the interest of the health and vision of Child Side School and Playgroup.

Parents/guardians should:

- communicate their concerns and observations to educators, not to other parents or any children,
- raise their own concerns and observations to educators and not request a third party to communicate on their behalf,
- make appointments for significant concerns to enable them to be thoughtfully considered and documented,
- respect staff requests to delay and/or make a future appointment to discuss specific concerns, as the staff's duty of care is to the group,
- respect decisions made by staff as professional decisions in the best interests of the child and school, and
- keep all discussions confidential.

Parents/guardians can:

- discuss general information about individual children with the core educator on a daily basis before or after school,
- make an appointment for a meeting/debrief with the learning team, which meets every Wednesday immediately after early close at 2pm,
- discuss matters pertaining the school identity, policies and/or procedures with co-principals who are available on most Wednesdays,
- make an appointment for a meeting/debrief with co-principals for matters of a serious nature, and
- access the school grievance procedure* if solutions over time are unacceptable or the situation degenerates.

Those who activate grievance procedures will need to be prepared to work within the procedure and code of conduct and be available to meet in person to work towards a resolution; this will take time and often multiple meetings may be required.

The school will:

- ensure the senior educator is made aware of all concerns raised,
- ensure co-principals and the Governing Council (GC) are made aware of all serious concerns raised,
- document and file notes for all meetings and discussions,
- keep all discussions confidential,
- follow school policies when a complaint is made against a staff member",
- advise the parent/guardian when a third party may be required to assist in reaching a resolution, and
- address breaches of confidentiality that occur either within or outside of the school through co-principals and the GC.

The school may:

- not pursue anonymous and/or generalised complaints that are not evidence based, and
- complaints that are in conflict with the school's endorsed policies and educational practices will be handled at the discretion of co-principals and the chair of the GC.

These policies state the process will be documented and monitored by the co-principals in consultation with the chair of the GC. Any actions required under staff disciplinary procedures would be handled confidentially within the School.

GRIEVANCE GUIDELINES

1. We expect children to follow the conflict resolution procedure therefore we expect all adults; parents, staff and volunteers to also follow the procedure. Research and experience show that significant adults modelling appropriate behaviours and procedures is a powerful and authentic way for children to learn.
2. In all matters of dispute, the educational well-being of the children is the first priority, both the individual and collective impact needs to be considered.
3. Information about the process for raising concerns and dealing with disputes and complaints is available to children, parents, staff and members of the local community on the school website, in staff and parent packs, in annual information pack, in each classroom.
4. The process for responding to concerns, disputes and complaints is as follows:
(PLEASE REFER TO CHILD FEEDBACK AND SOLUTION SEEKING POLICY FOR CHILD FRIENDLY VERSION)

Raising Concerns and Complaints

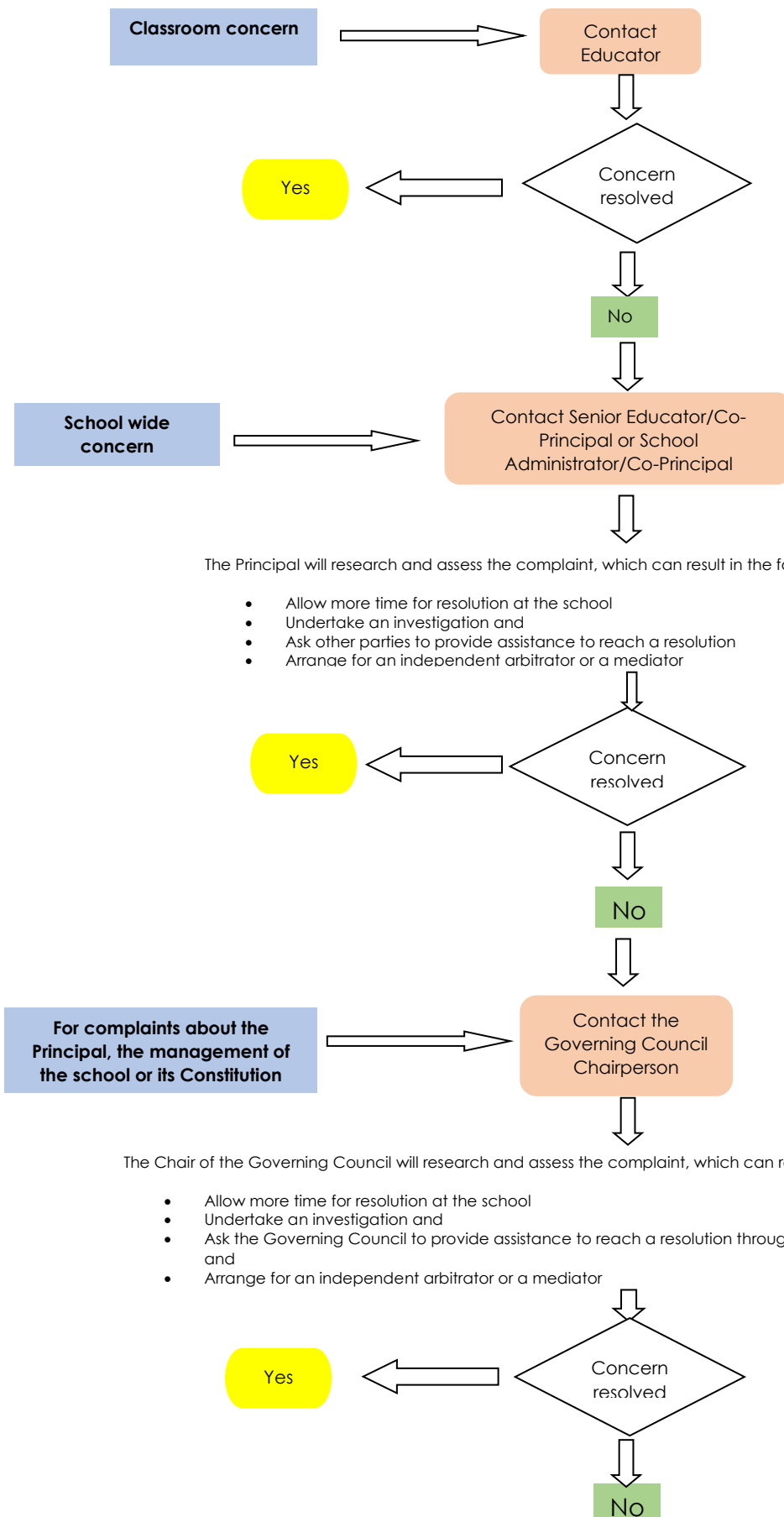
1. A concern will be treated as a less serious matter that may be resolved with a more informal approach.
2. Complaints will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction that requires a more formal process.
3. We encourage people to first treat their grievance as a concern when approaching the school, and then lodge a complaint if this is not handled to your satisfaction or a resolution has not been reached.
4. When raising a concern, we suggest that it is best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue eg, class or learning issues to your child's educator or request a Learning Team Meeting on a Wednesday afternoon during Staff Dialogue time.
5. Complaints need to be lodged in writing, clearly outlining the details of the grievance and this should be lodged with either the Senior Educator/Co-Principal or School Administrator/Co-Principal unless the complaint is about these individuals in which case the complaint can be lodged with the Chair of the Governing Council.
6. Anonymous complaints will also be considered and addressed.
7. Complaints are treated in a confidential manner and with integrity, respect and cultural sensitivity. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Senior Educator/Co-Principal or School Administrator/Co-Principal and those directly involved. The Chairperson of the Governing Council may also need to be informed.
8. It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

9. We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the School aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the Police or to Department of Child Protection for advice or immediate action. If such action was required parents would be informed.
10. Information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file and in a complaint's register. All documents, files and registers are retained in locked cabinets in the administration building and are only accessible by the Co-Principals and Administration Assistant.
11. Action which needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints, would be handled confidentially within the School.
12. If a complaint is lodged in writing, a written response will be made within 5 working days to acknowledge the complaint and, unless further exploration of the issue is needed, detail what action is proposed or will be taken and the timeline for this action. It may be suggested that a meeting will be required between relevant parties.
13. If you are not satisfied with the outcome or, that your concerns have not been fully and fairly considered, the Senior Educator/Co-Principal or School Administrator/Co-Principal will refer the matter to the Chairperson of the Governing Council, alternatively you may wish to write directly to the Chairperson. The Chairperson will call for a full report from the Senior Educator/Co-Principal or School Administrator/Co-Principal and will examine matters thoroughly before responding. This may result in a positive solution, but if it does not, the Chairperson will invite you to a meeting. Those involved in this meeting would include: The Chairperson, Senior Educator/Co-Principal or School Administrator/Co-Principal, at most one other staff member and the Complainant. Complainants may wish to be supported by a friend. Legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage.
14. Any complaints about the Senior Educator/Co-Principal or School Administrator/Co-Principal the management of the school or its Constitution should be submitted to the Chair of the Governing Council in writing.
15. If a solution or resolution is unable to be reached, then the Chairperson would seek the advice of an independent arbitrator.

The Director General of the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the school observes the Registration Standards and monitors the school's compliance with the standards including the standard about its complaints handling system. Any student, parent or community member is entitled to contact the Director General with concerns about how the school has dealt with a complaint. Information is available of the Department of Education website. While the Director General may consider whether the school has breached the registration standards and other requirements, she does not have the power to intervene in a complaint or override the school's decision.

CHILD SIDE SCHOOL GRIEVANCE FLOWCHART

When raising a concern start with the person most closely concerned with the issue eg class educator or request a Learning Team Meeting on a Wednesday after Staff Dialogue.



Any concerns should be submitted to the Chair of the Governing Council in writing.

If an agreed resolution is unable to be reached by both parties, final arbitration can be sought through an independent adjudicator who must have no relationship with either party or a personal or professional interest in the outcome of the complaint or dispute. AISWA will be consulted to assist in this process.