

GRIEVANCE POLICY

This policy is informed by:

- CMS Members Grievance Policy (*reviewed 2014*)

Statement:

Canberra Montessori School is committed to providing a safe work environment for all staff and students. The policy applies to any grievance felt by a parent or carer of a child participating in a school program, in relation to a staff member, the School, the School Board, or another parent or carer.

Rationale:

The purpose of the Grievance Policy is to define a framework which can be used to deal with grievances within the Canberra Montessori School or any program owned or operated by the school, in an effective and transparent manner.

A distinctive feature of the Grievance Policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that complaints are addressed in a timely and confidential manner at the lowest appropriate management level, in order to prevent minor problems or concerns from escalating. Please refer to the "*Communication Pathways at CMS*" document. We expect that complaints will be brought forward and resolved in a respectful manner recognising the dignity of each person concerned in the process. The policy recognises that simple matters can be resolved without recourse to the formal complaint handling process but rather, quickly and simply, by discussion between appropriate people.

Specific Practices & Procedures:

There is no prescribed procedure for lodging a grievance. However, the following suggestions may assist in resolving a grievance.

Grievances can be serious events with significant consequences for many people and therefore preparation can be helpful.

- Clarify the facts of the matter (*What happened and when? Who was present?*).
- Define your expectations in relation to the matter (*Preferred action. When and by whom?*).
- Investigate school policy on the issue in question (*review school policy documentation. Seek information from appropriate sources*).
- Develop a plan of action (*Who to approach and when. There should be some discretion used with respect to the timing and location of the discussion. It would be inappropriate, for example, to start a discussion with a Class Director in the morning when s/he is welcoming students. Typically, a time and place should be agreed for discussion of the matter. Identify clearly what your issue/concern is. Making notes is helpful*).

Grievance Action:

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When meeting with the person/people involved it is suggested you are respectful, assertive, non-judgemental and solution focused. Allow enough time for the matter to be discussed fully.

- Describe what happened (*As factually as possible, without interpretation*).
- Specify what makes it unacceptable to you (*identify your expectations about the situation. If relevant, identify breaches of school policy*)
- Own and clearly express your feelings about the matter (*Use “I statements”. Identify your preferred situation or behaviour. Allow discussion and for all parties to fully express their point of view*).

Canberra Montessori School Board involvement in a grievance proceeding will be through its Operational Liaison and Compliance Committee (OLCC). The OLCC has the full authority of the CMS Board regarding grievance matters and may be contacted by any participant in an ongoing grievance if either:

- The grievance relates directly to the Principal
- The matter involves the School Board or a member of the School Board
- The involvement of a third party (e.g. legal advisor or mediator) is deemed appropriate: or
- The matter has been unsuccessfully resolved, in the view of any party to the grievance, without the prior involvement of the OLCC.

Should an ongoing grievance with CMS become the subject of a process involving a relevant external authority (e.g., the ACT Education Department), then (a) if not already involved, the OLCC must be informed by the delegate representing the school in the grievance process (usually the Principal) as soon as possible, (b) the CMS grievance process herein described is terminated and (c) the CMS Board, via the OLCC, will cooperate full and appropriately in any process or procedure deemed necessary by the relevant external authority.

Grievance Reporting:

Appropriate record keeping and reporting are integral aspects of the grievance process. However, grievances dealt with successfully via direct discussion between the primary parties in the grievance do not require formal reporting mechanisms. Any grievance which entails the involvement of the Principal or the OLCC should have a correspondence file opened and maintained by either the school’s administrative staff (in the case of Principal involvement) or the OLCC (in the case of its involvement). Further, at the completion of any grievance process involving the OLCC, a formal report shall be provided to the member (or members) who brought the grievance, except in the case that the grievance process is terminated by the involvement of a relevant external authority.

For grievances which require the involvement of the OLCC, the OLCC (with relevant input from the full Board where such input is deemed necessary by the OLCC) has the Board’s delegated authority to make the final determination of (a) when the process is completed, (b) the ultimate outcome of the process, and (c) what, if any, recommendations are made.

Approved by:	Date:	Next Review Date:
Principal	07/08/2020	07/08/2022