

Dealing with Grievances and Complaints Policy and Procedure

Related Policies

Positive Guidance and Behaviour Management Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Child Protection Policy.

Aim

Grievances or complaints may arise from time to time and it is important that they are addressed.

We aim to ensure that any complaints from children, families or educators are respectfully considered and acted upon and are guided by the following policy values:

- Procedural fairness and natural justice
- Code of ethics and conduct
- Culture free from discrimination and harassment
- Transparent policies and procedures
- Opportunities for further investigation
- Adhering to our Service philosophy

Definitions

Complaint or Grievance: Includes complaints or grievances relating to the curriculum, extra curricular activities, the method or manner of teaching, conflict or other issues between students, and/or issues involving parent helpers.

Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct: Includes complaints raised by stakeholders (including parents and carers) about staff misconduct and reportable conduct. Please refer to our Child Protection Policy.

Board: Board means the Board of Directors of Headland Montessori

Privacy and Confidentiality

- Management and educators will adhere to our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy when dealing with grievances. However, if a grievance involves a staff member or child protection issues, a government agency may need to be informed.

Conflict of Interest

It is important for the complainant to feel confident in

- Being heard fairly
- An unbiased decision making process

Should a conflict of interest arise during a grievance or complaints that involves the Approved Provider, the Nominated Supervisor or other Management will be nominated as an alternative mediator.

The School may also engage the resources of an Independent Conflict Resolution Service to assist with the mediation of a dispute. We will ensure that throughout the conflict resolution process the Services Code of Conduct must be adhered to.

Implementation

1. A complaint or grievance should be raised as soon as realistically possible in person with the Principal of the School. The Principal or the complainant may decide to include a Board Member in that discussion if required.
2. If for any reason it is not possible or appropriate to raise the complaint with the Principal, the complaint or grievance should be raised with a Board member.
3. Under no circumstances is a parent to approach another child directly with a complaint.
4. Any complaint or grievance discussed with the Principal or Board Member by appointment at a time that is suitable for both the parent/carer and Principal and/or Board Member.
5. The Principal or the Board Member listening to the complaint will either request the problem be documented in writing or make written notes themselves if deemed necessary.
6. If the matter is resolved at this level the Principal will provide a written response outlining the outcome and provide a copy to all parties involved.
7. If the Principal or Board Member is unable to resolve the grievance or complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant, then the matter should be referred to the entire Board for consideration. The issue will be addressed at a special Board meeting convened to discuss the grievance or complaint. The Board, in its absolute discretion, may require any documentation to be provided to the Board prior to the special Board meeting to provide background and clarity about the grievance or complaint. If the matter cannot be resolved at such a Board meeting, the Board will seek advice from the Australian Independent Schools Association (AIS).
8. All documentation relating to complaints and meetings about complaints will be kept in a secure, lockable location.
9. The complainant's right to privacy will be respected subject to the School's duty of care and legal responsibility to report student behaviours and concerns to parents/caregivers and reportable events/criminal behaviour to the relevant child protection authorities.
10. The School reserves the right to decline to make changes requested by a complainant which may disadvantage others or interfere with the delivery of the curriculum to any student or cause hardship to the School or is not in accordance with the School's ethos and values.

Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct

The following formal steps will be followed:

1. Please refer to Headland Montessori's Child Protection Policy to ensure that the complaint about a staff member refers to reportable conduct/misconduct, rather than other types of complaints that can be taken more informally to the Principal (or Chairman of the Board, if the complaint is about the Principal).

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2. If the complaint is deemed to be reportable, it is recommended that the complaint be made in writing. The complaint should be handed in person to or emailed directly to the Principal admin@headlandmontessori.com.au. If the complaint is about the Principal, the complaint should be handed in person to or emailed directly to the Chair of the Board yan@headlandmontessori.com.au
3. The School will acknowledge, consider and follow-up the complaint.
4. The School will determine how the complaint will be responded to. Please note that the handling of a formal complaint could take substantially longer than a general complaint, if a reportable conduct investigation needs to take place.
5. If the complaint is to be investigated, the School will update the complainant on the School's progress, as deemed appropriate.
6. The complainant will be emailed personally to inform him or her of when the complaint has been finalised. Please note that there may be limitations under the Ombudsman's Act and privacy legislation regarding disclosure of information about the investigation and the outcome of the investigation.
7. The complainant's and accused's right to privacy will be respected subject to the School's duty of care and legal responsibility to report staff misconduct to the relevant child protection authorities.