

# Grievance Policy

Policy P042

## Rationale

North-Eastern Montessori School seeks to promote a culture that inspires and reinforces high standards of conduct and accountability.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for handling grievances or complaints from staff, parents, children or external stakeholders.

A grievance may be made informally or formally in writing, following a circumstance believed to be just cause for disapproval. This may involve behaviour by a community member or a school process that is not in accordance with school policies, values and expectations or not in accordance with government regulation. The school's Whistle-blower Protection Policy is in place for grievances that relate to potential misconduct or breaches of the law.

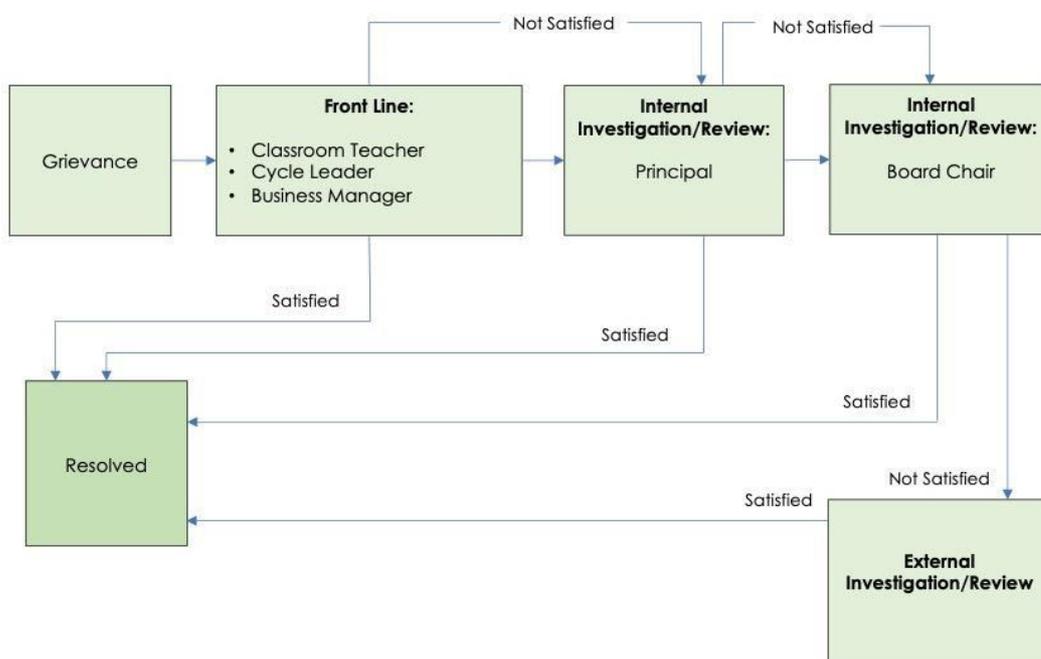
## Implementation

- This Grievance Policy should be accessible to all members of the school community.
- The authority underpinning the school's approach to handling the grievance (e.g. regulation, policy or Montessori approach) can be clarified for the person making the grievance.
- Staff should aim to prevent grievances. However, as conflict is inevitable within any school community, a positive school environment should be cultivated to encourage and help people raise grievances when appropriate.
- As a general rule, an anonymous grievance will only be accepted by the school at its discretion having regard to its nature and seriousness and whether there is sufficient information for an investigation to be conducted.
- Any grievance related to child safety, even if anonymous, will be investigated.
- When handling grievances, staff should give consideration to responsiveness, confidentiality, fairness, due process, outcomes, community engagement and school improvement.
- Grievances should be logged and all investigations, responses and resolutions documented.
- The Principal has the right to suspend a staff member or a student as part of the grievance process if the matter carries serious safety concerns.
- There should be adequate resources, training and support (including consideration of their health and safety) for staff involved with grievances.
- The school will endeavour to support all parties involved in any grievance made in good faith. Grievances found to be vexatious will be dismissed or viewed as misconduct. Victimisation will not be tolerated.
- There are three levels of grievance review within the school:
  - Frontline Handling
  - Internal Investigation/Review
  - External Investigation/Review
- **Frontline Handling** - The school aims for the majority of grievances to be handled by direct communication with the person involved using Grace and Courtesy and positive conflict resolution techniques appropriate for a school community. These may include discussion, mediation or the instigation of a restorative process facilitated by the Principal. Particular consideration should be given to the roles and responsibilities of community members, including the Duty of Care responsibility staff have with children under their supervision. The school's Code of Conduct may be a helpful guide for those with a grievance. The Classroom Teacher, or Cycle Co-ordinator, may be consulted for advice, or the school's Business Manager in the case

of an administrative matter. As a general principle, early resolution should be sought. It is anticipated that the majority of school grievances will be best resolved through this channel.

- **Internal Investigation/Review** – When a grievance is more serious or complex or cannot be resolved with the help of frontline staff, an internal investigation is to be conducted by the Principal. This investigation is designed to find and evaluate the facts, to determine whether the grievance has merit and to respond in keeping with the school's policies for the best outcome. This investigation may be followed by a review of the school's grievance handling processes or grievance policy. If the grievance relates to the Principal or a Director, the Board Chair conducts the internal investigation/review.
- **External Investigation/Review** – When the first two levels have been exhausted, or a grievance is so serious or complex that it constitutes a significant threat to the person or the school, an independent and professional external review agency may be consulted. This is instigated at the Board's discretion (or the Principal's discretion, with Board support, depending on the nature of the grievance). This agency may offer advice, representation or conciliation or may investigate and provide a report with recommendations to the school's leadership to resolve the grievance.
- Any grievances are held in strict confidence and no disclosure will be made to any parties other than those necessary to investigate and resolve the grievance.

### Grievance Procedure



**Board contact email for grievances:**

[enquiries@board.northeastern.vic.edu.au](mailto:enquiries@board.northeastern.vic.edu.au)

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