(14) COMPLAINTS/FEEDBACK POLICY

The Beehive Montessori School Inc. is committed to encouraging feedback and managing parental/student concerns and issues about management and education.

Rationale

• The School strongly encourages constructive feedback from stakeholders, which may assist in improving the School.
• The School recognizes that some stakeholders may disagree with actions, priorities, procedures and environments of the School. Appropriate mechanisms should be in place to provide a forum for expression of complaints and feedback, and where possible, mutually acceptable resolution.
• The Board remains the final adjudicator of complaints, and clear communication of decisions and reasoning remains fundamental.

Objectives

The School commits to:
• create an environment that welcomes feedback and has a pathway for dealing with complaints;
• attempt to resolve conflicts to mutual satisfaction of the School and the complainant; and
• demonstrate that a fair and equitable complaints handling process has been followed.

Links to School and Strategic Plan

The Constitution and the Strategic Plan upholds the rights and education of children through a Montessori holistic approach, the development of children at School, at home and in society. Dispute resolution is fundamental to self development.
**Applicable Issues**

Complaints may be made in person by telephone, by letter, or email in which case the initial point of contact at the School (eg office staff, teacher etc) should:

- Identify that this is a complaint (rather than for example merely a provision of information).
- Not attempt to resolve the complaint.
- Refer the complaint to the Complaints Officer or the Principal.
- If there is a complaint against the Board the procedures in the 2009 Constitution applies (see Constitution 2009 – under Meetings).

The Principal or the Complaints Officer will record the complaint in the Complaints Register and an acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint will be issued to the complainant within 48 hours.

Early intervention, independent, fair and impartial investigation is essential for all issues whether they be educational, management or personal. Some matters are simple, and a brief discussion with the person responsible for it will be sufficient.

When the matter is more complex or if an initial discussion does not resolve it, the Communication Path for Parents Procedure is to be followed.

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 to be determined by the School, but it should be demonstrable at that end point that the complaint has been properly 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 Schools or the Catholic Education Office.

All parties to a complaint are expected to treat each other with mutual respect and in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
Levels of Responsibility

The School Board is responsible for:

• developing and adopting the policy.
• ultimately responsible to the School community for ensuring that all measures have been adopted by the Principal, staff and School Board, that the policy is in place.
• investigating independently and respectfully any instance where a dispute is tabled.
• ensuring there is no conflict of interest.
• if necessary a mediator may be used.
• appointing a Complaints Officer.
• annual review of the Complaints Register.

The Principal and Complaints Officer are responsible for:

• fairness, impartiality and respect in investigating any dispute.
• strict confidentiality.
• early intervention and setting a timeline to ensure prompt investigating and response.
• ensuring there is no conflict of interest and if so, handing the issue to School Board.
• arranging meetings between principal, director, parents/guardian and child.
• careful assessment of the dispute.
• careful assessment of the resolution.
• maintaining thorough written records of any meeting, notation of all interaction between principal, director, child and parents/guardian.
• ensuring all information is handled responsibly.
• ensuring that administration of all documentation is handled appropriately and is included in the child’s file.

The Vice Principals are responsible for:

• fairness, impartiality and respect.
• strict confidentiality.
• ensuring all information is handled responsibly.
• those duties as delegated by the Principal.
Levels of Responsibility (cont’d)

The Staff are responsible for:
- identifying whether a communication from a stakeholder is a complaint or merely provision of information.
- referring complaints to the Principal or the Complaints Officer.
- fairness and impartiality if investigating any query or dispute.
- strict confidentiality.
- ensuring all information is handled responsibly.
- encouraging all children to behave respectfully.
- application of conflict resolution techniques if required.
- early intervention in all conflict.
- meeting with Principal and complainants if required.
- maintaining thorough written records relevant to a complaint.
- ensuring personal information is handled responsibly.
- ensuring that documentation is included in the child’s file where appropriate.

Complainants are responsible for:
- following the chain of dispute resolution, as appropriate.
- accurate reporting of any query or dispute.
- assistance in investigating any query or dispute.
- if still dissatisfied, report to School Board, in writing.
- attend School Board meeting as required.

Documentation

- The Policy and Procedures are documented in the Parent Handbook.
- The Policy, Procedures and Guidelines for staff are documented in the Staff Handbook and Administration Procedures file.
- Minutes of School Board should be handled responsibly and with confidentiality

Performance Review and Measurement

All complaints will be acted upon by the School fairly and without delay.
Activity

- Annual review of the Policy is required by the School Board.
- Annual review of the Complaints Register.

Related Documents

Code of Conduct

The Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000

- Admissions Policy
- Child Conduct Policy
- Child Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Child Safety Policy
- Crisis Management Policy
- Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Policy
- Educational Standards Policy
- Parent Information Policy
- Privacy Policy