Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten values the diversity within the school community and it is our intention to work together to achieve harmony and consensus. Our school believes that a strong grievance procedure is one of many mechanisms for achieving harmony and consensus amongst a diverse group of people. It is not always possible to achieve perfect harmony amongst people of different views. Acceptance, however, of those differences and demonstrating a willingness to work collaboratively are important characteristics of a member of a Steiner School community.

The Grievance Procedure adopted by the Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten is based on Natural Justice, which allows all parties to be heard and to hear claims being made.

WHAT IS A GRIEVANCE?

A grievance is an expression by an individual or group of dissatisfaction with their treatment by others. A grievance is about how policies guidelines have been applied, rather than what the policy is. (Concerns about policies or guidelines in place are better discussed with Governance Committee Members or the School Administrator, who can explain the policy in question, its history and its aims and can take action on proposals for change.)

WHY LODGE A GRIEVANCE?

Employment involves responsibilities. Each employee and, for that matter, elected official, has a duty of care to carry out their duties as effectively as possible. Our work is about people, not machines. This adds an additional level of responsibility about how we deliver our services. Having access to a Grievance process is a means whereby employees of Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten can be accountable to the people who receive our services. Lodging a grievance is a formal feedback mechanism which seeks resolution of a problematic situation. Many problems can be resolved in an informal manner. Efforts to resolve a problem should precede the lodgment of a grievance.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION

Although email correspondence is an effective means of communicating information of an organizational nature, it is not as well suited to expressing opinions. When an email contains complex issues or emotions it is easy to misunderstand the context and to misread the tone and intent. Unlike in face-to-face conversations, those who read an email don’t have the benefit of all the non-verbal cues that convey so much.

It can be tempting to send an email in the heat of the moment as a way of expressing anger or to criticize someone who has offended us in some way. We can find ourselves writing things that we would not say face to face.
Once an email message has been sent it lives forever and it can easily be forwarded on to other people for whom it was not intended or to those who do not wish to receive it.

Email messages that contain personal information or statements that are not based on fact may breach privacy laws or be defamatory and may provoke legal action against the person who wrote and/or sent the email.

Firing off an email also robs us of the opportunity to ‘sleep on it’ or work through an issue before responding. The practice of giving a problem three nights sleep allows us time to process it and to invite the wisdom of a higher aspect of ourselves.

If you have an issue that you would like to raise then please contact the school in person or by telephone to make an appointment. If you chose to use email then please be concise. Indicate the general nature of your issue so that we can be prepared to respond to it.

Talking face to face is the best form of communication as it is a direct personal exchange, and any misunderstandings can be cleared up on the spot.

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**PROCEDURE - HOW TO LODGE A GRIEVANCE**

The Grievance Register will be held in a secure location by the School Administrator, using the schools administration software.

Early Childhood issues can also be referred to DEECD, Benalla office:
50 Arundel Street
Benalla VIC 3672
(03) 5761 2100

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**ISSUES RELATING DIRECTLY WITH CHILDREN**

*Speak directly with the child’s class teacher.*

1. This first may be done informally, for minor issues, by just speaking to the teacher after school or making a time to meet. Some issues require time & thought and a formal meeting may be organised at a mutually convenient time. A formal meeting will have notes taken so that follow up can be assured.

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**ISSUES RELATING TO FINANCES, POLICIES OR SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

*Speak directly with the school administrator.*

1. This first may be done informally, however some issues require time & thought and a formal meeting may be organised at a mutually convenient time.

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**SPEAK WITH PRINCIPAL**
1. If, after an informal meeting the problem has not been resolved, an appointment should be made to speak with the Principal, Fran Cummins, who will deal with the situation directly.

2. Make an appointment with the Principal, either through the Office or directly by email, franc@mansfieldsteiner.vic.edu.au.

3. The Principal will meet the Complainant. This may or may not include the child’s class teacher. The Deputy Principal, Matthew Reynolds, and/or the School Administrator, Richard Merton may also be invited, depending on the issue.

4. The Complainant has a right to bring one person with them to support them.

5. Notes will be taken.

6. A written response will be given within 7 days.

7. Followup meetings may be arranged if required.

8. The decision of the Principal will be in writing and will be final.