



Mansfield Steiner School - Complaints Handling Policy 2023

This summary should be read in conjunction with the Child Safe Complaints Management policy located on the school's Policy Connect portal.

<https://mansfieldrudolfsteiner.policyconnect.com.au/module/262/page/3a0ac18c-9b63-4759-9b89-56398cebb2cc.md>

Policy Summary Statement: Mansfield Steiner School is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school community, including students, families, staff, volunteers, contractors, and visitors. We recognize the importance of addressing and resolving complaints in a fair, timely, and respectful manner. This Complaints Handling Policy outlines the process for making a complaint, the roles and responsibilities of individuals involved, and the steps to be taken in responding to complaints or concerns, including those relating to child abuse.

We envisage that most complaints can be dealt with at the 'local level' and strongly encourage parents, students, and the community to openly communicate with each other as issues arise. In most instances, issues can be resolved by the parties involved by respectfully discussing and listening to the concerns of the other and reaching an appropriate outcome or course of action. Most often this will involve Parents, Class teachers or Guardians, Heads of Faculty, Head of Wellbeing, where this is not possible or the gravity of the complaint is exceptional, such as any allegation of abuse, the following process should be followed.

1. Making a Complaint: a. Any individual who wishes to make a complaint about the school or any person within the school (staff, volunteers, contractors, families, children, or students) may do so by following the procedure outlined below. b. Complaints can be made verbally or in writing to the principal, who will ensure confidentiality and impartiality throughout the process. c. Complaints may also be submitted anonymously; however, please note that it may limit the school's ability to fully investigate and address the complaint.
2. Roles and Responsibilities: a. Leadership:
 - The school leadership will ensure the implementation and adherence to the Complaints Handling Policy.
 - They appoint the principal to oversee the complaint-handling process and ensure the proper resolution of complaints.
 - Leadership will provide appropriate resources and support to facilitate the handling of complaints effectively.
3. If the Complaint involves the Principal the Chair of the Governance Committee, John Bowen should be contacted. johnb@mrssk.vic.edu.au

b. Staff and Volunteers:

- All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to create a safe and supportive environment and to report any complaints or concerns they become aware of to the Principal.
- They should cooperate fully with the investigation process and maintain confidentiality.



3. Process for Dealing with Complaints: a. All complaints will be taken seriously and treated with respect and confidentiality. b. The Principal will promptly acknowledge receipt of the complaint and inform the complainant of the anticipated timeframe for resolution. c. The Principal will conduct a thorough investigation, including gathering relevant information and speaking with the relevant parties involved. d. Once the investigation is complete, the principal will provide a written response to the complainant, outlining the findings and any actions taken or recommended. e. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they may request a review of the decision by submitting a written request to the school leadership. f. The school leadership will conduct a review, ensuring a fair and impartial assessment of the complaint, and provide a final written response to the complainant.
4. Procedure for Responding to Complaints or Concerns Relating to Child Abuse: a. Complaints or concerns relating to child abuse will be addressed with utmost priority and sensitivity, considering the diverse characteristics of the school community. b. The procedures for responding to child abuse complaints or concerns will be outlined in a separate document, the Child Protection Policy, which aligns with the requirements set forth by relevant authorities and legislation. c. The Child Protection Policy will be made publicly available, easily accessible, and communicated to all members of the school community. d. Staff members will be assigned specific roles and responsibilities in responding to child abuse complaints or concerns, including reporting to relevant authorities when necessary. e. The Child Protection Policy will not discharge any other obligations arising if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse, and it will clearly describe the actions the school will take to respond to such complaints or concerns.
5. Reporting and Cooperation with Law Enforcement: a. The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse will address the reporting of complaints to school leadership and other relevant authorities, in line with legal requirements. b. The school will cooperate fully with law enforcement agencies during the investigation of child abuse complaints or concerns.
6. Approval, Availability, and Implementation: a. The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures for responding to child abuse complaints or concerns will be approved by the school leadership. b. The policy and procedures will be made publicly available on the school's website and other appropriate platforms. c. The policy and procedures will be accessible to all members of the school community, ensuring they are easily understood and culturally safe. d. The school will ensure compliance with recordkeeping, reporting, privacy, and employment law obligations when responding to complaints and concerns. e. The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse will be effectively implemented and regularly reviewed to ensure their ongoing effectiveness.

This Complaints Handling Policy aims to provide clear guidance on the process for making complaints, the roles and responsibilities of individuals involved, and the procedures for responding to complaints or concerns, including those relating to child abuse. It is our commitment to address complaints promptly, thoroughly, and in a manner that upholds the safety and well-being of our school community.



- Where a complaint involves the School Principal it should be directed to only members of the School Leadership Team or the Chair of the Governance Committee.

Policy Revised – Glenn Hood June 2023. Sent to GC for review June 2023.

The next review date post-GC approval is June 2025.