



COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCES POLICY AND PROCEDURE (Parents and External Stakeholders)

PRESHIL VISION STATEMENT

At our core remains an unshakeable commitment to encouraging all children to set and achieve their own goals and to be respected as individuals in their own right. It is a commitment to our children to be nurtured and challenged in an atmosphere that inspires creativity and independent thinking in all areas of life and does not, overtly or subtly, use competition or punishment to motivate through the fear of failure.

As global citizens we encourage an awareness of world issues and encourage effort to make a positive difference. We believe that education should prepare students to be thoughtful, peace-loving and active citizens of the world. Preshil will remain a school that puts kindness, compassion and social relationships at the centre of its operations.

RATIONALE

Preshil understands that from time to time parents, external organisations and other stakeholders may be dissatisfied or have a concern or complaint in relation to a decision taken or an action or activity for which the school is responsible. Where possible the school encourages such concerns to be identified and resolved speedily and informally; the complaints policy is designed to apply when that proves more difficult and a formal process is required.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles, guidelines and procedures governing the school's approach to the resolution of complaints from parents. The policy, together with the procedural documents listed in section 11, should be read and understood by all staff and by those wishing to make a complaint.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to parents and external stakeholders. The Complaints Policy does not apply to concerns that staff may have in relation to their employment. Those concerns are covered in the Staff Complaints and Grievance Policy. The Complaints Policy does not apply to students. The school has created an internal process for students to use.

The Complaints Policy does, however, apply to concerns that a prospective employee might have in relation to the appointment of staff.

PRINCIPLES

Preshil believes that staff, parents and students are committed to working closely together to provide the best educational opportunities for every child. The school is committed to the development of professional, trusting and cooperative relationships between the school, parents and the school community.

Preshil seeks the assurance from members of its school community that complaints do not give rise to victimisation or reprisal.

Preshil believes that complaints are an important way in which parents and the school community can provide the school with feedback and so form the basis for future improvements. The school will undertake to respond to both the specific and (where applicable) the systemic issues raised by the complaint.

Where possible, the school encourages concerns and complaints to be identified and resolved speedily and informally; the complaints policy is designed to apply when that proves more difficult and a formal process is required.

Preshil is committed to child safety and has a zero tolerance of child abuse. In the context of this policy, the response to a complaint relating to child safety, particularly any in relation to Indigenous children, children with disabilities, children from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds will be given high priority.

It is not always possible to respond to complaints received from an anonymous source and, by definition, it is not possible for the school to communicate any resolution or response to the person making the complaint. The school will always act when anonymous concerns about child safety are raised.

The complaints policy and procedures are intended to be conciliatory, non-adversarial and non-legal.

PROCEDURE

In resolving a complaint, the school will give priority to student wellbeing and educational needs.

The school will respond to all formal complaints in a timely manner. The school will acknowledge the complaint promptly and parents will be kept informed of the progress of their complaint, particularly when the complaint is complex and may take time to resolve.

The school will ensure that the complaint procedure is responsive and flexible. In practice that means that parents are able to make a complaint in person, by phone or in writing. The school will provide support for parents with specific needs for example language translation.

The school is committed to natural justice. The school will ensure that all those involved in the complaint's procedure will be able to put forward their point of view and will be treated with dignity and respect.

The school will endeavour to respond to each complaint in a fair, objective and unbiased manner, considering the school's mission and values. Anyone involved in the complaint will be required to declare any conflicts of interest.

In dealing with the complaint, the school is committed to acting in a confidential manner and expects that parents involved in the complaint will show similar respect for the process and for others involved by doing likewise.

The complaints procedures will be restricted to dealing with the matter raised by the complaint and not with any other matters.

The school may determine that a complaint is vexatious (where the complaint is designed to harass, annoy or embarrass the school or another parent) or spurious (where the complaint has no real basis in fact or is manifestly groundless). When this is the case, the parent making the complaint will be informed in writing of the decision.

The school will ensure any actions, outcomes and the resolution of a complaint are well documented, kept on file and that the parents concerned have a copy of the final decisions.

The school will ensure that the handling of complaints does not contravene the school's Privacy Policy. The school will seek actively to prevent the disclosure of personally identifiable information concerning the parents and students involved in the complaint.

Who handles complaints?

Where possible, the school encourages concerns to be identified and resolved speedily and informally with the member of staff most directly involved e.g. classroom teacher/head of campus/principal.

Where the concern has not been resolved to the satisfaction of those concerned, a formal complaint under the auspices of this policy may be made to the Head of Campus or Principal.

Authorised by: Principal

Maintained by: Principal

Review Date: August 2021

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If the complaint concerns the decisions, actions or activities of the principal, a formal complaint should be made to the President of School Council.

BREACH OF POLICY

Any breach of school policy by a parent will be considered under this policy by the principal and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

The principal may take such action as considered appropriate in response to a breach of the policy including the:

- provision of a verbal or a written warning
- withdrawal of certain privileges or opportunities
- exclusion from future school events or functions
- exclusion from the school grounds and facilities
- revocation of their child's enrolment.

Legal and regulatory basis for compliance

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Regulations (2017)
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Minimum Standards
- Child Safe Standards Ministerial Order 870
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- determining this policy and reviewing it on an annual basis
- responding to any formal complaint raised that relates to the principal
- responding to an appeal if that is lodged in relation to an unresolved formal complaint

The principal is responsible for:

- determining the complaints procedures and ensuring that they are implemented in a way that is consistent with this policy
- ensuring the complaints policy is communicated to parents and the wider school community and external community via the website with copies also available from the school office
- responding to a formal complaint brought under this policy
- retaining a register of formal complaints (listing the date, subject and resolution) for reporting to the governing board on an annual basis and to be available to the VRQA as required.

Members of staff are responsible for:

- responding to and resolving concerns and complaints raised informally
- responding to concerns raised by students.

Links to other policies

- Child Safe Standards Policy
- Grievance Policy (staff)
- Whistle blower Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Record Management Policy
- Student Wellbeing Policy
- Mutual Respect Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy

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