



## GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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### POLICY

Mumbulla School will manage grievances in a timely, fair, and where deemed appropriate, confidential manner.

## GUIDELINES

### 1. Rationale

Mumbulla School for Rudolf Steiner Education recognises that grievances will arise in a school community.

The School encourages open and honest communication and is fully supportive of a respectful, cooperative and transparent approach in handling grievances. The school is committed to providing confidential, non-judgmental and supportive grievance resolution procedures.

Formal grievances have a clear management pathway.

### 2. Scope

This policy covers grievances that need to be addressed through either informal or formal procedures.

Grievance resolution procedures do not apply where an issue is raised in the ordinary course of school life and which can be readily and simply discussed and resolved. In cases where parents have queries or concerns relating to educational matters these should be directed to the class teacher whenever possible.

This Policy does not cover grievances brought by students against other students as those matters are dealt with in the Student Welfare and Behaviour Support Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy.

### 3. Definitions

- **Grievance or complaint** – a statement expressing dissatisfaction about any aspect of school life that is made to a representative of the school and which requires action or response.
- **Queries and concerns** – questions or issues of a minor nature, usually expressed verbally
- **Representatives of the school** – all employees, including Directors of the Board
- **Staff** – employees of the school
- **Grievant** – the person raising the concern or grievance
- **Respondent** – the person against whom the concern or grievance is brought
- **Informal procedures** for handling grievances include efforts to clarify and resolve grievances through direct communication with the relevant person. Direct communication would normally be the first option for the resolution of queries and concerns
- **Formal procedures** provide the necessary support, protection and structure for all concerned if resolution has not been achieved through informal means
- **Education Manager** – coordinate's the management of grievance resolution within the school (see Attachment C: *Education Manager Duty Statement*)

### 4. Principles of grievance handling at Mumbulla School

The school's policy for handling complaints is based on principles of confidentiality, procedural fairness, substantive fairness, timeliness, record keeping and transparency.

#### 4.1 Confidentiality

- means that:
- A person should be able to raise a complaint and receive advice in confidence.

- A complaint should not be referred elsewhere, formally investigated or discussed with others without the consent of the grievant (except in relation to Child Protection policy concerns or criminal offences).
- An anonymous grievance cannot be acted upon (except in relation to the Child Protection policy or criminal offences).
- Records must be kept securely and confidentially.

**4.2 Procedural fairness** in practice means that:

- The process will be fair and impartial.
- Before proceeding, the grievant will be informed of the school's process for resolving grievances via the Grievance Policy and of the implications of making a formal/written complaint.
- The respondent has the right to know details of the complaint against them.
- The respondent has a right of reply.
- Before they respond, the respondent has a right to know the implications for them in terms of disciplinary action if the complaint is proven.
- Persons handling the grievance should be fair, impartial, and unbiased in their investigation and if there is conflict of interest, the matter should be referred to another person within the school or from outside the school should the Board deem this necessary.
- The procedure as outlined in the attached flow chart will be followed in all cases.

**4.3 Substantive fairness or impartiality** means that:

- The person/s handling the grievance should remain impartial and not assume guilt. They should determine that the complaint is substantiated only after hearing from both/all parties, checking other relevant evidence, and considering any mitigating circumstances.

**4.4 Principles of timeliness** include an awareness that:

- Delays at any stage of the grievance procedure can result in a denial of procedural fairness.
- Delays in determining the grievance can be critical in any appeal.
- Delay in addressing issues in a complaint can lead to the exacerbation of the situation, a continuation of the problem, a worsening of the relationship between the parties involved and increased distress for all parties.
- Delays can also result in more time being expended in dealing with a grievance once action is taken because the situation has escalated.
- There should be an initial response to receipt of a grievance within 24 hours.

**4.5 Principles of record keeping** include:

- Written records must be kept, including details of allegations, responses and actions.
- Records can be used for statistical purposes to identify systemic problems.
- Records can substantiate procedural fairness in the event of an appeal against process or outcome of grievance investigation.
- If allegations are complex, record the complaint, the response, the evidence of witnesses and ask parties to sign.

**4.6 Principles of transparency** are related to procedural fairness and include:

- Effective implementation of Mumbulla School policies and procedures
- Effective communication to all parties about relevant policies and procedures
- Effective communication to all parties of the outcomes, of reasons for the outcome and, where appropriate, the evidence which was relied upon
- Principle of openness, honesty and fair dealing

- Fair and accurate reporting if the case is referred to other persons/groups in the steps towards more formal action
- Fair and accurate reporting particularly where disciplinary action is likely to result.
- Parties being given an opportunity for a right of reply, this should be done in writing to the Education Manager

## **5. Responsibilities of Education Manager, Board Directors, teachers, staff and parents & carers**

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that a **grievant** understands the school's processes for resolving grievances and their rights and responsibilities in relation to the school's policy. The Education Manager is responsible for responding appropriately to concerns or grievances and managing the resolution process in keeping with the above principles and the Grievance Policy and procedures.

Staff, parents, and students have a responsibility to contribute to a respectful and safe school environment. Staff and parents have a responsibility to participate in any grievance resolution process in good faith, to engage constructively in the process and to not initiate complaints with mischievous or malicious intent.

It is the responsibility of the Education Manager to identify systemic concern, and to report on these to the Board. It is the responsibility of all staff to report trends in queries and concerns that they become aware of to the Education Manager.

The Board bears the final responsibility for procedural oversight of the policy and practice of grievance resolution in the school and will regularly review this to ensure that the policy is being applied consistently and effectively, particularly in relation to conflict of interest.

## **6. Who to contact for assistance in making a grievance**

A core principle of the grievance resolution process is that people are encouraged to raise complaints directly with the person concerned or with the person who may have the most relevant information to assist them. This is appropriate in matters where the complainant feels comfortable with making a direct approach. When that is not the case the person with the grievance or complaint should approach the Education Manager.

The Education Manager is responsible for:

- accepting the grievance in a confidential and non-judgmental manner
- ensuring that the person understands the process and receives a copy of the Grievance Resolution Policy
- coordinating the management of the resolution process. (See *Attachment C: Education Manager Duty Statement*)

## **7. Appointment of Alternative Education Manager**

**7.1** If the Education Manager is unavailable the College Chair will act in their place.

**7.2** If there is a conflict of interest arising, the College Chair will act in their place.

**7.3** If the College Chair is unavailable or has a conflict of interest, the Board Chair will assess the grievance and either act as an alternative mediator or, in consultation with Directors, appoint an alternative mediator from outside the school community.

## **8. Grievance Resolution procedure**

The Grievance Resolution procedure outlines the process for handling grievances.

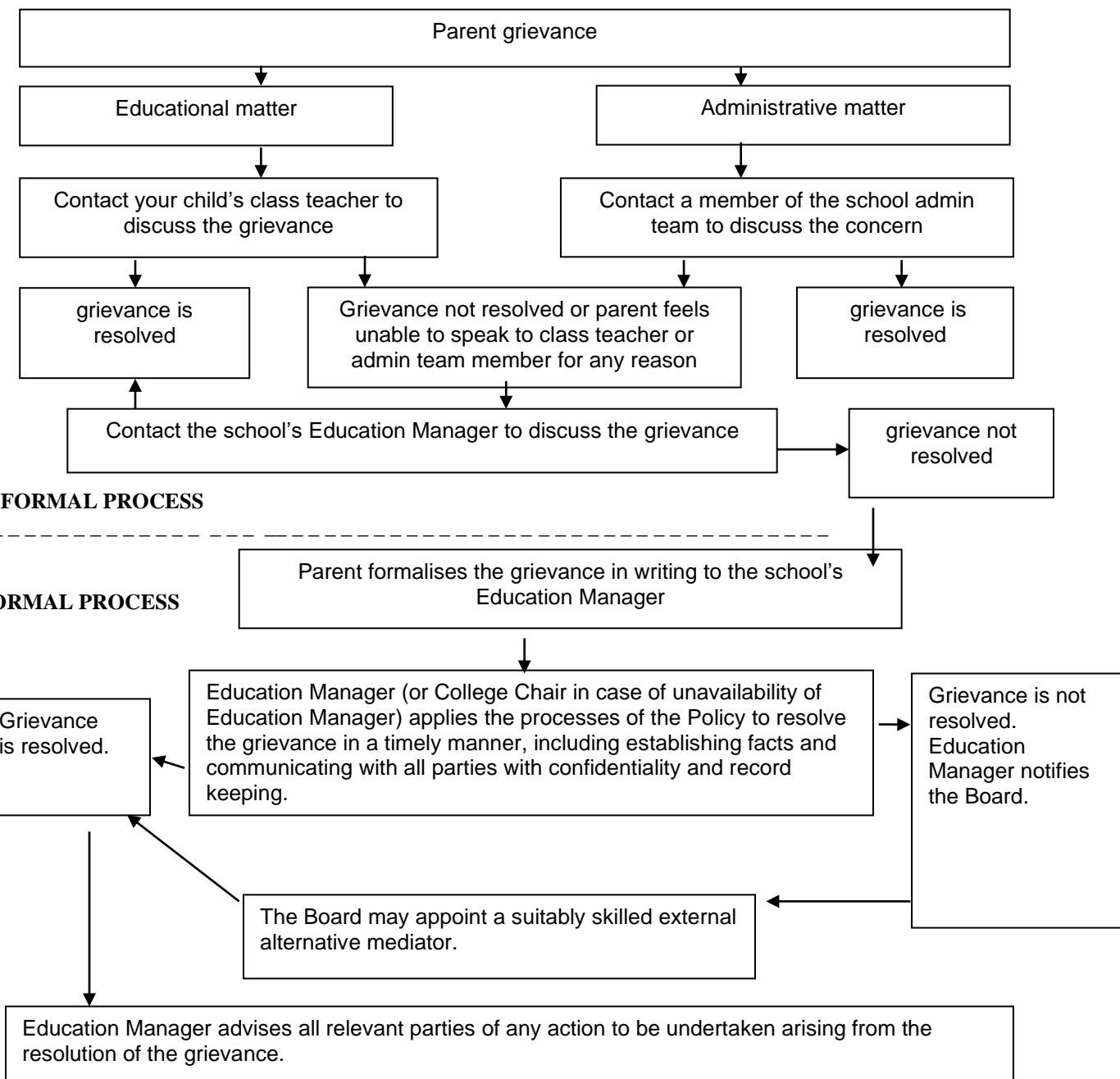
The Grievance Resolution procedures are in the form of flow charts attached to this policy.  
(See Attachment A: *Grievance Resolution procedure – Parents* and Attachment B:  
*Grievance Resolution procedure – Staff*)

<i>Date approved:</i>	<i>Reviewed by:</i>	<i>Next Review date:</i>	<i>Changes:</i>
08/08/2013	<i>Educational Administrator and Communication Manager</i>	August 2015	<i>Policy Created</i>
30/11/2017	<i>Education Manager in consultation with Educational Administrator and College Chair</i>	May 2018	<i>Wording changed to reflect EM and CC positions. Removed reference to Communication Manager.</i>
February 2021	<i>Education Manager</i>	<i>February 2022 or as needed</i>	<i>Updated flow charts and refined wording of document</i>

### **ATTACHMENT A GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE - PARENTS**

This flowchart outlines the key steps for resolving a parent grievance at Mumbulla School.

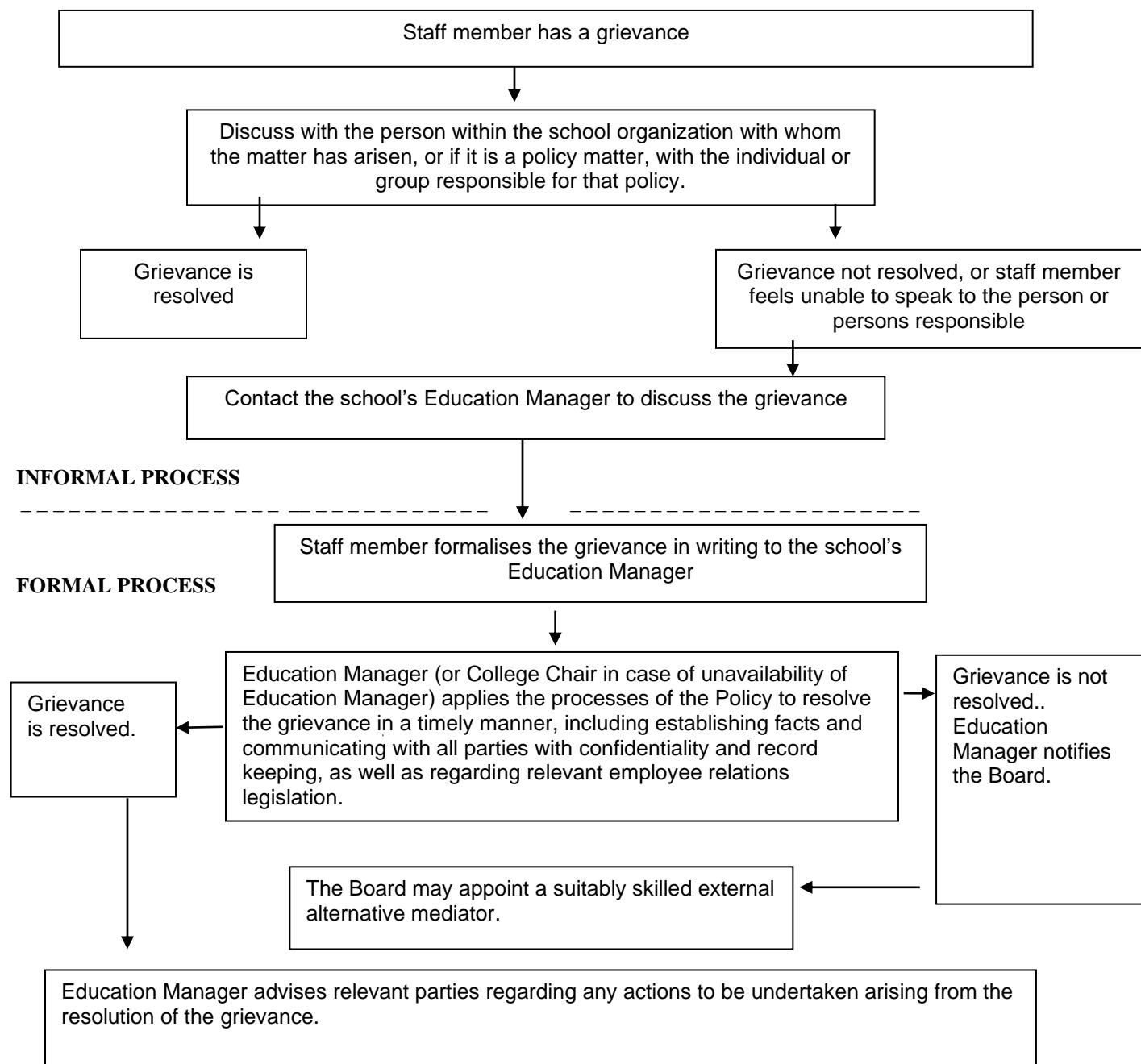
Review processes (but not confidential details) are monitored by the Mumbulla School Board of Directors ('the Board') so that all parties can be confident that the Policy is applied consistently to the benefit of all.



## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE – STAFF

This flowchart outlines the key steps for resolving staff grievances at Mumbulla School.

Review processes (but not confidential details) are monitored by the Mumbulla School Board of Directors ('the Board') so that all parties can be confident that the Policy is applied consistently to the benefit of all.



## **ATTACHMENT C EDUCATION MANAGER DUTY STATEMENT**

The Education Manager's duties are to:

1. take the lead responsibility for tasks related to communication and complaint handling as set out in the Grievance Resolution Policy;
2. to manage tasks related to communication and complaint handling in line with principles of confidentiality, procedural fairness, substantive fairness, timeliness, recordkeeping and transparency;
3. provide information to members of the school community about the grievance process including providing guidance about the handling of informal queries and concerns;
4. be available to hear grievances from any member of the school community;
5. be the first point of contact for any staff or parent complaints that have elevated from an informal query or concern to a formal grievance;
6. manage grievances in line with the Grievance Resolution Policy including:
  - a. receiving grievance in writing or assisting with the preparation of a written grievance;
  - b. responding in a timely manner including an initial response within 24 hours;
  - c. respecting confidentiality requirements;
  - d. informing the College Chair and the Board of any conflicts of interest;
  - e. appropriate recordkeeping;
  - f. following up to ensure outcomes are achieved;
  - g. where necessary communicating with relevant mandated groups.
7. to identify any systemic issues arising from a grievance and to bring these to the attention of the Board and any other relevant group/s.

report to Board meetings, in a de-identified format, formal grievances and systemic issues.