

## COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

Purpose:	<p>Mastery Schools Australia is committed to creating a culture that views concerns and complaints as an opportunity to improve the company. All concerns, complaints and issues will be managed ethically and responsibly, and a visible, accessible and fair handling process will be applied.</p> <p>This policy applies to students enrolled at Mastery Schools Australia and the parents of those students. It also applies to employees and contractors. It is the responsibility of all employees, contractors, students, and parents to understand and comply with this policy.</p>	
Scope:	<p>The Complaints Handling Policy and related procedures are designed to ensure all concerns, complaints and issues are handled in an effective, efficient, timely, fair and confidential manner.</p>	
Status:	Approved	Supersedes: Nil
Authorised by:	School Governing Body Chairperson	Date of Authorisation: Aug 2022
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Occupational Health and Safety Act 2011 (qld); and</li> <li>● Privacy Act 1988</li> <li>● Privacy Policy.</li> <li>● Complaints Handling Procedure.</li> <li>● Complaints Handling Register; and</li> <li>● Complaints Form</li> </ul>	
Review Date:	Every 2 Years	Next Review Date: Aug 2024
Policy Owner:	School Governing Body	

### DEFINITIONS

- Concern – A concern about a matter, perceived discrimination, a situation, a process, a person or people, a facility or support service provided by Mastery Schools Australia, which an apprentice, trainee, student and/or customer of Mastery Schools Australia brings to the attention of Mastery Schools Australia in an informal way
- Complaint – the formal notification of a concern about a matter, perceived discrimination, a situation, a process, a person or people, a facility or support service provided by Mastery Schools Australia
- Complainant – The person lodging the concern, complaint, or appeal

### COMPLAINTS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

Mastery Schools Australia encourages students, parents and employees to lodge promptly any concerns regarding sexual harassment, child protection, discrimination, workplace bullying and privacy breaches as well as more general complaints that include areas such as:

- the school, its employees or students having done something wrong.
- the school, its employees or students having failed to do something they should have done.

- the school, its employees or students having acted unfairly or impolitely.
- issues of student or employee behaviour that are contrary to their relevant code of conduct.
- issues related to learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning.
- issues related to communication with students or parents or between employees.
- issues related to school fees and payments; and
- general administrative issues.

Student complaints may be brought by students or by parents on behalf of their children, as appropriate in the circumstances.

## COMPLAINTS OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

The following matters are outside the scope of this policy and should be managed as follows:

- Child protection concerns or risks of harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the law and the school's Child Protection Policy.
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the Behaviour Management Policy.
- Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the Behaviour Management Policy.
- Employee complaints related to their employment should be directed to their supervisor.
- Student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the principal who will involve the Police as appropriate; and
- Formal legal proceedings.

## COMPLAINTS HANDLING PRINCIPLES

Mastery Schools Australia is committed to managing complaints according to the following principles:

- complaints will be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.
- complaints will be taken seriously.
- anonymous complaints will be treated on their merit's complaints will be dealt with fairly and objectively and in a timely manner.
- Mastery Schools Australia will determine the appropriate person to deal with the complaint in the first instance. Complaints should be resolved with as little formality and disputation as possible.
- mediation, negotiation and informal resolution are optional alternatives.
- procedural fairness will be ensured wherever practicable, including the right of interested parties to the complaint to be heard.
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible.
- all parties to the complaints will be appropriately supported.
- Mastery Schools Australia will give reasonable progress updates.
- appropriate remedies will be offered and implemented.
- provide a review pathway for parties to the complaint if warranted.
- complainants, respondents and people associated with them will not be victimised as a result of lodging the complaints and they will not suffer any other reprisals.
- the school will keep records of complaints; and
- the school's insurer will be informed if a complaint could be connected to an insured risk.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### The school

The school has the following role and responsibilities:

- develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the school's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures.

- appropriately communicate the school's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures to students, parents and employees.
- ensure that the Complaints Handling procedures are readily accessible by staff, students and parents.
- upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the Complaints Handling procedures.
- ensure that appropriate support is provided to all parties to a complaint.
- take appropriate action to prevent victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.
- appropriately implement remedies.
- appropriately train relevant employees.
- keep records.
- conduct a review/audit of the Complaints Register from time to time.
- monitor and report to the governing body on complaints.
- report to the school's insurer when that is relevant; and
- refer to the school's governing body immediately any claim for legal redress.

### **All Parties Involved in a Dispute**

The complainant and respondent both have the following role and responsibilities:

- apply and comply with the school's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures.
- lodge the complaint as soon as possible after the issue arises.
- expect that the complaint will be dealt with fairly and objectively; in a timely manner; with procedural fairness wherever practicable; that confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible.
- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner.
- not provide deliberately false or misleading information.
- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints.
- act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner.
- act in a non-threatening manner.
- to be appropriately supported.
- acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties.
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties; and
- not victimise or act in reprisal against any party to the dispute or any person associated with them.

### **Employees Receiving the Complaint**

Any employee that receives a complaint will refer to and follow the Complaints Handling Procedure. In addition, the employee will keep details of the complaint confidential in accordance with the Complaints Handling Procedure.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Mastery Schools Australia is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints at the school, including by the development and implementation of this policy and related procedures, and via the clear support and promotion of the policy and procedures. This will be done through the following channels:

- School newsletter.
- School website.
- Student Assembly; and
- Staff meetings

Mastery Schools Australia is also committed to appropriately training relevant employees (especially senior staff) on how to resolve complaints in line with this policy and the related procedures.

Mastery Schools Australia will keep appropriate records of complaints, will monitor complaints and the resolutions and will report on a high-level basis to the school Board on complaint handling at the school.

Mastery Schools Australia will act to encourage students, parents and employees to contribute to a healthy school culture where complaints are resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.

Mastery Schools Australia will appoint an appropriate employee as an Equity Contact Officer to provide confidential and impartial information about the school's relevant policies and processes.

## **BREACH OF THE POLICY**

Breaches of this policy:

- are not acceptable by any person
- will be responded to promptly; and
- may result in disciplinary action being taken

## **REVIEW OF THE POLICY**

This policy is reviewed periodically as detailed in the Policy Review Schedule. Next review date is August 2024.