



Policy Name	Grievance Policy
Related Policies and Legislation	Grievance Procedure
Policy Category	Community
Relevant Audience	All Treetops Community
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Person/s Responsible for Review	Treetops Administration

Grievance Policy

Introduction

All parents/guardians, students and staff at Treetops are valued and they should feel free to voice grievances. The School's Grievance Policy provides parents/guardians, students, staff and members of the public with the appropriate process by which to bring grievances to the attention of the school, so that any such grievance may be listened to and addressed in a constructive and timely manner. A grievance may take the form of a complaint, an area of concern or criticism.

All grievances shall be taken seriously, the process of handling grievances shall be applied in a consistent manner and at all times have an end process in sight. Parents/guardians, students and staff shall be made aware of the process and each step in the process shall be documented.

Grievances shall be acknowledged as soon as practicable. All parties involved shall be notified as to what approach is being taken.

While parents will often wish to raise issues on behalf of their children there are other issues which students may wish to raise on their own behalf and which are best raised by them. Treetops shall encourage and support the independent voice of its students. Students should feel confident that they will be listened to and comfortable to raise concerns with any member of staff. If the grievance is a painful one for the student, they may need support from another student or an adult. They should be encouraged to seek out such support.

Grievances from members of the public will be referred directly to the Principal.

Grievances from staff regarding aspects of their work are covered under a separate policy.

Grievances about the Board should be directed to the Chair, via the Board Secretary.

Documentation

An effective log shall be kept for three reasons:

1. The grievance may become a case of legal action.
2. Patterns in the record may indicate a need for action.
3. The Principal should be able to report on the grievance regularly, if necessary, to the Chairperson.

The log should contain the following information:

1. Date when the issue was raised.
2. Name of complainant.
3. Name of student (if applicable).
4. Brief statement of the issue.
5. Member of staff handling the issue.
6. Brief statement of action taken and outcome.

Confidentially

All grievances should be treated in a confidential manner. It may be possible to deal with an issue without naming individuals. However, it may be impractical to deal with some issues without naming individuals.

Staff members have a right to know about grievances which may damage their reputation. Treetops Montessori School is aware of the need to provide support for staff against whom a grievance is made. A member of staff who is not otherwise involved should provide this support.

Resolution

Resolution will come in any of the following ways:

1. Knowing that changes have been made.
2. Knowing that the School is now alert to a previously unknown situation.
3. Feeling by the concerned party that the matter has been satisfactorily dealt with.
4. A considered letter.

The complainant should receive a letter outlining the issue, action taken and outcome.

Steps in the Grievance Process

In order for grievances to be appropriately addressed it is necessary to raise any such grievance with the appropriate member of staff, rather than sharing dissatisfaction with other parents. The following step-by-step process is designed to assist in lodging a grievance.

Step 1: The first step is to determine who is the appropriate staff member to address a grievance to:

1. Grievances about a specific student's educational, social or emotional development should be addressed in the first instance to the student's classroom teacher.
2. Grievances about student behaviour should be addressed in the first instance to classroom teachers or if of a more general nature to the School Executive.

3. Grievances about administrative process, school policy or grounds and facilities should be addressed in the first instance to the School Administration.
4. Grievances about payment of School Fees should be addressed in the first instance to the School Administration.
5. Grievances about individual staff members should be addressed in the first instance to that staff member. If that is not possible, the grievance should be addressed to the Principal, who will bring the grievance to the attention of the staff member. In the case of the Principal, if it is not possible to address the grievance to the Principal, the grievance should be addressed to the Chairperson, who will then bring the grievance to the attention of the Principal.

Step 2: Once the appropriate staff member has been identified, the next step is to either discuss the grievance in person with the relevant staff member (with a support person if needed) or to put the grievance in writing to the relevant staff member. Any discussion/correspondence shall be fully documented.

Step 3: If the grievance remains unresolved it should then be directed to the Principal, either in person (with a support person if needed) or in writing. If the grievance involves a student the Principal may need to talk with the student with or without the parent/guardian being present. All meetings and correspondence shall be fully documented.

Step 4: The principal may choose to appoint a delegate (ie: a senior teacher) to investigate and make recommendation.

Step 5: The principal will make a determination and communicate this in writing.

Step 6 If after Step 5, the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved the Principal may involve the Chairperson of the Board in the process. The parent/guardian will be informed by the Principal that this step has been reached. The Chairperson should discuss the matter fully with the Principal and be provided with relevant documentation. If a briefing is required from a staff member this should occur in the presence of the Principal.

The Chairperson should respond to the parent/guardian notifying them that they are reviewing the decision. If the chairperson wishes to gain further information they would give the opportunity for parties to add anything further. The Chairperson should provide an indicative date by which the parent/guardian should expect a response.

If a meeting is requested parents/guardians should be permitted to bring along a support person. Others involved should be the Chairperson, the Principal and, if appropriate, one other member of staff.

Step 7 If Step 6 does not resolve the matter the Chairperson should consider seeking the advice from AISWA to convene a further meeting, and/or use of an independent arbitrator with parties to resolve the matter. The principal will confirm the outcome of the meeting(s) in writing within an appropriate agreed period.



