

GRIEVANCE POLICY (COMMUNITY)

Last Review: August 2025	Constructed / Reviewed by: Mentone Grammar on advice from Russell Kennedy Lawyers
Next Review: August 2027 (and every two years thereafter in accordance with the School's review cycle, or more frequently as required)	Approval Required: Executive
Policy Number: 49B	Approval Date: 30 September 2025

1 Overview

- 1.1 Mentone Grammar (the **School**) is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy environment characterised by tolerance and support; and which also respects differing learning styles and celebrates student achievements.
- 1.2 Part of this commitment involves ensuring the School community has access to processes that allow for grievances to be managed appropriately, promptly and fairly.
- 1.3 This policy provides clear and transparent information about how a parent, or other member of the School community (other than a staff member) can raise grievances about the School, staff conduct, a student's education and/or student wellbeing, and about how such grievances will be managed and resolved.
- 1.4 Our aim is to ensure that grievances are handled objectively and with sensitivity. In doing so, we will seek to identify both the specific and (where applicable) systemic issues raised by a grievance (thereby enabling future improvements to be identified and implemented).
- 1.5 Ensuring that the management of a complaint that alleges a child is exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours is child focused, culturally safe and compliant with privacy laws, reporting obligations and employment law

2 Scope and Purpose

- 2.1 This policy applies to all School Board members, staff, contractors, volunteers, visitors, parents/guardians, students and other members of the School community.
- 2.2 This policy does not apply to:
 - (a) Staff grievances, which should be raised in accordance with the School's *Staff Grievances Policy*.
 - (b) Concerns about child abuse, reportable conduct and student safety, which will be addressed in accordance with the *Responding to Student Safety Concerns Policy*.
 - (c) Legal matters, including requests for compensation, payment and redress.

3 Guiding Principles

- 3.1 When raising a grievance with the School, a member of the School community can expect to:

- (a) Be treated with respect and courtesy.
- (b) Have their grievance taken seriously, considered impartially, and dealt with on the merits.
- (c) Have their grievance dealt with in a confidential and timely manner.
- (d) Have access to appropriate and easily understandable information regarding the grievance resolution process being followed by the School (including this policy).
- (e) Be supported by the School during the grievance handling process.
- (f) Be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the grievance.
- (g) Not be victimised, or subjected to reprisal, for raising grievances in good faith.

3.2 In return, the School expects that a member of the School community who raises a grievance will:

- (a) Treat others (including School staff, students and parents, both former and current) with respect and courtesy.
- (b) Raise grievances in the appropriate forum, having regard to the below framework, and as soon as possible after the event giving rise to the grievance has occurred.
- (c) Provide complete and factual information about the grievance.
- (d) Ask for assistance or further information as needed.
- (e) Act in good faith to achieve a reasonable outcome.
- (f) Be understanding and accepting of any outcome reached, being mindful that the School must sometimes manage the interests of a number of students and other individuals when making decisions, and may be privy to confidential information not known to the person raising the grievance.

3.3 Our aim is for the prompt resolution of concerns, ideally without there being a need for a formal complaint to be made. As the Board appoints the Principal to manage the day-to-day operations of the School, a review by the Board Chair should be a last resort.

3.4 Timeframes listed in this policy are only a guide, and can vary due to the nature of the grievance and surrounding circumstances. Where timeframes set out in this policy cannot be met, the School will strive to communicate with the affected parties about the status of the grievance, and the steps taken (or to be taken) to progress a resolution in a timely manner.

3.5 Please note the processes outlined in this policy are intended to be conciliatory, non-adversarial and non-legal.

4 Framework

4.1 The School's framework for dealing with grievances involves a three-step process, namely:

- (a) **Stage 1** - A concern is raised with the School.
- (b) **Stage 2** - A complaint is made to the Principal.
- (c) **Stage 3** - A review by the Board Chair is requested.

4.2 Further details about these Stages are set out in **Schedule 1**.

4.3 Common considerations when the School is managing grievances are set out in **Schedule 2**.

5 Responsibilities

Stakeholder	Responsibilities
Board members	Dealing with concerns and complaints, and requests for review, in accordance with this policy
Principal	- Dealing with concerns and complaints in accordance with this policy - Referring requests for review to the Board
Staff	- Responding to concerns in accordance with this policy - Referring complaints to the Principal
Volunteers/contractors/visitors	Referring concerns, complaints and requests for review to the appropriate decision-maker as per table 6.3 in accordance with this policy
Parents or Carers	Raising concerns, complaints and requests for review in accordance with this policy

6 Recommendations for initially raising concerns (Stage 1)

6.1 At first instance, you should raise your concerns directly with the School via the contacts outlined in the table below depending on the nature of the concern. The School must be aware of a concern and of its substance in order to address it.

6.2 The School believes that a concern is often best resolved closest to its source, and when a concern relates to a student, encourages concerns to be raised with the relevant classroom teacher in the first instance.

6.3 However, depending on the nature and severity of an issue, and whether the classroom teacher has a conflict of interest, concerns may instead be raised directly with a senior staff member (including a member of the Executive Team). For guidance on who to contact, refer below.

Designated staff member	Nature of grievance
Early Learning Centre Director	Mary Jones ELC student-related matters (including wellbeing concerns)
Head of Eblana	Years Foundation - 4 student-related matters (including wellbeing concerns)
Head of Riviera	Years 5 & 6 student-related matters (including wellbeing concerns)
Head of Bayview	Years 7 & 8 student-related matters (including wellbeing concerns)
Head of Greenways	Year 9 student-related matters (including wellbeing concerns)

Head of Frogmore	Years 10-12 student-related matters (including wellbeing concerns)
Director of Learning and Teaching	Curriculum matters, staff related matters – whole school concerns
Director of School Operations / Deputy Principal	School operation matters, whole school concerns
Director of Business	Business operations or finance matters
Board Chair	Principal or Board member matters

6.4 A student can utilise the Grievance Policy (students) to raise concerns.

6.5 The following considerations are relevant prior to, and when, raising a concern:

- (a) Clearly identify the issue or problem prior to contacting the School.
- (b) Decide whether the issue or problem is in the nature of a complaint, concern, enquiry or suggestion. This will help find a solution.
- (c) Identify the party or parties involved.
- (d) Consider the practical outcome you are trying to achieve (while being realistic and open to other outcomes and solutions).
- (e) Consider whether there are any interim measures you would like the School to consider whilst it makes enquiries about the concern.
- (f) Make an appointment to meet with the relevant staff member to discuss the concern - the best way to do this is to contact the Campus/School Reception to arrange a mutually convenient time for a telephone call or meeting. When contacting Reception, please identify yourself and the subject of your concern, identify the person you would like to speak with, and provide a brief description of the issue you wish to speak about (for example 'homework', 'wellbeing' or 'grounds maintenance').
- (g) Remain courteous and calm when conveying your concerns. The School is within its rights to terminate a conversation with the person raising the concern until such time that a courteous and calm conversation can continue.

SCHEDULE 1

Further details about Mentone Grammar School's Grievances Resolution Procedure

	Details	Comment
Stage 1: Raise the concern		
Step 1	Identify the concern	Clarify your concern: " <i>who, what, when, where, why, and how</i> ". Identify the outcome you are trying to achieve by raising your concern.
Step 2	Raise the concern	The School believes that a concern is often best resolved closest to its source and encourages concerns to be raised with the relevant classroom teacher in the first instance. Depending on the nature and severity of an issue, and whether the classroom teacher has a conflict of interest, concerns may instead be raised directly with a senior staff member (including a member of the Executive Team). It is noted that a Senior member of staff may direct the complaint to a more relevant staff member in the first instance prior to it being raised directly with them in the first instance (for example a Year level Coordinator in the initial stages of the grievance)
Step 3	Acknowledgement	Once a concern is raised, the School will record (either by way of an electronic file note or written correspondence) the details of the concern including your name and contact details. The School's focus will be on understanding the nature of the problem, the party or parties involved, and the nature of any agreeable solutions.
Step 4	Outcome	Where an agreeable solution is available, this will usually be communicated in writing to you (usually within three (3) business days of the outcome being reached). Where a mutually agreed outcome between the School and the person raising the concern is not appropriate, or possible, the staff member handling the concern will make a decision that best aligns with the School's procedures and legal obligations. This decision will be communicated in writing to you (usually within three (3) business days of the outcome being reached), and the communication will be kept on the relevant student's (and if appropriate, staff member's) file.

	Details	Comment
Stage 2: Make a complaint		
Step 1	Make a complaint	If you are not satisfied with the way your concern has been handled, you may choose to make a formal written complaint. Complaints should ordinarily be made within one (1) calendar month of the initial concern first being raised with the School. A formal complaint should at first instance be addressed to the Head of Faculty, Head of School/Head of Campus, Director of School Operations, Director Learning & Teaching, Deputy Principal or Principal, as appropriate. If the complaint concerns the Principal, the complaint should be made to the Board Chair (see Stage 3), in which case the Board Chair will manage the process outlined below. You may write to the Principal (enquiry@mentonegrammar.net), - or telephone Reception (+613 9584 4211), to arrange a meeting. Please note that if phoning to arrange a meeting, Reception staff will take your details and endeavour to confirm a meeting time as soon as it is practicable to do so.
Step 2	Acknowledge receipt	The appropriate person (as above) will acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as practicable (being usually within three (3) business days).
Step 3	Review of complaint	When the appropriate person is dealing with a complaint, the School's objective is to achieve a resolution by: Clarifying the substance of the complaint, and the steps taken by the School to address the initial concern. Identifying whether the complaint raises an issue regarding non-compliance with the School's policies procedures. Identifying whether the complaint raises an issue that would be more appropriately addressed under the School's <i>Responding to Student Safety Concerns Policy</i>. Communicating with you and relevant parent(s), student(s) and staff, in an attempt to resolve the issue by agreement (where practicable). Failing agreement, investigating the complaint and deciding appropriate outcomes in accordance with procedural fairness and natural justice principles. The appropriate person may delegate parts of the complaint-management process, and seek the assistance of third parties, however

	Details	Comment
		any ultimate decision will still be made by the appropriate person in consultation with the Principal. If the appropriate person or delegate arranges to speak with you, you may request to have someone else present as a support person. The support person can be a relative or a friend, but please note that the role of a support person is to provide you with support and not to act as an advocate.
Step 4	Outcome	The appropriate person will aim to communicate the outcome of a complaint in writing within fifteen (15) business days where practicable. The appropriate person will promptly report any formal complaints, and relevant outcomes, to the Board.
Stage 3 – Request a Review		
Step 1	Request a review by the Principal	If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been adequately resolved by the appropriate person, you may request a review by writing to the Principal (enquiry@mentonegrammar.net), - or telephone Reception (+613 9584 4211, to arrange a meeting. Please note that if phoning to arrange a meeting, Reception staff will take your details and endeavour to confirm a meeting time as soon as it is practicable to do so. If the complaint concerns the Principal, the request for review should be made to the Board Chair (see Stage 3), Members of the School community who raise grievances with other Board members will be directed to follow the procedures set out in this policy (e.g. raising a complaint with the appropriate person or requesting a review by writing to the Principal or the Board Chair, if the complaint concerns the Principal). Requests for review must be made in writing within ten (10) business days of the date the relevant staff member communicated the outcome of your complaint in writing. The grounds for the review, and in particular any concerns you have with the way the relevant complaint was dealt with, must be clearly identified in the request for review.
Step 2	Review	The Principal in reviewing the Deputy Principal's decision will aim to achieve a resolution by: Reviewing the information and any correspondence or communication already provided by the complainant. Determining whether the School's procedures have been followed appropriately.

	Details	Comment
		Ensuring that procedural fairness and natural justice principles were applied. The Principal may delegate parts of the review, or seek the assistance of third parties, however any ultimate decision will still be made by the Principal . For the avoidance of doubt, the Principal will not delegate to the Deputy Principal a review of a decision they have already made. However, if the Principal is satisfied that a complaint has not been properly raised (or dealt) with by the Deputy Principal (and the Deputy Principal does not otherwise have a conflict of interest), the Principal may refer the matter back to the Deputy Principal to make an initial decision (noting that decision would then create a right to request a review).
Step 3	Outcome	The Principal will aim to communicate the outcome of a request for review in writing within thirty (30) business days where practicable. The Principal will promptly report any formal complaints, and relevant outcomes, to the Board through the Risk and Compliance report (Grievances section).
Stage 3 – Request an Appeal of the Final Review of the Decision		
Step 1	Request an appeal of the review and decision by the Board Chair	If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been adequately resolved by the Principal through the review, you may request an appeal by writing to the Board Chair (chair@mentonegrammar.net). Members of the School community who raise grievances with other Board members will be directed to follow the procedures set out in this policy (e.g. raising a complaint with the appropriate person or requesting a review by writing to the Principal or requesting an appeal of the review and decision by the Board Chair). Requests for an appeal of the review and decision must be made in writing within ten (10) business days of the date the Principal communicated the outcome of your complaint in writing. The grounds for the appeal of the review and decision, and in particular any concerns you have with the way the relevant review and complaint was dealt with, must be clearly identified in the request for appeal of the review and decision.
Step 2	Review	Please note that in accordance with good governance, the Board entrusts the Principal with the day-to-day management of the School, and in particular its staff and

	Details	Comment
		students. The Principal is accorded significant discretion regarding such matters. Accordingly, any appeal of the Principal's review and decision under this policy will be confined to the Board Chair deciding whether there is evidence that the School's procedures have not been followed, in a way likely to have meaningfully influenced the Principal's review and decision, or that the Principal unreasonably exercised his or her discretion. The Board Chair may delegate parts of the appeal, or seek the assistance of third parties, however any ultimate decision will still be made by the Board Chair. For the avoidance of doubt, the Board Chair will not delegate to the Principal an appeal of the review and decision he or she has already made. However, if the Board Chair is satisfied that a complaint has not been properly raised (or dealt with) by the appropriate person or Principal (and the Principal does not otherwise have a conflict of interest), the Board Chair may refer the matter to the Principal to make an initial decision (noting that decision would then create a right to request an Appeal of the review and decision)
Step 3	Outcome	The Board Chair will aim to communicate the outcome of a request for an Appeal of the review and decision in writing within forty-five (45) business days where practicable. The Board Chair will promptly report any requests for appeal of the review and decision, and relevant outcomes, to the Board.

SCHEDULE 2

Relevant Considerations

1 Withdrawal of a Grievance

- 1.1 A grievance can be withdrawn at any stage during the processes outlined in this policy. A grievance can only be withdrawn by the person who made the complaint to the School.
- 1.2 Ideally, all grievances should be retracted in writing, however a dated notation on the School's systems, stating the grievance has been withdrawn verbally by the appropriate person can be made by a staff member at the School responsible for managing the grievance.
- 1.3 The School will notify affected parties if a grievance is withdrawn, where considered appropriate.
- 1.4 Regardless of a person's wish to withdraw a grievance, complaints that have disciplinary implications for a member of staff may still be followed up by the School.

2 Anonymous Grievances

- 2.1 The School is committed to dealing with grievances in accordance with the processes outlined in this policy. The School respects in some cases, complainants would prefer to remain anonymous and not put a name to their grievances.
- 2.2 The School treats grievances about the School, a staff member, a student's education and/or a student's wellbeing with the utmost importance, and will investigate such grievances raised to the fullest extent practicable. However, anonymity can make it difficult for the School to effectively resolve grievances (particularly where the School is being asked to accept an anonymous source's version of events) and are accordingly discouraged.

3 Previously Addressed, Stale or Vexatious Grievances

- 3.1 Grievances that have been previously addressed by the School or externally, or which were not raised with the School within a reasonable period of time (having regard to the nature of the relevant grievance), will not be considered in the absence of highly relevant new information and/or evidence coming to light.
- 3.2 The School does not tolerate vexatious grievances.

4 External Grievances and Redress

- 4.1 The School acknowledges that grievances relating to the School can also be made to an external body, such as the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA), or be the subject of legal action. However, the School encourages its community to raise any grievances, and work to resolve such matters, in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

5 Confidentiality

- 5.1 Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained by the School at all times when dealing with a grievance, with information only being provided to those who have a right or need to know.

6 Communication

- 6.1 The policy is available to parents, students and the School community via the [Policies | Mentone Grammar](#) SCHOOL POLICIES section of the School's public website.