



Concerns and Complaints Procedure

Rationale

1. At Casa Mia Montessori School, we believe that courteous and respectful communication is central to good mental health and fulfilling community relationships. We celebrate individual differences and encourage intellectual discussion around ideas and human values. A set of policies and procedures are in place that state our values and expectations for community relationships. Some of these are:
 - Montessori Philosophy and Pedagogy
 - Guiding Principles of Good Behaviour
 - Community Code of Conduct
 - Student Behaviour Policy and Procedures
2. Casa Mia is committed to a work environment that is safe and free from all forms of conflict, harassment and discrimination. The School has a responsibility to maintain such an environment and refuses to participate in, or condone, behaviour that breaches these criteria. Where conflict arises between community members this Concerns and Complaints Procedure will be used to set out the process for its resolution.
3. An effective Concerns and Complaints Procedure can diffuse problems and can provide the school with helpful information. Complaints treated as constructive suggestions can be used to improve standards and may prevent cause for further complaint. Even an unjustified complaint may indicate an area that can be improved.

Principles

- Casa Mia welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and all queries and concerns are taken seriously and acted on promptly. Prompt initial communication and discussion of a query, concern or issue will provide clarity and help to resolve conflict.
- There are clear procedures which outline the appropriate action when a matter remains unresolved or cannot be resolved quickly.
- Procedural fairness is for all members of the community. This is derived from the principles of natural justice. This means decision makers:
 - act fairly and provide reasons for decisions,
 - the person affected is given a fair hearing,
 - all parties to a matter have an opportunity to put their case where an adverse decision or finding is made;
 - and all relevant arguments are considered and irrelevant arguments are excluded.

The Resolution Process

The informal complaint resolution process is usually the preferred option and generally offers the best outcome. These procedures can be flexible enough to handle both formal complaints and the informal raising of issues. Serious issues may be raised in an informal and friendly way. Please note the Flow Chart on page 4.

“How should I express my concern or make a complaint?”

When you contact the school, ask to speak to the Principal or Administration Officer. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you. The Principal may direct you to the person most closely concerned with the issue.

Members of staff will be happy to help. You may start with the person most closely concerned with the issue – for example, the classroom teacher. They may be able to sort things out quickly, with the minimum of fuss. However, you may prefer to take the matter to the Principal.

“I don’t want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me”

The school is here for you and your child, and we want to hear your views and your ideas. Contact a member of staff, as described above.

“I am not sure whether to complain or not”

If as parents you have concerns, you are entitled to raise them. If in doubt, you should contact the school, as we are here to help.

“What will happen next?”

If you raise something face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction.

If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing, we will contact you within five working days, to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.

In many circumstances, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding. You will be given a date by which time you will receive a response. If a detailed exploration of the issue is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

Parents need to be aware that in some cases the school will not be able to discuss the details of action taken as it would be inappropriate. For example if the action involved staff discipline.

“What happens about confidentiality?”

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal and those directly involved. The Chair of the School Governing Body may also need to be informed. It is the school’s policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child’s safety was at risk or it become necessary to refer matters to the Police. You would be fully informed.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints might not be pursued.

“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

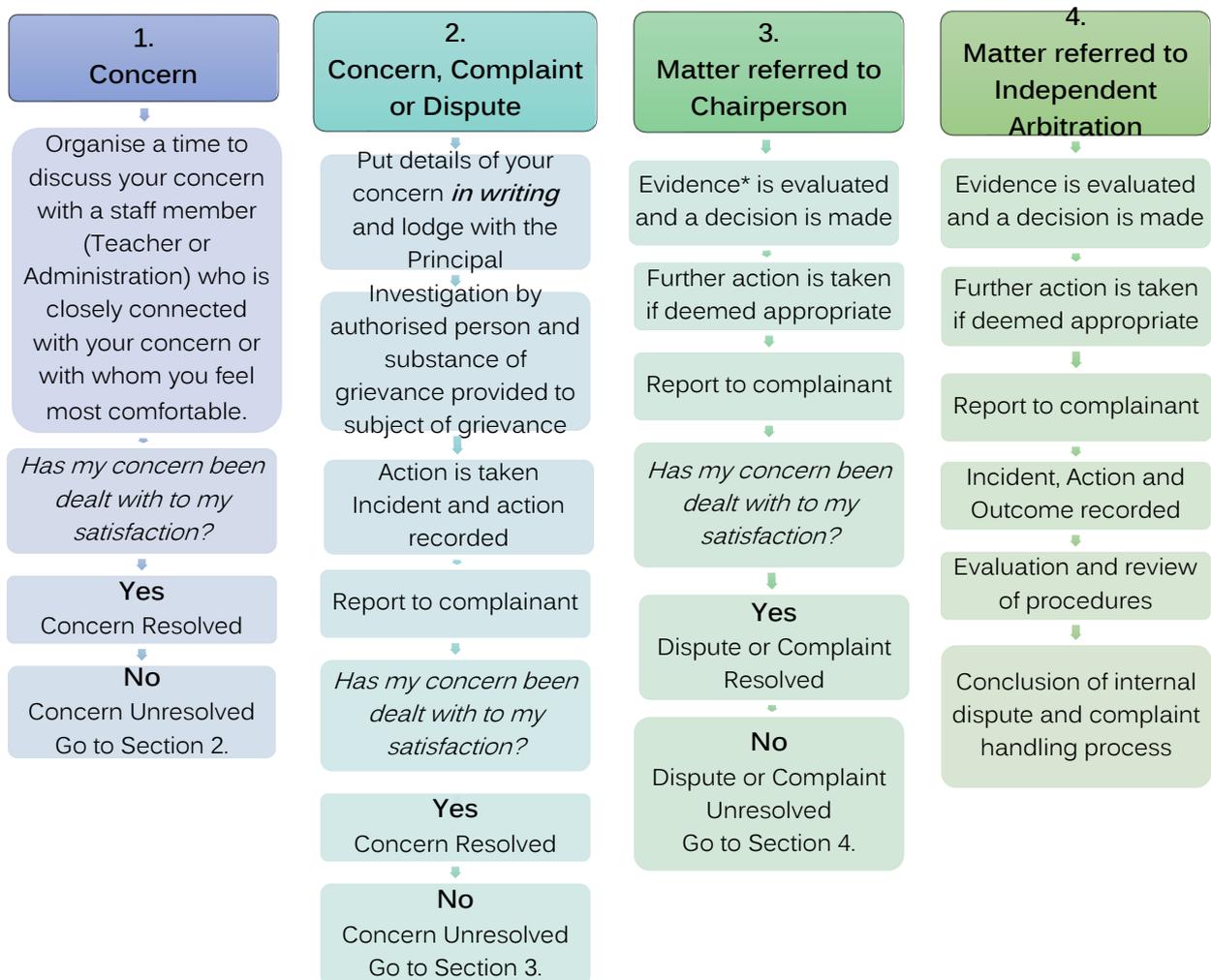
If you are not satisfied, the Principal will offer to refer the matter to the Chair of the School Governing Body. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Chair. The Chair will call for a full report from the Principal, and will examine matters thoroughly before responding. This may result in a satisfactory solution, but if it does not, the Chair will invite you to a meeting. You may wish to be supported by a friend, but legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage.

If the meeting does not bring about a resolution, the matter would be referred to the school’s Conciliation Committee or an independent arbiter. It is their task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. The Committee Convenor will invite you to a meeting. You will be asked if there any papers you would like to have circulated beforehand. As with the Chair’s meeting, you will be invited to bring a friend with you.

The school recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.



Concerns, Complaints and Disputes Procedure Flow Chart



***Evidence: Written grievance from Complainant, Report from Staff, Report from Principal, School Policies**

External bodies with concerns, disputes or complaints please lodge these via email to the principal@casamiamontessori.wa.edu.au or To the Principal, PO Box419, Bassendean, WA, 6934