

POLICY		PROCEDURE
Procedure Name	Complaint Handling Procedure	
NESA Manual Section	Safe and Supportive Environment (B8) Student Welfare (B8.2)	
Related Procedures	Complaint Handling Procedural Fairness Guidelines (B8.2) Complaint Handling Process Flow Chart (B8.2) Complaints or Allegations of Staff Misconduct Flow Chart (B8.2) Privacy, Personal Information and Confidentiality Procedure (B2.3) Child Protection Procedure (B8.1) Student Wellbeing and Support Procedure (B8.2) Code of Conduct for Staff Procedure (B2.3) Staff Grievance Procedure (B2.3) Enrolment Procedure (B7.1) Document and Record Retention Procedure (B2.3)	
Related Policies	Complaint Handling Policy (B8.2) Privacy, Personal Information and Confidentiality Policy (B2.3) Child Protection Policy (B8.1) Student Wellbeing and Support Policy (B8.2) Code of Conduct for Staff Policy (B2.3) Staff Grievance Policy (B2.3) Enrolment Policy (B7.1) Document and Record Retention Policy (B2.3)	
Related Legislation	Education Act 1990 (NSW) Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW) Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)	
Date of Issue / Last Revision	30 May 2020 17 March 2022 20 May 2025 30 August 2026	
Date Set for Review	August 2029	

Complaint Handling Procedure

At Central Coast Montessori Primary School (CCMPS), we value open communication and believe that addressing complaints and grievances promptly, respectfully, and fairly is essential for building trust and nurturing a supportive community. We view complaints as opportunities for growth, learning, and continuous improvement, in keeping with the Montessori philosophy of respect and collaboration.

A **complaint or grievance** is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the School regarding an educational or operational matter, including the services provided by the School, or the behaviour or decisions of a staff member, contractor, or volunteer. This also includes allegations of misconduct.

If a parent/carer or student has a concern about the conduct of a staff member, they should raise it with the School using the contact details provided below. Where a complaint involves behaviour that may constitute reportable conduct, the matter will be managed in accordance with the School's *Child Protection Policy*

(B8.1). Complainants are not required to determine whether their concern meets the threshold for reportable conduct before making a complaint—any concern about a child’s wellbeing may be reported under this policy.

Complaints can be raised by students or parents/carers. While the School will seek to resolve complaints informally whenever possible, it recognises that in some cases a formal complaint may be necessary.

Scope

This procedure applies to complaints made by students, parents, and carers. It includes concerns about the conduct of staff, contractors, and volunteers, including matters that may constitute misconduct or reportable conduct.

Key Principles

- Respect and Dignity — All parties will be treated fairly and with respect throughout the process.
- Procedural Fairness — Each party will have the opportunity to be heard before a decision is made.
- Confidentiality — Information will be handled sensitively and in accordance with privacy laws.
- Timeliness — Complaints will be acknowledged promptly and addressed within reasonable timeframes.
- Safety — Any concerns about child safety or wellbeing will be addressed in accordance with the School’s Child Protection Policy.

Raising a Complaint

Informal Complaints

- Complainants are encouraged to raise concerns directly with the person involved, if appropriate, to seek a quick resolution.
- If the complainant does not feel comfortable doing so, or if it is not appropriate (e.g. concerning staff misconduct), they may raise the complaint directly with the Principal.

Formal Complaints

- If the matter is not resolved informally, or if the complainant wishes to proceed formally, they may make a formal complaint verbally or in writing to the Principal at principal@ccm.nsw.edu.au. Where a complaint is made verbally, the School may document the complaint and confirm the substance of the complaint with the complainant.
- Complaints concerning the conduct of the Principal should be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Board via the Board Secretary at board@ccm.nsw.edu.au. In this case, references in this procedure to the Principal will be read as references to the Chair of the Board.
- Complaints should include:
 - Name of the complainant
 - Details of the concern/complaint
 - Any supporting information or documentation
 - Contact details for communication

Handling Complaints

Acknowledgement

- The Principal (or delegate) will generally acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing as soon as practicable, usually within 5 working days, outlining the next steps.

Assessing the Complaint

The Principal will generally assess the complaint and determine:

- Whether the complaint falls under this policy or is a matter better handled by another policy (e.g. Child Protection).
- The priority of the complaint, considering its urgency and/or seriousness.
- Whether the matter gives rise to an external reporting or notification obligation, including to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), NSW Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG), NSW Police or another relevant authority.

Where a complaint gives rise to a child protection, reportable conduct, criminal or other statutory reporting obligation, the required report or notification must be made in accordance with the applicable legislation and School policy. The complaint handling process must not delay or replace that obligation.

Investigating a Formal Complaint

The Principal will generally manage a formal complaint by:

- Advising the complainant of the likely steps to be taken by the School.
- If appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the complaint and providing them with an opportunity to respond.
- Collecting any additional information required to assess the complaint.
- Making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved ("resolution decision").
- Advising the complainant in writing of the resolution decision and any actions to be taken.

In some circumstances, not all steps may be appropriate. The School reserves the right to determine the most appropriate process on a case-by-case basis.

Managing Staff Misconduct

Where a complaint raises concerns about staff misconduct or serious misconduct, the Principal will assess the matter and determine the appropriate employment, disciplinary, investigation and/or regulatory response.

Any investigation will be conducted in accordance with procedural fairness and applicable employment obligations. The staff member will be informed of the substance of relevant allegations and given a reasonable opportunity to respond before adverse findings are made, unless doing so would prejudice a statutory or external investigation.

Where the matter may involve child protection, reportable conduct or criminal conduct, the Child Protection Policy and Procedure and applicable external reporting requirements take priority.

Interim measures may be implemented where reasonably necessary to manage risk while a matter is being assessed or investigated.

Procedural Fairness

The School is committed to ensuring that:

- All parties are given a fair opportunity to be heard.
- Decisions are made impartially and without bias.
- The outcome is based on relevant evidence.

Support Persons

A complainant or any party named in a complaint may have an appropriate support person present at a meeting about the complaint. A support person is present to provide practical and emotional support and should not unreasonably disrupt or interfere with the process. Where a proposed support person presents a conflict of interest or would otherwise compromise the fair management of the complaint, the School may request that an alternative support person be nominated.

Outcomes and Resolution

The School will aim to provide the complainant with a written response outlining the decision within 20 working days where practicable. Where this is not possible due to the nature or complexity of the matter, the complainant will be advised of the delay and provided with an updated expected timeframe. Where appropriate, other relevant parties will also be informed, respecting privacy and confidentiality.

Review of Outcome

A complainant who is dissatisfied with the handling or outcome of a complaint may request a review where there are reasonable grounds to do so. A request should identify the aspect of the process or decision requiring review and the reasons for the request.

Where practicable, the review will be undertaken by a person who was not responsible for the original decision. The School will advise the complainant of the review outcome and any further avenues available, where appropriate.

Record Keeping

A confidential record of the complaint, investigation, and outcome will be maintained in accordance with privacy requirements.

Continuous Improvement

Complaints will be recorded confidentially and data reviewed regularly by the Principal to identify trends, learn from experience and opportunities for continual improvement with the quality of our educational environment, in alignment with our CCMPs philosophy of reflective practice.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Review

This procedure will be reviewed three (3) years, or earlier if required due to changes in legislation, NESA guidelines, or identified gaps in practice.

Continuous improvement will be guided by feedback from Guides, staff, families, and, where appropriate, students. As key stakeholders, families and staff will be encouraged to participate meaningfully in the review process to ensure the policy remains relevant and responsive to the needs of the school community.

Related Documents and References

[NESA Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools \(NSW\) Manual February 2026](#)

[NSW Ombudsman's Guidelines on Complaint Handling](#)

[NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme \(Children's Guardian Act 2019\)](#)

[National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)