



MASADA COLLEGE

Complaints Handling and Community Grievance

DOCUMENT NAME	Complaints Handling and Community Grievance
POLICY NUMBER	0043
APPLIES TO	Whole College
CONTACT PERSON	College Principal
DATE CREATED	21 August 2022
DATE LAST REVIEWED	8 December 2023
VERSION	3



Introduction

Purpose and scope

This procedure applies to Masada College in handling complaints made in respect of services provided by the College or against staff members, which includes employees, contractors and volunteers.

This procedure does not extend to personal grievances between parents, guardians or other members of the College community.

Whistleblowing complaints

This procedure does not extend to complaints which are whistleblowing disclosures. The procedure for whistleblowing complaints are dealt with in the College Whistleblowing Policy.

In summary, a whistleblowing disclosure is a disclosure which:

- is made by a board member, staff member, a person who supplies goods or services to the College, including a volunteer, an employer of a supplier or a relative of any of these people;
- involves alleged misconduct, an improper state of affairs or circumstances, or illegal activity, and
- is made to a senior staff member, or officer of the College, the College's auditor or a person who the College has authorised to collect such disclosures

Related policies

Complaints about reportable conduct will be addressed in accordance with the College's Child Protection Policy.

Complaints regarding a grievance between staff members about work matters, including work relationships and decisions made by other staff members which impact on their work, will be addressed in accordance with the College's Staff Grievance Policy.

Complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying between staff are generally addressed in accordance with the school's Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Statement.

Confidentiality

All parties involved in complaints handling are required to maintain appropriate confidentiality, including in relation to the handling and storing records.



Complaints

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the College about an educational and/or operational matter relating to services provided by the College or the behaviour or decisions of a staff member, contractor or volunteer, including misconduct.

If a parent/carer or student has a concern about the conduct of a staff member, they should raise their concern with the College. If a complaint that concerns the behaviour of a staff member may constitute reportable conduct, the matter will be addressed in accordance with the College's Child Protection Policy. Please refer to the College's Child Protection Policy for information about reportable conduct. Complainants are not required to assess whether their concern meets the threshold of reportable conduct before making a complaint. Any concern about a child's wellbeing may be reported under this policy.

Complaints may be made by a student or parent/carer.

The College will seek to resolve complaints informally where possible but acknowledges that in some cases a person may wish to make a formal complaint.

Raising a complaint

The complainant

Informal complaints may be raised by a complainant directly with the person involved. However, if the complainant does not feel comfortable doing so or the matter is one where it may not be appropriate to do so a complaint can be made to the College Principal, or relevant College Executive Member. Any complaint about the conduct of a staff member should be raised directly with the College Principal in the first instance.

Should the matter not be resolved through informal processes, the complainant may raise the matter formally with the school via the following methods:

- a) ELC & Junior School complaints should be made directly to the Head of Junior School and the College Principal
- b) Senior School complaints should be made directly to the Head of Senior School and the College Principal

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning the College Principal the complaint should be made in writing to the Board Co-Presidents via email president@staff.masada.nsw.edu.au. In this situation, the references in this policy relating to the role of the College Principal should be read as references to the Board Co-Presidents.



The College

The College Principal will generally acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing as soon as practicable.

Handling Complaints

Assessing a complaint

- The College Principal generally will assess the complaint and determine:
- whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or is a staff grievance or reportable conduct matter which are dealt with by the relevant policies; and
- the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised; and
- whether the school may be required to report the matter to the Office of the Children's Guardian, Police, Department of Communities and Justice or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters

Managing a formal complaint

The College Principal generally will manage a formal complaint by:

- a) advising the complainant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the College in relation to the complaint;
- b) if appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the complaint at the relevant time and providing them with an opportunity to respond;
- c) collecting any additional information the College considers necessary to assess the complaint;
- d) making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved ("resolution decision"); and
- e) advising the complainant in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision of the College Principal and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

There may be circumstances where some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the College will determine, on a case by case basis the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.

A complainant and the relevant parties that the complaint is about may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the College about the complaint. However, the College maintains the right to determine whether the person's preferred support person is appropriate and may not approve the attendance of a support person where they are determined by the School to be inappropriate.



Steps in Raising Issues at the College

The School has in place processes for dealing with complaints and grievances raised by students and/or parents. The contact persons for this process is outlined in the Communication Flow Chart (page 4)

Depending on the nature of the issue who should be the first point of contact. In the first instance if it is appropriate it is best to address the grievance directly with the staff member involved. The process from there works its way through to appointments with the College Executive, and under given circumstances, the Board of Management, as per below.

Early Learning Centre and Junior School: Appointments with the Head of Junior School may be made by telephoning the Personal Assistant to the Head of Junior School.

Senior School: Appointments may be made by telephoning the Personal Assistant to the Head of Senior School. Please indicate if your visit concerns your child, as it is usual for the Head of Senior School to ensure that the student's Year Patron is present and that any necessary information is obtained prior to the meeting if appropriate.

Business Administrator Appointments can be made by telephoning reception.

College Principal: Appointments may be made by telephoning the Executive Assistant to the College Principal and Board.

President of the Board of Management: appointments may be made by telephoning the Executive Assistant to the College Principal and Board

Appointments with Staff

Parents are encouraged to bring their concerns or ideas, be they through telephone, email, letter or in person to staff. It is important in doing so to go through the appropriate channels as set out in the Communication Flow Chart.

Following going through the steps in the Communication Flow Chart parents are welcome to make appointments to meet with the Head of Senior School /Curriculum about matters related to the general curriculum and with the Head of Jewish Life about matters related to the Jewish Life curriculum.

For all matters, appointments should be made by telephoning the School office and an appointment time or a return call can then be organised.

In the Senior School parents are asked initially to address all matters:

- relating to a particular subject area to the subject teacher
- and thereafter to the relevant KLA (Key Learning Area) Head of Department (see College Staff List which is distributed annually for names of Department Heads).
- Matters of a general nature concerning your child should be addressed to the Year Patron.



In the Junior School appointments may be made with:

- The child's teacher. Parents are asked not to interrupt teachers during class time. If it is necessary to phone teachers during school hours a message should be left requesting the teacher to return your call. Parents may also choose to email the relevant staff member to raise
- their concerns.
- Specialist teachers
- Head of Teaching and Learning for curriculum matters
- Head of Academic Care for pastoral matters
- Head of Hebrew/Jewish Studies for these subject matters

If phone messages are left for staff they will endeavour to answer them within 24 hours. Similarly staff will attempt to respond via email in a timely manner.

Parents can expect to have their issues acknowledged, investigated as/if appropriate and be provided with feedback on the outcome.

You should not telephone teachers, College executive staff at their homes or on their mobiles. Similarly, the President of the Board of Management should only be accessed through a request to the Executive Assistant to the College Principal and Board.

Communication with the College

Any parent with a concern is urged to approach the College promptly to ensure early intervention and resolution of the problem. There are appropriate channels of communication in the College to facilitate this process. Communication may be in writing or via a telephone or appointed meeting.

Communication Channels

In the following schematics of the channels of communication, the arrow indicates where to go next if not satisfied that the matter has been resolved.

Responses to Grievances

The College will determine the most appropriate method for dealing with the grievance which could include amongst other things the following:

- Requesting further information
- Seeking out information from staff members or students
- Setting up a meeting with you and other parties involved in the grievance issue
- Reviewing and responding to the grievance or arranging an appropriate person to respond to the grievance
- Facilitating a meeting between you and the person(s) that the grievance is about

On receipt of the grievance the College will generally take the following steps:

- Determine the best method of handling the grievance



- Advise you of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the College in relation to the grievance
- Advise the person about whom the grievance is about the nature of the grievance and seek out their response
- Collect any additional information the College considers necessary and appropriate to properly review the grievance and
- Advise you and the person(s) that the grievance is about of the College's response to the grievance and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

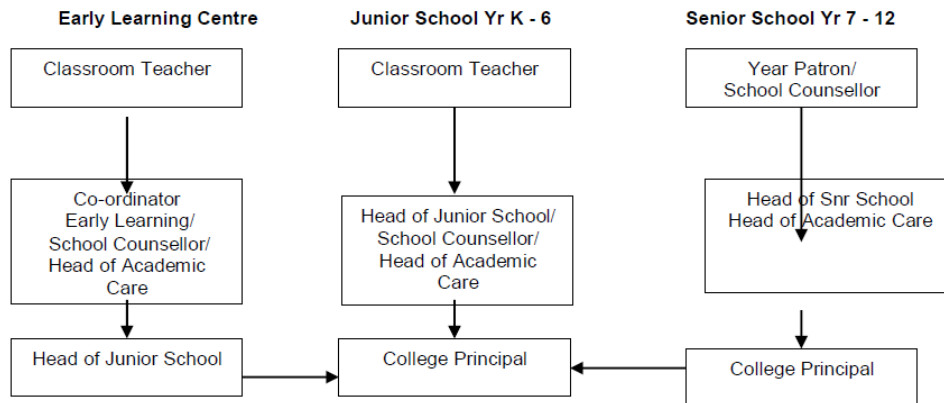
Note; There may be circumstances in which some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the College will determine in its absolute discretion, on a case by case basis the most appropriate method of handling the grievance.

Parents can expect that all matters raised with the College at meetings or via written correspondence will be followed up with a response in writing acknowledging the grievance and putting forward the outcome(s) of the discussion and any follow up as a result of the matter being raised.

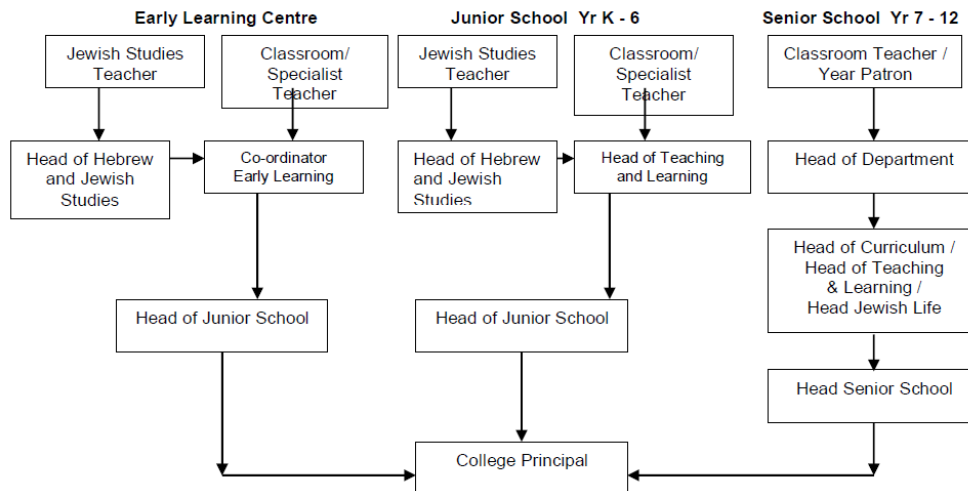


Communication Flow Chart

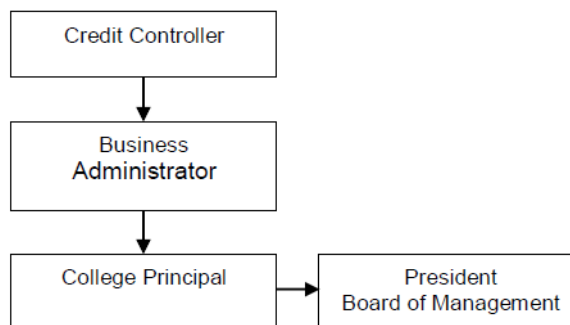
Student Welfare Issues: Issues relating to your child's wellbeing.



Educational issues: issues relating to your child's academic progress



Financial Issues: issues relating to fees, other charges, education funding etc



Parents should rest assured that in the event of any concerns being expressed by them, the College Executive will not tolerate any repercussions on their child.



Communication Rules

For any issues not relating directly to your child but relating to the general processes, policies or everyday management of the College please approach the relevant Head of Junior or Senior Schools or Business Administration.

All College teaching, office and maintenance staff are required to speak to and behave towards parents and visitors with utmost courtesy. The College expects the same in return from parents when they phone, email or visit the College.

Emergency Communication: In emergencies, contact the school office.

Senior School: The office is unable to pass on messages to the children except in an emergency. Please make all necessary arrangements for transportation, dentists' appointments etc. prior to leaving home in the morning. A phone is available at reception for necessary use by the students.

Junior School: In the case of an emergency, Reception contacts children with important information. Messages cannot be relayed after 2.00pm. Generally, it is recommended that all afternoon and travel arrangements be clearly defined before your child attends school each day.

Letters and notes from the College: When letters/emails sent home by the College require a response or acknowledgement, parents are requested to do so promptly. Permission notes regarding excursions must be returned signed by a parent at least 48 hours before the excursion.

Contact

If you have any queries about this procedure, you should contact Raquel Charet College Principal via email (rcharet@staff.masada.nsw.edu.au) for advice.