



GRIEVANCE POLICY

Approved by Management Committee 02 February 2023

Policy

This policy has been developed in the interest of maintaining a supportive and productive environment for students, staff and parents at Peregrine. We strive to create an environment that fosters open and respectful communication between members of the school community. We recognise that from time to time conflict may arise and we urge the parties involved to work towards resolution as quickly as possible.

- Peregrine is committed to excellence in educational delivery and to the provision of supportive working and community environments. The school seeks to work with all people within its community in a constructive manner.
- The school values direct communication between individuals and expects that individuals will bring concerns directly to the parties involved. The school expects that all reasonable efforts will be made by all parties to resolve the issue utilising the appropriate internal school process and in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct policy.
- All issues between staff/parents/students/the general community and Peregrine will be subject to the School's internal resolution processes. The school will assist individuals with the presentation of grievances within these processes.
- The School acknowledges Aggrieved Parties have recourse to resolution processes independent of the school at any stage of the Grievance Resolution process.
- The school takes all grievance issues seriously and commits to resolving grievances as quickly as possible and has developed a time framework for action.
- The school will respect your privacy and treat matters respectfully. Grievances are handled in line with the school's Privacy Policy.

Definitions:

Grievance – the submission of a complaint, or a strong feeling that you have been treated unfairly, with the aim of remedial action being taken.

Policy Aims

- to address all grievance issues in a sensitive and appropriate manner,
- to actively work with complainants to address grievances,
- to seek positive outcomes at all times,
- to comply with the School's Registration Board's Grievance Process guidelines and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

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Procedural Fairness

Throughout the grievance process, the school will ensure that the person raising the complaint, or having a complaint made against them, is given a fair hearing. This includes:

- providing a reasonable opportunity for them to present their case in person and/or in writing
- inviting the person to have a support person with them in meetings
- allowing the person to have legal representation at any decision making meeting
- disclosing any critical issues to be addressed or any information that is credible, relevant and significant in the decision making process
- giving the person notice that a decision is being made that may affect them

ensuring that any person making a decision is not biased or may be seen to be biased in terms of a conflict of interest.

Procedures

Lodge a Grievance

If you have a grievance to lodge, follow these steps:

1. If appropriate, first adopt the *informal resolution process*. This involves discussing the issue directly with the person you have a grievance with. If you need help following this process, talk with someone you trust to help. Where it is not appropriate to discuss directly with the person involved (ie, an instance of abuse or criminal activity), talk first with someone you trust to help you begin the formal resolution process.
2. If using the informal resolution process does not resolve the grievance, you have the right to lodge a formal grievance which will involve following the *formal resolution process*.

Informal Resolution Process

Most concerns will be able to be resolved using an informal process. An informal process involves talking with the person concerned as soon as possible. While it may be helpful to talk to a trusted support person to support you through the resolution process, it is not generally helpful to share your grievance with others **instead** of following the grievance process.

When attempting to resolve the conflict, take time to consider the following:

- Talk to the person as soon as possible. Leaving things longer will only make it harder.
- Try to remain calm and adopt an objective approach, even though you may not feel that way. Writing down the problem may help to clarify whether the issue is a concern, complaint or grievance. Writing things down particularly helps if there is more than one problem and may act as a memory aid at a later stage.
- Try to identify what outcome would resolve the situation for you.
- Choose a mutually convenient time to talk and do so in a private place, i.e. not in front of students or other adults.

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- Remember that your version of the issue may differ from the other person's perspective.
- Seek a positive outcome resolution at all times.

Note - Where the grievance involves law-breaking and other reportable matters, additional school policy will need to be consulted.

If talking with the person concerned does not resolve the grievance, you may move to the formal resolution process.

Law-Breaking Behaviour or Major Policy Breach

Where an instance of a grievance has occurred that involves a breach of the law or major breach of school policy (child protection for example), the Co-Principals or member of the Management Committee will first consult the appropriate school policy prior to commencing any resolution process, as some steps may be inappropriate in this instance. Relevant policies to consult in these instances include:

1. Child Protection Policy
2. Mandatory Reporting Policy
3. Duty of Care Policy
4. Code of Conduct

Formal Resolution Process

The formal resolution process will be enacted by one of the Co-Principals or a member of the Management Committee in accordance with the supporting resolution process. The school has a separate grievance process for:

- Staff
- Students
- Parents
- Broader Community

A copy of this Grievance Policy will be provided to any person lodging a grievance. A student should ask a parent or teacher to help them to lodge their grievance.

The school will respond to any grievance within 48 hours and expects that any grievance process will take no longer than six weeks to complete. On receipt of any grievance, the school will provide a copy of the Grievance policy and relevant Resolution Process flowchart.

The formal resolution process involves arranging a meeting with one of the Co-Principals or a member of the Management Committee. This person will assist in facilitating and attempting to find a mutually satisfactory resolution between the parties involved in the conflict. If any aggrieved person feels that the Management Committee Representative and/or Co-Principal is not appropriate in their particular case, i.e., due to a conflict of interest, or the complaint is about one or both of the Co-Principals or a Management Committee Representative, then the Committee should be contacted and they will appoint an appropriate person.

It may be appropriate for internal or external mediation between the parties to be arranged at any time in the process and the Management Committee may authorise this mediation to take place at the school's expense. The mediator must be acceptable to both parties.

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If there are disputed facts, an investigator may be appointed at the school's expense. This may be:

- another member of staff
- a member of the Management Committee
- a representative from Independent Schools Tasmania
- a representative from Strong Families, Safe Kids
- a professional investigator

If the Management Committee decides that the school grievance process has been exhausted or has broken down and resolution has not been achieved, the school may decide to take legal action.

Records of grievances and complaints that follow the formal resolution process are stored in school records for reference.

The options of mediation or legal action remain open to both parties at any time.

To make contact with a member of the Management Committee, please contact the Peregrine school office on 03 6295 1300 and request a call back or email communication.

Complaints against one or both of the Co-Principals, or a member of the Management Committee:

If appropriate, enact the *informal resolution process* to discuss your concerns with the person concerned, as soon as possible.

If this does not resolve the matter or is inappropriate, you have the right to lodge a formal grievance by writing directly to the Management Committee Chair or another member of the committee, should the Chair not be appropriate. This process will follow the *formal resolution process*.

When enacting the *formal resolution process*, both parties must agree on a mediator to support a meeting. It may be appropriate to appoint an external representative or investigator, as detailed in this policy.

If resolution of a grievance is unable to be achieved through the above lines of approach, there are several mechanisms for external arbitration. Unresolved disputes may be referred to Courts of Law (in civil matters), relevant statutory bodies or commissions for further investigation and resolution.

Distribution:

- This policy is to be given out along with the appropriate grievance process when any grievance is notified, or on application.
- This policy is to be included in enrolment material provided to prospective parents.
- The Parent Issue Resolution Process is to be published in the school newsletter at the beginning of each school year and available on the school website.
- The Staff Issue Resolution Process is to be provided to new staff on appointment and displayed in the office in a prominent place.

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Appendix

- 7.3.2 Parent Issues Resolution Process
- 7.3.3 Staff Including Volunteers Issues Resolution Process
- 7.3.4 Broader Community Issues Resolution Process
- 7.3.5 Student Issues Resolution Process

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