Carmel School Complaint/Grievance Policy

(incorporating parent and student complaints/grievances)

Statement of Purpose and Commitment

It is recognised that at times, grievances or complaints may arise within the School community. This policy sets out processes by which matters of concern can be addressed in a timely manner, in confidence and with sensitivity to all concerned. School leaders, staff and volunteers are responsible for communicating any complaints to the relevant staff members or authority.

Definition:

Carmel School is committed to:

- ensuring that the School is a safe, fair and just environment
- actively promoting the development of positive, respectful relationships
- proactively seeking to minimise conflict
- supporting every community member's right to have their grievance listened to and dealt with fairly, in a timely manner
- attempting to resolve disputes and grievances in a non-threatening, respectful and supportive manner

Guiding Principles

Complainants are encouraged to firstly and, where practicable, seek to resolve the complaint informally. Formal procedures for the resolution of grievances will normally only be invoked when a matter cannot be resolved by informal means.

Wherever possible, the School supports the informal, amicable resolution of grievances through discussion, mediation and/or conciliation to achieve an agreed outcome aimed at enabling all parties to continue in the School community free from harassment or retribution. All resolution processes acknowledge different perspectives and operate under the principles of impartiality and protection from victimisation.

Communications are based on parties acting in good faith, being honest and open and focusing on the issue and not the person. At all times, the School will act and report as necessary as well as cooperate with law enforcement.

In dealing with a complaint, informally or formally, every reasonable effort shall be made to ensure that natural justice is afforded to all parties. In practical terms:

- subject to duty or care or other legal obligations, respondents will be informed of all allegations and circumstances which give rise to the complaint
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Development has any power to intervene directly in complaints relating to the operations of a non-government school.

Record Keeping

Complaints will be recorded in a register, kept securely by the Principal.
The register will contain the following:

Date complaint was received	Name of complainant	Summary of complaint	Investigator	Actions taken	Outcome	Date Principal closed the case

Outcomes

An outcome is deemed successful if all parties find it acceptable. Should any party not be satisfied with the result, they can choose to pursue the matter further.

Each complaint or grievance will be dealt with fairly and in good conscience, based on its particular circumstances and merits. Any settlements reached through the grievance process will not constitute any binding precedent for future cases.

Appropriate Confidentiality

The School recognises that accusations can potentially be defamatory and can involve risks to those concerned, especially if such accusations are without foundation and reputations are damaged without just cause. All persons dealing with grievances or complaints should maintain confidentiality unless otherwise required by circumstances, policy or law, to minimise disruption to the School and the risk of a civil suit for defamation.

Both campuses (Primary and Secondary) have several options available to parents and students should they need to raise a grievance. Although it is most unusual for complaints or grievances to remain unresolved at the School, there may be times where students or parents feel the need to take their grievances further, hence the tiered options outlined below.

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Feedback Channels for Students

At Carmel, we respond to emails within 48 business hours. Responses may be in the form of an email reply, a phone call or a face-to-face discussion. Please make it clear at the time of your grievance if you would like a written response from the School.

In order to get your query attended to quickly, efficiently and directly, it is best to contact the person with the right knowledge and information to help resolve the issue.

Here are the right people to contact for each campus:

ELC and Primary School

- Speak to your classroom teacher.
- If your classroom teacher is unable to assist, please email or speak to the Head of Primary.
- If your query relates to Jewish studies or Hebrew, first speak to your Jewish Studies or Hebrew teacher. If they are unable to assist, please speak to or email the Jewish Studies and Hebrew in the Primary School.
- If you are unsure of who to approach, please speak to the Primary School Administrative Officer who will tell you who to contact.

Secondary School

- For day to day issues, contact your mentor teacher. Names and email addresses of all mentors (and teachers) can be accessed via SEQTA on your timetable.
- For matters relating to your learning in a particular subject, start by talking to or emailing your teacher. If they are unable to assist, you should contact the relevant Head of Learning Area or Learning Area Co-ordinator. If you aren't sure who this is, you can ask at reception and you will be referred to the right person.
- For matters relating to your pastoral care and wellbeing, please contact the Director of Student Development and Wellbeing.
- If you require further assistance, please contact the Head of Secondary.
- If you are unsure of who to approach, ask at reception and they will guide you appropriately.

Whole School Queries

- If you would like to make an appointment to see the Principal, you can email directly. Ask at reception if you need help to do this.
- If you would like to leave feedback, give suggestions or inform us about anything at all, you can always email our general enquires line at: