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COMPLAINTS POLICY

OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework for:

- Receiving and addressing complaints at Cheder Levi Yitzchok and Bnos Chana (collectively referred to hereafter as the Cheder).
- Outlining the procedures to be followed in investigating complaints.
- Ensuring that all complaints, including those related to child safety, are handled appropriately and effectively.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all staff, students, contractors, volunteers, parents/guardians, visitors, external stakeholders, and other members of the Cheder community who have a complaint that falls within the Cheder's area of responsibility. The Cheder's approach to child safety is outlined in the various policies contained in Cheder's Child Safe Program, available on the school website.

Matters of serious misconduct such as sexual offences, criminal charges, serious incidents, or matters requiring mandatory reporting should be immediately reported to a child safety officer, head of school or the principal. For more information, please refer to Cheder's **Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns.**

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Cheder Levi Yitzchok welcomes feedback from all members of its community. Responding to both positive and negative communication promotes open dialogue and continuous improvement. Complaints about any aspect of the Cheder's operations, services, students, or staff will be handled in an appropriate and timely manner. The confidential nature of complaints will be respected (refer to Cheder Levi Yitzchok's **Privacy Policy**).

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Cheder Levi Yitzchok is committed to providing a working environment that is safe, respectful and free from workplace bullying and harassment, in accordance with applicable workplace health and safety and employment obligations. Workplace bullying includes repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a staff member or other worker that creates a risk to health, safety or wellbeing. (Reasonable management action carried out in a reasonable manner does not constitute bullying.)

The Cheder undertakes to:

- Investigate complaints thoroughly and impartially
- Handle complaints seriously
- Address complaints promptly and confidentially
- Where appropriate, encourage individuals to take ownership of their actions and reflect on the impact of their behaviour
- Ensure that all complaints related to child safety are managed with a focus on the welfare of the child, in accordance with our Child Safe policies

The following principles underpin this policy:

- Every attempt will be made to resolve complaints through informal discussion.
- It is the objective of all concerned to resolve all complaints in a timely, consistent, and fair manner.
- All staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, students, and other Cheder community members have the right to report a complaint when they believe the matter is serious enough.

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1. PROCEDURE

The Cheder will use the complaints resolution procedures outlined below to seek to resolve complaints which fall within the Cheder's area of responsibility. All cases of serious misconduct, reportable complaints, serious incidents, or child safety-related complaints will be managed according to the **Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Policy** and referred to the relevant external authority as required.

1.1 Addressing an Informal Complaint

When a complaint is received, the staff member handling it will:

- Encourage the complainant to resolve the complaint directly with the person involved, if appropriate
- Attempt to resolve the issue through informal discussion
- Inform the complainant that they may request a meeting with a member of the Leadership Team to discuss the complaint
- Inform the complainant that if the matter cannot be resolved informally or directly, they should submit a formal complaint in writing
- Note that (in relation to complaints other than those concerning child safety) the Cheder does not commit to follow-up unless the complaint has been submitted formally in writing

1.2 Making a Formal Complain

Complaints can be made using the following methods:

- Using the locked Suggestion Box at Reception.
- Contacting the School Complaints Officer by email at complaints@cly.vic.edu.au.
- Using the complaints form on the Cheder website.

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Once a complaint is received, it will be escalated or prioritised appropriately:

- **If it is a child safety concern,** it will be immediately brought to the attention of a Child Safety Officer.
- **If there is an immediate threat or risk**, it will be escalated to the Heads of School and/or Principal without delay.
- **If it is a reportable matter,** immediate actions as per **Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns** policy and child safety requirements will be taken.
- **If it is an allegation of bullying involving:**
  • A staff member and another staff member;
  • A staff member and a parent or guardian;
  • A staff member and another adult member of the Cheder community.

  The matter may be raised with the Head of School; where the complaint concerns the Head of School, the matter may be raised with the Principal; or where the complaint concerns the Principal, the matter can be raised with **Rabbi Hendel Serebryanski -** the nominated member of the School Advisory Board.

Complaints may be made formally in writing via email to the nominated personnel.

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1.3 Dealing with a Formal Complaint

When a formal complaint is lodged in writing, it will be handled as follows:

- The staff member receiving the formal complaint will record all relevant details.
- The complaint will be forwarded to the appropriate member of the Leadership Team.
- The Leadership Team members will assess the complaint to determine if it requires mandatory reporting.
- If the complaint needs to be reported, the Heads of School or Principal must be notified, and immediate actions as per Cheder policy and child safety requirements will be taken.
- Conflicts of interest will be disclosed where they are identified, and if necessary, the matter will be passed to a different member of the Leadership Team or the Principal.

If the complaint concerns the Principal:

- The complainant may bring the matter to **Rabbi Menachem Cohen**, Cheder Head of School, or **Rabbi Hendel Serebryanski**, a member of the School Advisory Board (SAB).

1.4 Investigating the Formal Complaint

For General Complaints:

The investigation will be conducted by a member of the Leadership Team, who will:

- Meet with parties involved and give the right of reply to the person against whom the allegations are made.
- Inform staff involved that they have the right to be accompanied by a support person.
- Document all meetings, discussions, and relevant information.
- Review all relevant information and obtain any additional documentation that will assist in resolving the complaint.
- Seek advice, where appropriate, from individuals and organisations that may assist in resolving the complaint.

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For Child Safety-Related Complaints:

Investigations will be conducted in accordance with the **Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Policy**, ensuring:

- The safety and wellbeing of the child/ren is the primary concern.
- Confidentiality is maintained throughout the process.
- Appropriate support is offered to the complainant and/or any affected parties.
- Compliance with legal obligations, including mandatory reporting requirements.
- Detailed records are kept securely, as per our **Child Safe Record Keeping protocols**.

For Workplace Bullying-related complaints:

Upon receipt of a complaint alleging workplace bullying, the Cheder will:

- Conduct a preliminary assessment of the complaint
- Determine whether the conduct falls within the definition of workplace bullying
- Provide the respondent with an opportunity to respond to the allegations
- Make such enquiries as are appropriate having regard to the seriousness and circumstances of the matter
- Maintain appropriate documentation of the process and findings

Investigations will be conducted in a manner that is fair, timely, and proportionate to the nature of the complaint.

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1.5 Following the Investigation

Once the investigation is complete, the person conducting it will:

For General Complaints:

- Endeavour to resolve the complaint by mutual agreement with the parties involved.
- Attempt to resolve the complaint within 14 days.
- Document outcomes and issue of formal warnings or disciplinary actions where required.
- Advise the complainant and other relevant parties of any decisions made.

For Child Safety-Related Complaints:

- Take immediate action to address any substantiated concerns
- Ensure that any actions taken are in the best interest of the child and comply with legal obligations.
- If relevant, provide feedback to the complainant on the resolution of their complaint, while respecting confidentiality and privacy laws.

For Workplace Bullying-related complaints:

Where a complaint of workplace bullying is substantiated, the Cheder may choose to implement appropriate measures to address the conduct and to optimise the safety of and respect within the working environment.

Such measures may include conversations, training, employment-related actions, implementation of communication protocols, setting of behavioural expectations, formal warnings or termination, or other appropriate steps consistent with applicable law and governance obligations.

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1.6 Failure to Resolve Formal Complaint

If the formal complaint is not resolved following investigation:

- The complainant should outline the complaint in writing to the Principal.
- Every effort will be made to resolve the issue within 14 days of receipt of this subsequent written complaint.
- The Principal may recommend that the parties to the dispute meet with an external mediator.
- If the issue remains unresolved after mediation, the Principal will review the complaint and investigation documentation and will issue a decision in writing to the complainant.

1.7 Right to Review

If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the complainant has the right to use other available agencies and processes, such as the Privacy Commissioner, the Ombudsman, the workplace regulator, Beis Din (Jewish court of law) or legal processes.

If the complaint directly concerns the Principal:

- The complainant may refer the formal complaint or complaint in writing to **Rabbi Menachem Cohen**, Cheder Head of School, Mrs Chaya Winner, Bnos Chana Head of School, or **Rabbi Hendel Serebryanski** a member of the School Advisory Board.
- The concern or complaint will be officially acknowledged.
- The matter will be reviewed, and appropriate action will be taken.

1.8 Protection Against Reprisal

Cheder Levi Yitzchok is committed to protecting individuals from being penalised, subjected to reprisal, victimised or suffering adverse consequences for making a complaint in good faith. This protection extends to complaints of workplace bullying made in good faith under section 1.1 of this Policy.

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1.9 Feedback and Communication

Complainants will receive feedback on the resolution of their complaints and any actions taken by the Cheder.

Open communication will be maintained throughout the process, while respecting confidentiality.

1.10 Training and Awareness

Regular training on complaint handling and child safety will be accessible to staff and volunteers.

The policy is communicated to all relevant parties, ensuring understanding and accessibility.

1.11 Record Keeping

Detailed records of all child safety-related complaints and their outcomes are maintained securely under our **Child Safe Record Keeping protocols**.

Records of all complaints addressed to Cheder Levi Yitzchok are kept confidential and stored in compliance with Cheder Levi Yitzchok's Privacy Policy.

1.12 Review and Monitoring

The complaints handling process will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with current child safety standards and regulations.

Reviews will occur annually or following any significant incidents or changes in legislation.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Complaint

An expression of dissatisfaction with the Cheder's practices, decisions, or conduct

Informal Complaint (Verbal): A concern or issue communicated verbally that can typically be resolved through open dialogue and does not require a formal investigation. Informal complaints are important for immediate feedback but might not be formally documented unless escalated.

Formal Complaint (Written): A concern or issue submitted in writing that requires a formal response and possibly an investigation. Formal complaints are documented, and the Cheder commits to follow up and resolve the matter.

2.2 Reportable Complaint

A complaint that alleges a breach of the relevant Act or Regulation, or alleges that the health, safety, or wellbeing of a child at the Cheder may have been compromised.

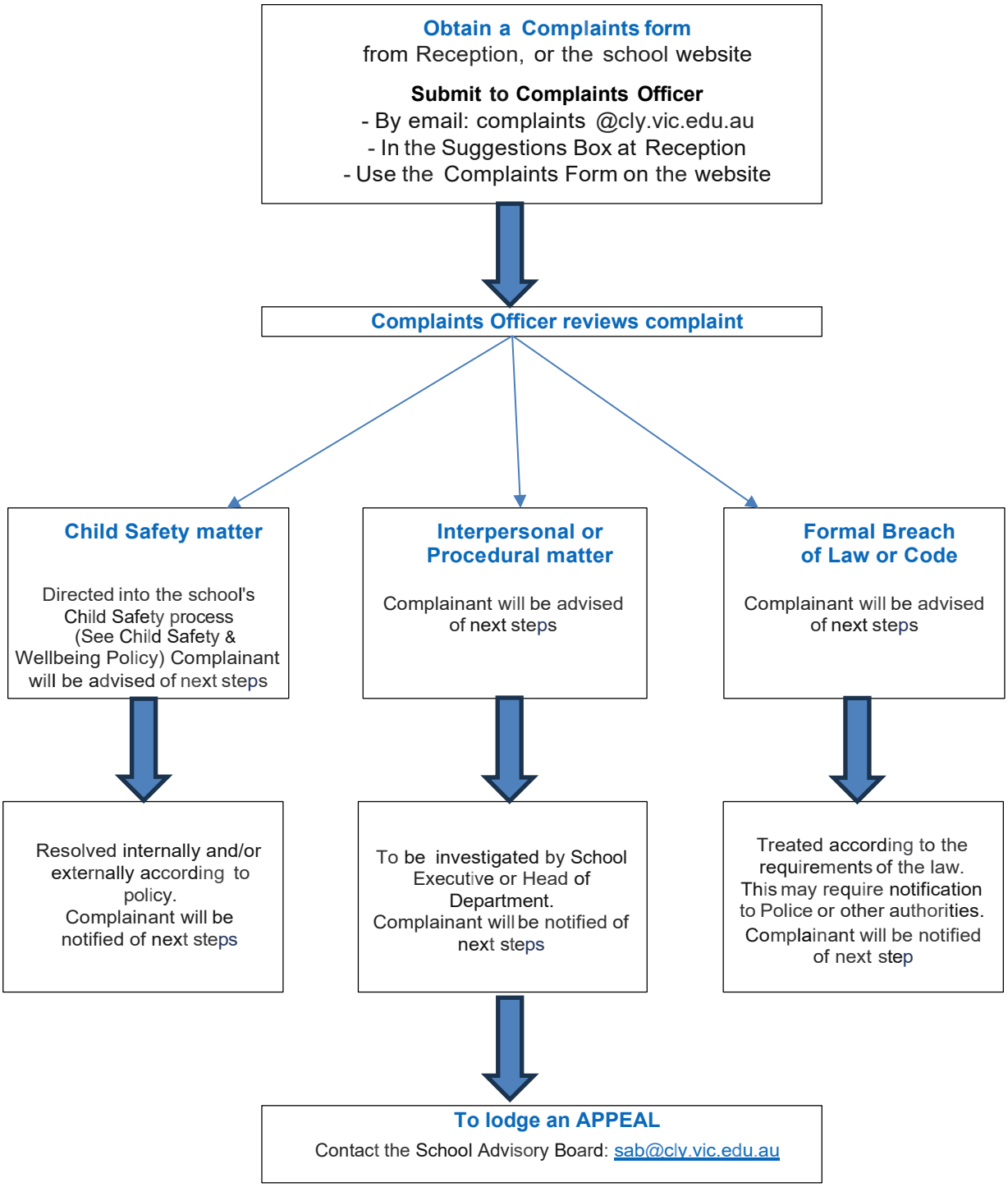
An incident resulting in the death of a child, or an injury, trauma, or illness requiring medical attention.

Situations where a child is missing, unaccounted for, or mistakenly locked in/out of the Cheder premises.

Current Version	Complaints Policy R20260325
Consultation	Leadership, Executive
Endorsed by	Yossi Gopin, Sue-Anne Shanahan
Ratified by	School Advisory Board
Next review date	March 2027 (every 12 months)
Previous Version History:	Complaints Policy R20241114 Complaints Policy For Adults R20230727

FLOW CHART - COMPLAINTS BY ADULTS

Try to resolve your issue before making a complaint. If this is not possible:



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MAKING A COMPLAINT

DATE: / / YOUR NAME: _____

YOUR PHONE: _____ YOUR EMAIL: _____

WHAT IS YOUR COMPLAINT:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO TRY TO RESOLVE THIS:

[ ] Spoken to the part(ies) involved directly on more than one occasion
[ ] Made suggestions or offers that were rejected
[ ] Offered to take personal responsibility to change your own approach
[ ] Followed up on ideas from the other in good faith
[ ] Asked third parties to assist you
[ ] Other/Describe what you have tried: _____

_____
_____
_____

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WHAT OUTCOME ARE YOU LOOKING TO ACHIEVE:

[ ] Acknowledgement or apology [ ] Just a conversation
[ ] Awareness / Change
[ ] Intervention or process adjustment [ ] Punishment or Penalty
[ ] Report to external authorities
[ ] Other - Please describe the outcome being sought:

_____

_____

_____

Place this form into the locked Suggestion Box at Reception or email it to complaints@cly.vic.edu.au, or use the online form on the school website.