

GRIEVANCE POLICY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN MONTESSORI ASSOCIATION
(effective 4th July 2009)

Members of the South African Montessori Association (SAMA) are bound by the Aims and Objectives as well as the Code of Conduct of the organisation.

The purpose of this grievance procedure is to facilitate the aims and objectives of the organisation. It should be viewed and used as a platform on which to raise concerns and seen as a process which facilitates both parties in finding resolution.

1. Lodging a Grievance with SAMA

Should you wish to lodge a grievance with the SAMA, please take the following considerations into account:

- 1.1 A grievance is a grievance against unfair, inappropriate or unjust practice.
- 1.2 A grievance should be lodged if the actual needs of the child and the child's best interests are the primary concern.
- 1.3 What outcome do you wish to achieve?
- 1.4 SAMA cannot involve itself with any matter currently under litigation.
- 1.5 Can you provide evidence of attempts to resolve the grievance with the school?
- 1.6 SAMA does not intervene in the internal procedures of institutions or perform as a regulatory body.
- 1.7 SAMA is not an adjudicatory or grievance-resolving body.
- 1.8 SAMA does not consider allegations concerning the personal lives of individuals connected with its members.
- 1.9 SAMA assumes no responsibility for adjudicating isolated grievances between students, faculty, or members of the public and individual institutions.
- 1.10 SAMA will not act as a court of appeal in matters of admissions, granting or transfer of academic credit, grades, fees, student financial aid, student discipline, collective bargaining, faculty appointments, promotion, tenure, and dismissals or similar matters.
- 1.11 SAMA can and does respond to grievances regarding allegations of conditions at member schools that raise significant questions about the Institution's compliance with SAMA's code of conduct and constitution
- 1.12 SAMA has a legal obligation to raise serious grievances with the Department of Social Development and will not hesitate to do so should a grievance of this nature be submitted.

In handling the grievance, SAMA will:

- 1.13 Uphold the aims and objectives of SAMA,
 - 1.14 Uphold its legal obligations,
 - 1.15 Ensure as far as possible mutual respect between parties is maintained
 - 1.16 Take into consideration all input and contributions with due respect
 - 1.17 Keep the process as simple yet effective as possible
 - 1.18 Handle the grievance procedure in an impartial way that aims at resolution
 - 1.19 Serve the needs of the child concerned, the needs other children, the rights of members and the Montessori community as a whole.
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2. Procedure for Handling Grievances

- 2.1 When SAMA receives a verbal or written grievance regarding a member institution, the complainant is advised of the grievance policy and requested to submit the SAMA grievance form in writing with necessary documentation to the SAMA office.
- 2.2 When a grievance form regarding a member institution is received, SAMA acknowledges in writing receipt of the grievance within seven business days and inform the complainant of the date for the next Exco meeting when the grievance will be discussed.
- 2.3 The complainant must complete all applicable sections of the grievance form:
 - 2.3.1 State the grievance in the clearest possible terms.
 - 2.3.2 Provide in writing a clear description of the evidence upon which the allegation is based. The evidence should state relevant and provable facts and support the allegation that the institution is in violation of the Code of Conduct and / or any documents approved by the AGM with regard to the management and commitment to / from SAMA.
 - 2.3.3 Demonstrate that all remedies available at the institution (grievance procedures, appeals hearings, etc.) have been exhausted. The complainant should describe what has been done in this regard.
 - 2.3.4 Identify any requests to have identity protected.
 - 2.3.5 Acknowledge that SAMA may send a copy of the grievance to the institution.
 - 2.3.6 Attest that the matter in question is not under litigation.
 - 2.3.7 Sign the grievance.
- 2.4 After acknowledging receipt of the grievance, the SAMA Exco will review it at the next scheduled Exco meeting to determine whether it is within the scope of SAMA's policies and jurisdiction and if there is adequate documentation.
- 2.5 If it is determined that the grievance is not within the scope of SAMA's policies and jurisdiction, the complainant will be so notified. Individual grievances, whether acted on or not by the SAMA, will be retained in SAMA's files for five years.
- 2.6 In case adequate documentation is not provided, the complainant is notified in writing within, ten business days of the Exco meeting at which the grievance was raised that further documentation will be required.
- 2.7 In the case of the complainant not having exhausted all grievance procedures available at the school, s/he will be advised to do so.
- 2.8 When the grievance appears to be within the scope of SAMA's policies, is substantially documented, and where appropriate institutional appeal procedures have been utilised, a copy of the grievance will be forwarded to the institution to respond to the SAMA within seven business days after receipt of the grievance.

Note: In the case where a complainant wishes their identity to be withheld, SAMA only undertakes to make a note of the grievance and alert the member that the grievance has been lodged. No further action will be taken.

2.9 When the response from the institution is received, Exco compares the information provided by the complainant and the institution and will determine one of the following:

- a) The grievance will not be processed further.
- b) The grievance has sufficient substance to warrant further review.
- c) Where appropriate, a resolution is suggested to the complainant and the institution.
- d) If the complainant raises issues regarding noncompliance of SAMA's Code of Conduct or SAMA's aims and objectives, a member (in any category) may be suspended pending further investigation.

2.10 Although every effort will be made to expedite the further review and/or final decision, it is not possible to guarantee a specific time frame in which the process will be completed. If further review is warranted, the time required to conduct the investigation may vary considerably depending on the circumstances and nature of the grievance.

2.11 The complainant and the institution will be notified of the Exco's decision.

3 Grievances against SAMA

3.1 Grievances against SAMA follow the procedure as above. If any specific Exco members are implicated as part of the grievance, they will be recused, and the remaining Exco will go into committee to discuss the grievance.

3.2 If no resolve is reached this will be taken to the Board of Trustees of the South African Montessori Association Trust.

If you have further questions, please write, email or telephone the South African Montessori Association at the contact details indicated below:

**SAMA
P O Box 5338
Walmer
6065**

**Tel: 041 367 4936
Cel: 072 609 5979
Fax: 086 561 8774
Email: admin@samontessori.org.za**

COMPLAINANT INFORMATION

Title:	
Full Name:	
Street Address:	
City:	
Province:	
Postal Code:	
Country:	
Telephone:	
Fax:	
Cel:	
Email:	
SAMA Membership status:	

Or

- Anonymous Complaint**

ACTUAL COMPLAINT

Please state the nature of the complaint in two sentences:

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Briefly describe the details of the complaint. (You may attach additional sheets for description if necessary):

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Please describe the steps taken to exhaust the institution's grievance process:

For review of this complaint, ALL applicable boxes must be checked below:

I have read the SAMA Complaint Policy and agree that this form constitutes my formal complaint.

As stated in the SAMA Complaint Policy, I understand that the Association does not intervene in the internal procedures of institutions or perform as a regulatory body, nor is the Association a formal ad judicatory or grievance-resolving body.

I authorize SAMA to provide my complaint and/or any documents concerning my complaint to the involved institution(s). (Please identify any exceptions or a request for anonymity on the previous page).

I attest that this matter is not under litigation. (SAMA does not review complaint matters that are involved with litigation).

I hereby certify that all of the information I have given above is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Signed on this _____ day of _____ 20__ by:

COMPLAINANT

WITNESS

(Please print name)

(Please print name)



OR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

SAMA COMPLAINTS FORM REVIEW

Name of Reviewer:

Complainant:

Complainant Status:.....

Institution:

Institution Status:

Complaint Type:

- In-Scope
- Out of Scope

Date received:

Date acknowledged:.....

Action taken:

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Closed:

