



Policy: **COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCES POLICY
& PROCEDURES**

Approved at School Council Meeting: 2016 Review: 2018

1 Rationale

Our school has both a desire and a responsibility to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained by staff and students at all times and that complaints are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.

2 Aims

1. To provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment.
2. To resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.
3. To provide a safe and supportive learning environment for students and a safe working environment for staff.

3 Expectations

The school expects a person raising a concern or complaint to:

- do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs;
- provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint;
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties;
- acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties;
- act in good faith and in a calm and courteous manner
- show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame;
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced

The school will address any concerns and complaints received from parents:

- courteously, efficiently, fairly and promptly
- in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Departments regulatory framework

3 Implementation

1. Our school seeks to provide a positive, harmonious and productive environment.
2. It is the Principal's responsibility to provide a healthy and positive school environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. In doing so, Principals must ensure that all staff members are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
3. All concerns will be dealt with in a confidential and sensitive manner by the relevant staff member and Principal. In discussion with the complainant and the relevant staff/student a mutually acceptable outcome will be decided upon. Implementation of any actions resulting from this concern will occur in a timely manner and you will be informed throughout the process of the status of your concern.

4. The Principal is required to use local complaints resolution procedures, where appropriate for resolving complaints in relation to issues that fall within the school's area of responsibility. All cases of serious misconduct – sexual offences, criminal charges, or other serious incidents – must instead be referred to the Department of Education Conduct and Ethics Branch.
5. The school will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving others level of the Department.
6. It is incumbent upon the principal to act where unacceptable conduct is observed or brought to his or her attention.
7. A complainant may at any stage choose to take their complaint directly to an external agency such as the Merit Protection Boards, Australian Education Union, Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission or the Ombudsman.
8. It is important that all complaints, ensuing procedures and outcomes are fully documented.
9. The Principal may choose to respond to a complaint through an informal process in cases where the complaint is minor, the complainant wishes the matter to be dealt with informally, or the complaint has arisen from lack of or unclear communication.
10. Formal processes will be used when informal processes haven't been successful, a complainant seeks a formal process, or the principal believes the complaint warrants formal investigation.
11. Full details regarding formal complaint resolution procedures are contained within the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's "Addressing parents' Concerns and complaints effectively: policy and guides", and contains the following steps.
12. The formal process involves:
 - a) Investigating the complaint including formal interviews, written statements, conveying the details of the complaint to the respondent in writing providing the opportunity for a written response.
 - b) Dismissing or accepting the complaint. Acceptance may involve the Conduct & Ethics Branch, verbal or written warnings, conciliation, counselling or consequences etc.
 - c) Preparation of a detailed confidential report.
 - d) Monitoring of the situation.
13. Parties dissatisfied with the process can appeal to the previously mentioned external agencies.
14. All matters must be treated with utmost confidentiality and professional respect at all times.