



PARENT CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

The School's Values

The school's approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on our values of:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Resilience

Concerns and complaints covered by this policy

- Issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's code of conduct.
- Incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard.
- Learning programs, assessments and reporting of student learning.
- Communication with parents.
- School fees and payments.
- General administrative issues.
- Any other school-related matters except as detailed below.

Matters not covered by this policy, for which there are existing rights of review or appeal include:

- student discipline matters involving expulsions;
- complaints about employee conduct or performance;
- child protection issues;
- criminal matters.

The Principal or Department of Education Regional Office can advise you about specific procedures for complaints of these types.

Ownership and scope

The school will develop its procedures to address concerns and complaints in collaboration with parents and the school community.

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

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
- promptly, or within the timeline agreed with the person with the concern or complaint
- in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework

Raising concerns or complaints

In the first instance, a complaint should be made to the school. The complainant should telephone, visit or write to:

- the student's teacher about learning issues and incidents that happened in their class
- the Principal about issues relating to staff members, complex student issues, school policy, school management.

If you are not sure who to contact, contact the Principal on 9428 1909.

Help with raising concerns or complaints

Parents may refer to the Department of Education's website when considering raising a concern or complaint.

<http://www.DepartmentofEducation.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx>

Complainants can seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are unable to express their concern clearly. An advocate can be a friend or someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation who does not receive a fee for service.

All parties involved in addressing a complaint may seek the services of a mediator when there is a difficulty coming to an agreement.

A complainant who wishes to use these support services should ensure the person addressing the concern or complaint is aware of their intention and is in agreement.

Managing information

The school will record the following details of all complaints received, even if the complaint appears to be minor:

- name and contact details of the person with a concern or complaint
- the date the concern was expressed or complaint made
- the form in which the concern or complaint was received (face to face, telephone, e-mail)
- a brief description of the concern or complaint
- details of the school person responding to the concern or complaint
- action taken on the concern or complaint
- any recommendations for future improvement in the school's policy or procedures

However, in the first instance, when the complaint is easily resolved with a telephone call, a brief note in the respondent's diary recording the issue and the resolution may be all that is required.

The person addressing the concern or complaint will be responsible for recording these details. The complaint records will be kept in the Principal's office.

Addressing concerns or complaints

All complaints will be acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint. The school will acknowledge all complaints made in writing and will provide the complainant with a

timeline for investigating the complaint. Concerns and complaints about general school matters will be addressed by the Principal or a relevant staff member.

The school will make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible. If your complaint involves many students and a range of issues, the school will need more time to investigate and resolve it. The school might need to take advice from the Department of Education's regional office which may take more time. The school will tell the complainant the new timeline and the reasons for any delays.

Remedies

If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the school will offer an appropriate remedy. For example, at its discretion and depending on the circumstances, the school might offer:

- an explanation or further information about the issue
- mediation, counselling or other support
- an apology, expression of regret or admission of fault
- to change its decision
- to change its policies, procedures or practices

The school will implement the remedy as soon as practicable.

Referral of concerns or complaints

If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, they should contact the Department of Education's regional office.

Northern West Victoria Region
Level 2
189 Urquhart Street, Coburg
Telephone: 9488 9488

The officer from the region will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and the complainant's opinion about why the school did not resolve it to their satisfaction.

If the complaint cannot be resolved by the complainant, school and regional office working together, the regional officer may refer it to the Department of Education's School Operations and Governance Unit, Regional Monitoring and Support Division.

Department of Department of Education and Training
GPO Box 4367
Melbourne, Vic, 3001
Phone: 9637 2000

Communication and training

The school will make information about procedures for addressing concerns and complaints readily available to parents and the school community, in clear and easy-to-understand language. The information will include:

- how a person can make a complaint;
- the person's responsibilities;
- information to be provided by the person;
- who the person should contact and their contact details;

- The process and timeframes for managing complaints.

The school's procedures for addressing concerns and complaints will be published on its website. The school will brief all members of staff about its procedures to address concerns annually.

Monitoring the Parent Complaints Policy

The School Council will regularly review its policy and procedures to effectively address parent concerns and complaints as part of its cyclic policy and procedures review schedule.

The school will review its information about complaints made over time to:

- identify common or recurring issues that may need addressing
- assess the effectiveness of these and other procedures and whether they are being followed
- use information provided to the school through the parent opinion survey on the views of parents.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in

August 2015