

Wattle Park Primary School



Raising Concerns and Complaints Policy

PURPOSE AND SCOPE:

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

- providing a safe and supportive learning environment
- building relationships between students, parents and staff
- providing a safe working environment for staff

These procedures cover concerns and complaints about:

- general 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, assessment and reporting of student learning
- communication with parents
- general administrative issues
- any other school-related matters except as detailed below.

Exceptions include:

- student discipline matters involving expulsions
- complaints about employee conduct or performance and complaints that should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action
- complaints by the Department's employees related to their employment
- student critical incident matters
- other criminal matters.

These procedures do not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the *Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide*.

GUIDELINES FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT

All concerns and complaints must be addressed in line with the Department's legislative and regulatory framework, which includes:

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Information Privacy Act 2000*
- *Wrongs Act 1958*.

Concerns and complaints must also be addressed in line with the Department's 2006 *Dignity and Respect Statement*. The statement says that:

- *The Department is committed to providing safe and supportive work environments where diversity is valued and everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity.*
- *Discrimination, sexual and other forms of harassment, bullying, violence and threatening behaviour are unacceptable.*
- *All employees, students, parents and visitors in schools and other Departmental workplaces are expected to act accordingly.*
- *The Department (which includes schools) and school councils, will act to ensure that the safety, security, health and wellbeing of all employees, students, parents and visitors in schools and other Departmental workplaces are protected.*

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

Responsibilities of the complainant

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 complainant should telephone, make an appointment to visit or write to:

- the student's teacher about learning issues
- the assistant principal about issues relating to complex student issues
- the principal about issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex student issues.

How the school will respond

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
- with reference to the relevant school processes and policies
- in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework.

Timelines for resolution

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.

Should the complaint involve complex issues, the school might need to take advice from the Department's regional office which may take more time. The school will tell the complainant the new timeline for addressing the complaint and the reasons for any delays. In all cases, the school will try to resolve a concern or complaint within 20 school days.

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.

The school will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the Department. If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, they should contact the Department's appropriate regional office.

Communicating the policy

The school's policy will be made available publicly on our school website.

Review

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.

RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL: 24th June, 2014