

## Parent/Carers Complaints Policy

### Rationale:

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect and encourages good communication between parents and schools.

Schools, regions and the central office act in accordance with the Department's parent complaints policy and processes when managing your complaint. Further information about the policy *Addressing parents' concerns and complaints effectively: policy and guides*, including everyone's role in resolving concerns and complaints, can be found on the Department's website.

### Process

All concerns and complaints lodged with the Department about a Government school are addressed in line with relevant professional and administrative standards and in accordance with obligations and rights afforded under Victorian legislative and regulatory frameworks. These include the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. Complete a parent complaint form.

### How do I raise an issue or make a complaint?

The school should always be your first point of contact. Schools need to know if you have any concerns about your child's education. Teaching and learning works best when parents and teachers talk to each other and work together to solve any problems. You are always welcome to ask about and request a copy of our school's policies.

### Clarifying the issue (what is your concern?)

Before you approach the school or your child's teacher:

- be clear about the topic or issue you want to discuss
- focus on the things that are genuinely affecting your child
- always remain calm and remember you may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue you wish to discuss
- think about what would be an acceptable outcome for you and your child
- be informed; check the departments policies or guidelines, where relevant
- ask the school for a copy of their complaints policy, if they have one.

### When contacting the school

There are a number of ways you can raise any concerns you have about your child and their education. You can:

- write a note to your child's teacher outlining your concerns
  - make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with their class teacher, the year level coordinator or home-group teacher; ensuring that you inform the school about the issue you wish to discuss
  - consider speaking with the school's student welfare coordinator if you feel that this would be appropriate
  - arrange any meeting times or phone calls through the school office (this is more convenient for both you and your child's teacher and does not interrupt teachers during the time they need to be with their students).
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- Plan what you will say so you can clearly explain what the problem is. (You might want to make some notes to help you.
  - Have some ideas about how the problem could be resolved realistically.
  - If you still have a concern after talking to your child's teacher/s you may want to speak to the Assistant Principal or Principal.

The class teacher or year level coordinator, together with any others who may be involved, should be given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address your concerns. Remember, it may not always be possible to resolve an issue to your complete satisfaction.

## Contact the Principal or Assistant Principal

Most concerns are resolved by following the first two steps above. However, if the issue remains unresolved after you have approached your child's teacher or other school staff you can then ask to see the assistant principal or principal. To do this, you will need to request an appointment through the school office. Please note that:

- the principal may ask another senior staff member to speak with you on their behalf
- if a teacher is going to be present at the meeting it is more likely to occur outside of classroom hours.
- If your concern is related to issues of school policy, these should be raised more formally (in writing) with the principal or the school council.

## Lodging a complaint in writing

You can use the Department's complaint form to help you to put together all the information you need to submit a complaint in writing, see: Parent Complaint Form (Appendix 1)

If you are having difficulties filling out the form you can contact your regional office for assistance.

You can send your complaint by mail, email or fax.

The Department's central office will try to respond within 20 school days. However, the more complex and sensitive the issues you raise, the more time will be needed to investigate or follow up with the relevant parties. The department will let you know if there may be major delays. (Address below)

## When to contact the central office

If the matter remains unresolved after discussions with your regional office you can send your complaint, in writing, to:

*Deputy Secretary, Regional Services Group*

*C/o Manager, School Operations and*

*Governance Unit*

*GPO Box 4367, Melbourne 3001*

E: [community.stakeholders@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:community.stakeholders@edumail.vic.gov.au)

## Victorian Ombudsman

If, after all avenues for resolution of your complaint have been explored, and you are not satisfied with the way in which your complaint has been handled by the Department, you are able to contact the Victorian Ombudsman on (03) 9613 6222.

## Further Information

If you would like further information about school policies you can visit the *School Policy and Advisory Guide* on the Departments website at: [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

Ratified by School Council May 17<sup>th</sup> 2017.

## Parent Complaint – Initial Contact with the Office

### **Before filling out this form:**

- Please ensure that your concern has been raised with your child's classroom teacher.
- If you still have a concern **after talking to your child's teacher/s** you may want to speak to the Assistant Principal or Principal.
- Please fill in the form below and at the earliest convenience, a Principal class officer will make contact with you.

|                         |  |      |  |
|-------------------------|--|------|--|
| Name of Parent/Guardian |  | Date |  |
| Best Contact No.        |  |      |  |

| Briefly Outline Your Concern/s | Who it involves |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1.                             | 1.              |
| 2.                             | 2.              |
| 3.                             | 3.              |

| Please list who you have already raised your concern with |
|---|
| 1.  |
| 2.  |
| 3.  |
| 4.  |

| Please list what you think would be an acceptable outcome to your concern/s |
|---|
| 1.  |
| 2.  |
| 3.  |

| Office Use Only                                   |
|---|
| Concern to be handled by Principal Class Officer: |

Remember, it may not always be possible to resolve an issue to everyone's complete satisfaction.

## Appendix 1



## Parent Complaint Form

This form should be used only when all avenues to have your complaint resolved at your child's Government school have been exhausted and you feel the issue/s are of such significance that you wish to register your complaint in writing with the school's Regional Office or the Regional Services Group.

Please read information on making a complaint at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/pages/complainschool.aspx>

### PERSONAL DETAILS:

|                 |             |              |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Title:          | First name: | Family name: |
| Street Address: |             |              |
| Suburb:         |             | Postcode:    |
| Telephone: B/H  |             | Mobile:      |
| Email:          |             |              |

### STUDENT DETAILS:

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| First name:  | Family name:   |
| Year level:  | Gender (please tick) Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> |
| SCHOOL NAME: |  |

Who have you contacted previously about your complaint? (please indicate below)

|                |                          |                                    |                          |                      |                          |            |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| Class teacher: | <input type="checkbox"/> | Year Level Co-ord:                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Assistant Principal: | <input type="checkbox"/> | Principal: | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Region:        | <input type="checkbox"/> | (please provide name/s and date/s) |                          |                      |                          |            |                          |

### COMPLAINT DETAILS:

Please provide an outline of your complaint. Include relevant dates / detail of phone conversations or meetings / any explanations that you think are important. Attach extra pages as required (including copies of other documents relevant to your complaint).

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