



CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY 2013

Beliefs

This policy 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

Guidelines

This policy covers 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 student learning
- Communication with parents
- School fees and payments
- General administrative issues
- Any other school related matters except as detailed below:
 - 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

Implementation

1. 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 differences, rather than judge and blame
 - Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.

2. The school will address any concerns and complaints received from parents :
 - Courteously, efficiently and 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.
3. In the first instance, a complaint should be made to the school. The complainant should telephone, visit or write to :
 - The student's teacher or home group teacher about learning issues and incidents that happened in their class or group.
 - The year level coordinator if students from several classes are involved
 - The assistant principal about issues relating to staff members or complex student issues
 - The principal about issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex student issues.
4. Complainants can seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are able 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.
5. All parties involved in addressing a complaint may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty coming to an agreement.
6. The school will record the following details of all complaints received, even if the complaint appears to be minor :
 - Name and contact details (with permission) 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 (such as face-to-face, by telephone, in writing, by email)
 - A brief description of the concern or complaint
 - Details of the school officer responding to the concern or complaint
 - Action taken on the concern or complaint
 - The outcome of 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 in a telephone call, a brief note in the school's/principal's/teacher's diary recording the issue and the resolution may be all that is required.

7. The school will give a complainant a copy of its complaints procedures.
8. The school will determine whether a concern or complaint should be managed through the school's concerns and complaints process or through other complaints processes of the Department. However, the school will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the Department.

9. All complaints will be noted and acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint.
10. The school will acknowledge all complaints made in writing. It will provide the complainant with a timeline for investigating the complaint.
11. Concerns and complaints about general school matters (such as the timing of events, school policies and facilities) will be addressed by the principal or a relevant staff member.
12. The school will make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible. If the complaint involves many students and a range of issues, the school will need more time to investigate and resolve it.
13. 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 and, where appropriate, in a range of community languages and formats that are accessible to everyone so that no-one is disadvantaged.

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.
14. The school's procedures for addressing concerns and complaints will be :
 - Published on the school website
 - Printed in a leaflet given to a parent when their child enrolls
 - Printed in the school newsletter
 15. The school will :
 - Brief all members of staff about its procedures to address concerns and complaints annually
 - Provide staff with (or provide access to) training and support appropriate to their responsibilities under the procedures.

Evaluation

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.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle.

This policy was ratified by School Council in October, 2012.

