

HEATHMONT EAST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Raising Concerns & Complaints Policy

Rationale

Heathmont East Primary School is committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect and encourages good communication between parents, carers and the school. Teaching and learning works best when parents and teachers talk to each other and work together to solve any problems.

Values

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

- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment
- Building positive relationships between students, parents and staff
- Providing a safe working environment for staff

Concerns and complaints covered by the procedures

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 school yard
- Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- Communication with parents
- School fees and payments
- General administrative issues
- Any other school related matters except for matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the Victorian School Policy and Advisory Guide.

For the purpose of the policy:

- A 'Parent', in relation to a child, includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child including parental responsibility under the Family Law Act 1975 of the Commonwealth and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.
- A 'concern' is an issue of interest (because of its importance and effect) which is raised informally in order to improve or change a situation.
- A 'complaint' is an expression of grievance or resentment where the complainant is seeking redress or justice.

2. Guidelines

- 2.1 To build positive relationships with parents and the school community
- 2.2 To understand and appreciate each other's perspective

- 2.3 To use two way communication
- 2.4 To ensure all concerns and complaints are followed up and dealt with in a timely manner

3. Implementation

- 3.1 All complaints will be noted and acted upon promptly.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 The school will acknowledge all complaints made in writing. It will provide the complainant with a timeline for investigating the complaint.
- 3.4 Complainants can seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are unable to express their concerns 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.
- 3.5 All parties involved in addressing a complaint may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty coming to an agreement.
- 3.6 The school will ensure that the complainant is aware of support as outlined above.
- 3.7 The school will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the Department.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the school will offer an appropriate remedy, i.e.: an explanation, mediation, counselling, an apology or other appropriate course of action. The school will implement the remedy as soon as possible.
- 3.10 If a person is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, they should contact the Department's appropriate regional office.
- 3.11 The school will make information about procedures for addressing concerns and complaints readily available and translated where necessary.
- 3.12 The school will brief all members of staff (including volunteers) about its procedures to address concerns and complaints annually.
- 3.13 The school will monitor parent concerns and complaints and consider issues raised through the parent's complaints process, and any other relevant information from the

parent opinion survey, when undertaking a review of the school's policies, procedures and operations.

- 3.14 The school will review its information about complaints made over time to assess the effectiveness of these and other procedures and whether they are being followed.

Evaluation

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