



OSBORNE PRIMARY SCHOOL
2655

Complaints and Grievances Policy and Procedures

Rationale:

Osborne Primary School has an open door policy. Parent feedback is welcomed and provides important information for continuous review of school policies and practices. Effective communication between school and families supports student learning and maximises a students' educational experience. This policy has been developed in consultation with parents and the school community and relates to students, parents and staff.

Aims:

- To foster effective communication between home and school
- To provide clear guidelines for communication of a concern or complaint
- To establish fair and respectful protocols and procedures that balance the rights of all parties (parents, teachers and school staff) when raising a concern or complaint.

This policy is based on the booklet *Addressing Parents' Concerns and Complaints Effectively: Policy and Guides* from Department of Education and Early Childhood (DEECD) April 2009.

Implementation:

Concerns and Complaints covered by the procedures

- 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
- School fees and payments
- General administrative issues
- Any other school related matters **except** the following matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide
 - 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 Departments employees related to their employment
 - Student critical incident matters
 - Other criminal matters

Guidelines:

Expectations

- Raise the matter promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs
- Provide complete and factual information about the matter
- Respect privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- Acknowledge that the common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- Act in good faith, in a calm and courteous manner with a spirit of cooperation
- Show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge or blame
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced

The school will:

- Deal with the complaint consistently, fairly, courteously, efficiently
- Promptly, within timeliness agreed with the person with the concern or complaint, (where possible, addressed within 20 school days)
- In accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the department's regulatory framework

Raising a Complaint or Concern

A parent can raise a concern or complaint about any aspect of a school's operations. In the first instance a concern or complaint should be taken to the school. Any complaint raised with the regional or central DEECD Office that has not been raised at the school level, will be referred back to the school for resolution (unless there are special circumstances which prevent the school from managing the complaint).

Help with raising a concern or complaint

An advocate may assist a person with a concern /complaint when the person feels they are unable to express themselves clearly.

An advocate may be:

- A friend or family member
- Person available through a support organisation who does not receive a fee for service
- All parties may seek services of a mediator when there is difficulty reaching an agreement

Relevant Point of Contact

Students' teacher:

- For issues about learning and incidents that happened in the class such as:
 - individual student needs
 - academic progress
 - behaviour and student discipline issues
 - non-attendance
 - challenging or changing family circumstances

Assistant Principal

- for issues involving students from several classes
- relating to staff members or complex student issues

Principal

- for issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex student issues.
 - school facilities
 - extra-curricular activities, eg. Sports days, excursions
 - school fees and charges
 - student assessment and reporting
 - student free days
 - Out of School Hours Care

Information to be provided

The person with a concern may contact the school either in person, or in writing with details of the concern including:

- Relevant facts such as dates, time place
- A description of the incident or problem
- Details of the concern or issue
- Steps you may have already taken to resolve the issue
- What action you think would be taken to resolve the issue

Managing a Complaint or Concern

The school will record the details of all concerns/complaints received, either in person, by telephone, or in writing including:

- Name and contact of person with a complaint
- Date the concern was expressed or complaint made
- Brief description of the complaint
- Details of the school officer responding to the complaint
- Action taken on the complaint
- Outcome of the action taken
- Any recommendations for future improvement in school policy or procedure

In the first instance, when the complaint is easily resolved by a conversation, note or telephone call, a brief note in the school's/principals/teacher's diary recording the issue and the resolution may be all that is required.

Remedy

If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the school will offer an appropriate remedy. For example and at its discretion, 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
- To cancel a debt (such as school payments)
- A fee refund
- The school will implement the remedy as soon as practicable
- Referral of concerns or complaints if required

Referral

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. (South Eastern Victorian Region - Postal address: PO Box 5, Dandenong, Victoria 3175 Location: 165-169 Thomas Street, Dandenong, Victoria 3175 Phone: (03) 8765 5600)

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

If the complainant cannot resolve the complaint, school and regional office working together, the regional office may refer it to the Department's Group Coordination Division. The Division will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and complainant's opinion about why the school and regional office did not resolve it to their satisfaction and will ask the complainant to outline their view on the course of action required to resolve the complaint. Where the complainant is unable to provide a written account the officer from Group Coordination Division should act on the information provided.

Communication:

- The school will make this policy readily accessible to the school community by
- Publication on the school's website
- Hard copy available at the front office
- Referred to in parent handbook
- All staff to be briefed on the policy

Review:

The School Council will monitor and consider issues raised through the parent complaint process and any other relevant information from the parent opinion survey when undertaking a review of the school's policies, procedures and operations.

The school will review any information about complaints or concerns to:

Identify common or recurring issues that may need addressing

Assess effectiveness of these procedures and whether they are being followed

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four-year review cycle in 2022.