

# **PARENTS - RAISING CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS**



## **POLICY**

Ratified School Council 2011

## RATIONALE

This policy will assist parents to address the concerns and complaints they may have about their child's education; and assist Skye Primary School staff to confidently address these concerns and complaints.

### AIMS:

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

- Providing a safe, supportive and productive learning environment
- Building relationships between students, parents and staff
- Providing a safe working environment for staff.
- Resolving complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.

### Concerns and Complaints Covered by this Policy

This policy covers concerns and complaints about:

- General issues of student behaviour
- 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
- Any other school-related matters except those detailed below –

This policy does not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in DEECD policy.

These matters include:

- Student discipline matters involving expulsions
- Complaints about employee conduct or performance
- Complaints by the DEECD's employees related to their employment
- Student critical matters
- Other criminal matters

This policy is not applicable where a complainant has employed another party to represent them, such as a solicitor – in these circumstances will be referred to the DEECD's Legal Services Branch.

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### **About Parents' Concerns and Complaints:**

Parent's concerns and complaints most commonly relate to:

- The management of an incident between students at a school
- The educational or other progress of their child
- The development and implementation of school and general education policy.

For the purposes of this policy:

- 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.

The school will address all concerns and complaints in line with the DEECD's legislative and regulatory framework, which includes the:

- 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 be addressed in line with the DEECD's 2006 *Dignity and Respect Statement*. The statement says that:

- Our school 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 our school are expected to behave accordingly.
- Our school and school council, will act to ensure that the safety, security, health and wellbeing of all employees, students, parents and visitors are protected.

When Making a Complaint:

- Parents first point of contact should always be the school
- Concerns are best resolved at the school
- The DEECD expects that most concerns and complaints will be resolved by the school

## IMPLEMENTATION

### HOW SHOULD PARENTS RAISE AN ISSUE OR MAKE A COMPLAINT WITH THE SCHOOL?

#### Parents approaching the school:

- The school recommends for parents to contact the school promptly, as soon as possible after the issue arises
- The school recommends for parents to be clear about the topic or issue they want to discuss, providing complete and factual information – is this an issue where the child’s teacher should be the first point of call and the issue discussed with their child’s teacher first or with the Principal or Assistant Principal (s)
- The school recommends parents to focus on the things that are genuinely affecting their child
- The school understands it can be hard but recommends for parents to remain calm as parents may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or concern they wish to discuss

The school will:

- Address all concerns and complaints courteously, efficiently, fairly and promptly within a reasonable timeframe.
- Maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties at all times.

**Contacting the School:** There are a number of ways parents can raise any concerns they have about their child and their child’s education:

Parents can -

- Write a note to their child’s teacher outlining concerns
- Make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with their child’s class teacher, assistant principal or principal – staff will return all phone calls in a timely manner to make a suitable meeting time to all parties
- Email the school email account – [skye.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:skye.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au)

The school will:

- All concerns and complaints will be noted and acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint – this may involve the staff member referring the concern or complaint to the most appropriate staff member for resolving the concern/complaint
- The school will make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible. If a concern/complaint involves many students or a range of issues, the school will need more time to investigate and resolve it
- The school will communicate to the parent the process and timeframe for addressing their specific concern or complaint
- The school will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the DEECD
- The school will not respond to any correspondence either verbally or in written form that is defamatory or uses abusive or threatening language.
- **Where the technology is available staff who are responding to a complaint via telephone and feel threatened or abused may either terminate the conversation or record the conversation for training or issue resolution purposes.**

### Remedies:

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
- Restorative Conferences, mediation, counselling or other support
- An apology, expression of regret or admission of fault
- To change a decision

The school will implement the remedy as soon as practicable.

### Referral of Concerns or Complaints:

If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, they may contact the DEECD's appropriate regional office – The Southern Metropolitan Office for the DEECD.

If the complaint cannot be resolved by the complainant, school and regional office working together, the regional office may refer it to the DEECD's Group Coordination Division.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Parents are able to access the DEECD's policy and more information about parents raising concerns and complaints via the DEECD website: [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au) – Parents/Parent Complaints.

### EVALUATION

The school will monitor parent concerns and complaints and consider issues raised through the parent complaints process, and any other relevant information from the Parent Opinion Survey, when undertaking a cyclic review of the school's policies, procedures and operations.

The school will review its information about concerns and complaints in the cyclic review process to:

- Identify common or recurring issues that may need addressing
- Assess the effectiveness of these and other procedures
- Consider information provided to the school to assist in program and policy development