

# Policy Document

## Raising Concerns and Complaints\_v1.0

### Rationale

- Stonnington Primary School's approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on our values of respect, responsibility, inclusivity, valour and passion through:
  - Promoting and modelling the school values in all interactions
  - Providing a safe and supportive learning environment
  - Building relationships between students, parents and staff
  - Providing a safe working environment for staff.
- The school will develop its procedures to address concerns and complaints in collaboration with parents and the school community.
- This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Engagement and Well-being policy.

### Objectives

- To provide clear procedures that cover concerns and complaints about:
  - General issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's code of conduct
  - Incidents of bullying and 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 as detailed below.
- These procedures do not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the *Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide*. Those matters include:
  - Student discipline matters including 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

- Stonnington Primary School expects a person raising a concern or a 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 difference, rather than judge or blame
  - Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced
  - Approach the school and not another parent or student
  - Contact the regional office if dissatisfied with the outcome; this may then require referral to the Department's Group Coordination Division.
- Stonnington Primary School will address any concerns and complaints received by parents:
  - Courteously
  - Efficiently
  - Fairly
  - Promptly, or within the timeline agreed with the person with the concern or complaint

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- In accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework.
- The school will:
  - Make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the Department
  - Respond to all complaints made in writing providing a timeline for investigating the complaint
  - Give a complainant a copy of the school's procedures
  - Determine whether a concern or complaint should be managed through the school's concerns and complaints processes or through those of the Department
  - Make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible however if many students and a range of issues involved the school will need more time to investigate and resolve the issue; the complainant will be advised
  - Explain the types of remedies under consideration if it accepts a concern or complaint is justified; these include an explanation about the issue, mediation or counselling, apology or expression of regret, change our decision/policies/procedures, cancel a debt, fee refund.
- In the first instance, a complaint should be made to the school. The complainant should telephone, visit or write to:
  - The student's Learning Space (LS) teacher about learning issues and incidents that happened in their class
  - The specialist teacher about learning issues and incidents that happened in their class
  - The appropriate Head of School if students from several LS's are involved
  - The appropriate Head of School about placement of students in LS's for the coming year
  - 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.
- Stonnington Primary School will record all details of complaints, even if the complaint seems to be minor:
  - Name and contact details (with permission) of the person with a concern or complaint
  - The date the concern/complaint was expressed
  - The form in which the concern/complaint was received
  - A brief description of the concern/complaint (when the matter is resolved over the telephone a brief note diarising the concern is sufficient)
  - Action taken on the concern/complaint
  - Details of the school officer responding to the concern/complaint
  - Action taken on the concern/complaint
  - Any recommendations for the future improvement of the school's policy and procedures.
- Students, parents, teachers and support staff involved in addressing a concern or complaint can enlist resources for support. Some examples are:
  - Seek the services of an advocate (an advocate can be a friend or someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation who does not receive a fee for service) when they feel they are unable to express their concern clearly
  - Seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty coming to an agreement



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## Evaluation

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

## Ratification

Ratified by School Council: May-2014

School Council President: Glen Noble

Principal: Anne McPhee

## References:

DEECD's Local Complaints Resolution Procedures Handbook

[http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Complaints\\_Misconduct\\_and\\_Unsatisfactory-Performance\\_VPS.pdf](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Complaints_Misconduct_and_Unsatisfactory-Performance_VPS.pdf)

Parent Complaints -

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/pages/parentcomplaints.aspx>