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:
  o Promoting and modelling the school values in all interactions
  o Providing a safe and supportive learning environment
  o Building relationships between students, parents and staff
  o 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:
  o General issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school’s code of conduct
  o Incidents of bullying and harassment in the classroom or school yard
  o Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
  o Communication with parents
  o School fees and payments
  o General administrative issues
  o 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:
  o Student discipline matters including expulsions
  o Complaints about employee conduct or performance and complaints that should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action
  o Complaints by the Department’s employees related to their employment
  o Student critical incident matters
  o Other criminal matters.

Implementation
• Stonnington Primary School expects a person raising a concern or a complaint to:
  o Do so promptly as soon as possible after the issue occurs
  o Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
  o Maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
  o Acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
  o Act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner
  o Show respect and understanding of each other’s point of view and value difference, rather than judge or blame
  o Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced
  o Approach the school and not another parent or student
  o 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:
  o Courteously
  o Efficiently
  o Fairly
  o Promptly, or within the timeline agreed with the person with the concern or complaint
Policy Document

- 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
  - 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
Policy Document

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
Parent Complaints -