



Addressing Parent Concerns and Complaints

POLICY

Rationale:

Melrose Primary School recognises that the involvement of parents in their child's education and the development of strong family-school partnerships are important for children's optimal development and learning. Melrose also recognises that in all partnerships there may be times of disagreement and issues of concern that will need to be raised and resolved.

The School's approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on a commitment to:

- provide a safe and supportive learning environment;
- build relationships between students, parents and staff;
- provide a safe working environment for staff;
- ensure all parties are treated with respect, fairness and dignity;

(In accordance with the Victorian Education Department's [Dignity & Respect Statement](#))

Complaints and concerns made by parents will in no way adversely affect their children.

Aim:

To ensure the school has in place a range of procedures in place to address concerns and complaints in collaboration with parents and the school community.

This policy and its associated procedures provide our school community with an avenue for raising concerns and airing complaints and ensuring they are investigated and addressed in a fair and transparent way. Concerns and complaints will be handled responsibly, openly and in a timely manner, with the aim of resolving the matter to the satisfaction of all parties.

Scope:

It should be recognised that parent complaints mostly relate to one of the following areas:

- The management of an incident between students at the school
- The educational (or other) progress of a student
- The development and implementation of school and general education policy.

These procedures will be used to effectively address concerns and complaints relating to:

- general issues of student misbehaviour that are contrary to the schools 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 and carers
- school fees and payments
- general administrative issues

The procedures **do not cover** concerns and issues related to:

- student discipline involving expulsions
- complaints about employee conduct or performance (as these should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution of disciplinary action)
- complaints by employees relating their employment
- student critical incident matters
- other criminal matters

Implementation:

Raising a concern or complaint

Parents are expected to follow the processes as outlined in the attached, '*Guidelines for raising a concern or complaint*'

Parents should not contact other parents or students about their concerns or complaints as the school will deal with them following due process.

Help with raising concerns or complaints

Complainants can seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are unable to express their concern 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.

All parties involved in addressing a complaint may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty coming to an agreement.

Addressing concerns or complaints:

See attached '*Addressing Parent Concerns and Complaints*' procedures.

- The school will ensure the guidelines and procedures are readily available to parents and the school community, in clear and easy-to-understand language and, where appropriate, provide a translated copy or accessible format.
- All complaints will be noted and acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint.
- Upon receipt of a concern or complaint the school will determine whether it should be managed through the School's concerns and complaints process or through other complaints processes of the Department.
- The school will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the Department.
- The school will provide the complainant with a timeline for investigating the complaint. The school will make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible. However, if a complaint involves many students and/or complex issues, the school will need more time to investigate and resolve the issues.
- Should the complaint involve complex issues, the school might need to take advice from the Department's regional office or central branch which may take more time. The school will inform the complainant the new timeline for addressing the complaint and the reasons for any delays.

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 Department's appropriate regional office (North East Victoria Region). An officer from the region will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and the complainant's opinion about why the school did not resolve it to their satisfaction.

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

Review:

The school will monitor and consider issues raised through the parent concerns and complaints 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 council will review its policy and procedures to effectively address parent concerns and complaints as part of its cyclic policy and procedures review schedule.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in...

June 2015

SignedDeb Covill..... School Council President