

POLICY: RAISING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

1. PURPOSE

To address concerns and complaints raised by parents in an effective manner.

2. AIMS

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

- ~ our values of respect, responsibility, excellence and teamwork
- ~ providing a safe and supportive learning environment
- ~ building relationships between students, parents and staff
- ~ providing a safe working environment for staff

3. IMPLEMENTATION

- The types of concerns and complaints that the policy covers are:
 - ~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 playground
 - ~learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
 - ~communication with parents
 - ~school fees and payments
 - ~general administrative issues
- A person raising a concern or complaint should:
 - ~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 their 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 others' point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame
 - ~recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced
- The school will address any concerns and complaints received from parents:
 - ~courteously
 - ~efficiently
 - ~fairly
 - ~promptly, or within the timeline agreed with the person with the concern or complaint
 - ~in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the department's regulatory framework
- A parent raising a concern or complaint should telephone or write to:
 - ~the student's teacher about learning issues and incidents that happened in their class
 - ~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 complex student issues

- Complainants can seek the services of an advocate when they feel that 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. In addressing a complaint, all parties may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty coming to an agreement.

- The school will record the following details of all complaints received:
 - ~name and contact details (with permission) of the person with the concern or complaint
 - ~the date the concern was expressed or complaint made
 - ~the form in which the concern or complaint was received (such as face-to-face, by telephone, in writing, by email)
 - ~a brief description of the concern or complaint
 - ~details of the school officer responding to the concern or complaint
 - ~action taken regarding the concern or complaint
 - ~the outcome of action taken on the concern or complaint
 - ~any recommendations for future improvement in the school's policy or procedures.

(If the incident is easily resolved there will not be any need for recording of information.)

- All complaints will be acted upon promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint.
 - ~the complainant will be given a timeline for investigating the complaint.
 - ~the Assistant Principal will investigate complaints and will provide a response to the complainant.
 - ~concerns and complaints about general school matters (such as the timing of events, school policies and facilities) will be addressed by the Principal or a relevant staff member.
 - ~the school will make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible. The school may need time to investigate a complex issue.

- If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the school will offer an appropriate solution. For example, at its discretion, and depending on the circumstances, 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
 - ~a fee refund

- If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, the person should contact the Department's regional office. 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.

- All staff will be briefed about the procedures to address concerns and complaints.
- 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 review of the school's policies, procedures and operations.

4. EVALUATION

- This policy will be reviewed as necessary.