POLICY: COMPLAINTS

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the office on 9702 2022.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Brentwood Park so that students, parents and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school
- ensure that all complaints and concerns are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

This policy relates to complaints brought by students, parents, carers, or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school.

In some limited instances, we may need to refer a complainant to another policy or area if there are different processes in place to the manage the issue including:

- Complaints and concerns relating to fraud and corruption will be managed in accordance with the department's Fraud and Corruption Policy
- Criminal matters will be referred to Victorian Police
- Legal claims will be referred to the Department's Legal Division
- Complaints and concerns relating to child abuse will be managed in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy and Procedures(Mandatory Reporting).

IMPLEMENTATION:

Brentwood Park welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our families and are committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. We recognise that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

We value and encourage open and positive relationships with our school community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

When addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- be considerate of each other's views and respect each other's role
- be focused on resolution of the complaint, with the interests of the student involved at the centre
- act in good faith and cooperation
- behave with respect and courtesy
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- operate within and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with any applicable legislation and DET policy.
- recognise that schools and the DoE may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

Complaints and concerns process for students

Brentwood Park acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. We encourage our students to raise issues or concerns as they arise so that we can work together to resolve them.

Students with a concern or complaint can raise them with a trusted adult at school, for example, with their classroom teacher, year level leaders, Education Support staff and or principal/ assistant principals. This person will take your concern or complaint seriously and will explain to you what steps we can take to try to resolve the issue and support you.

You can also ask your parent, carer or another trusted adult outside of the school, to talk to us about the issue instead.

Further information and resources to support students to raise issues or concerns are available at:

- Report Racism Hotline (call 1800 722 476) – this hotline enables students to report concerns relating to racism or religious discrimination
- Reach Out 13 11 14
- Headspace 1800 650 890.
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
- Victorian Aboriginal Education Association (VAEA) 9481 0800

Complaints and concerns process for parents, carers and community members

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

Brentwood Park encourages parents, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- carefully consider the issues you would like to discuss
- remember you may not have all the facts relating to the issues that you want to raise
- think about how the matter could be resolved
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the DoE and may refer to "Further Information and Resources" section below.

Support person

You are welcome to have a support person to assist you in raising a complaint or concern with our school. Please advise us if you wish to have a support person to assist you, and provide their name, contact details, and their relationship to you.

Raising a concern

Brentwood Park is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance can be raised to your child's teacher. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

Making a complaint

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the principal or an assistant principal.

If you would like to make a formal complaint, in most cases, depending on the nature of the complaint raised, our school will first seek to understand the issues and will then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint together. The following process will apply:

1. **Complaint received:** Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the office with the assistant principal or principal, to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are. We can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.
2. **Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the principal, assistant principal may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
3. **Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the assistant principal/principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties.
4. **Timelines:** We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, we may need some time to

gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. We will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting as soon as practicable.

Please note that unreasonable conduct (e.g. vexatious complaints) may need to be managed differently to the procedures in this policy.

Resolution

Where appropriate, we may seek to resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of the parents.

Escalation

If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved by the school, or if your complaint is about the principal and you do not want to raise it directly with them, then the complaint should be referred to the South Eastern Victorian Region, Dandenong Office by contacting 8765 5784.

Brentwood Park may also refer a complaint to SEVR if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

For more information about the Department's parent complaints process, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: Raise a complaint or concern about your school.

Record keeping and other requirements

To meet Department and legal requirements, our school must keep written records of:

- Serious, substantial or unusual complaints
- Complaints relating to the Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, to meet regulatory requirements - refer to Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes for further information

Our school also follows Department policy to ensure that record-keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints or concerns.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on school website
- Included in staff induction processes

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

- Complaints - Parents

The Department's parents' website:

- Raise a complaint or concern about your school
- Report racism or religious discrimination in schools

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	26/3/2024
Consultation	Consultation with Brentwood Park School Council
Approved by	James Bell, principal and school council
Next scheduled review date	March 2026