



Roma Mitchell
Secondary College

PARENT COMPLAINT POLICY

Purpose

Our school is committed to ensuring the delivery of high quality education and care to all students. Working in partnership with parents to resolve any concerns and complaints that they may have about their child's schooling, is a key part of how we deliver on this commitment. The purpose of this policy is to provide clear and transparent information to parents, the community and staff on how concerns and complaints will be managed and resolutions found. It is also the intent of this policy to ensure that parents have access to support and advice when attempting to resolve a concern or complaint.

This policy has been ratified by the Governing Council

School Staff

Parents are, in the first instance, to raise any concerns or complaints in relation to their child's education with their child's teacher. It is expected that teachers will:

- make a time available as soon as reasonably possible (ie, within five working days), to discuss with the parent (face-to-face, by phone) their complaint
- listen to the parent
- identify and discuss with the parent possible courses of action that could be taken to resolve their complaint and the timeframe within which this will occur
- follow up with the parent(s) after a reasonable period of time has elapsed for any changes to take affect to ensure that the parent is satisfied with the outcome(s)
- if appropriate (depending on the nature of the concern or complaint), keep a written record of the complaint, its progress and outcomes, using the Record of Complaint proforma which will be stored in confidential file in the Principal's Office
- If appropriate, refer the complaint to the relevant member of the leadership team.

Concerns and complaints received by a school staff member in relation to another staff member or an issue outside their responsibility or beyond their authority to resolve are to be referred to the relevant member of the leadership team. The staff member who receives the initial complaint is to advise the parent of the reason(s) why the matter is to be referred elsewhere, direct them to contact the relevant member of the leadership team, and assist, if required, the parent to make their complaint.

If a parent is not satisfied with the outcome of this stage of the complaint management procedure, or decides that it is more appropriate to discuss their complaint directly with a member of the school leadership team (ie, year level manager/ deputy principal/principal/), then the parent is to contact the school to make a time to meet with the appropriate leader. If a complaint is in relation to the principal then the parent is to contact the Para Hills Office, Ros Maio on 83144025.

Leadership team (year level leader/deputy principal/principal/)

It is expected that a leadership team member will:

- wherever possible, make every reasonable effort to resolve parent concerns or complaints at the school level in a timely and effective manner
- ensure when parents lodge a complaint they are made aware of the school's procedure for responding to complaints, the department's dedicated parent support free call number which is 1800 677 435 and how to access other information about the parent complaint process by visiting the department's website at www.decd.sa.gov.au/parentcomplaint or email DECD.parentcomplaint@sa.gov.au
- acknowledge receipt of a written parent complaint in writing as soon as reasonably possible (ie, within five working days)
- advise all relevant parties of the complaint
- determine if support needs to be provided to the parent or staff member involved while
- the complaint is considered
- consider relevant legislation, departmental policy and guidelines and school procedures
- seek advice and support, as required, from Central Office
- assess the complaint and its management to date.
- investigate, consider and determine the most appropriate action to be taken to resolve
- the complaint in a fair and prompt manner, including negotiation between the parties and whether the parent complaints unit's mediation services are required
- document the complaint process and outcome, using the Record of Complaint proforma which will be stored in confidential file in the Principal's Office
- communicate the outcome to all the parties involved verbally, and if appropriate, in writing (ie, within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint)
- advise the parent of their right to refer the matter to the regional office on 83144025 if they are dissatisfied with the outcome, and then to the Parent Complaint Unit if necessary on 1800 677 435

If the principal is unable to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the parent then the formal complaint management process will be utilised. The principal will forward all relevant information recorded by the school, in relation to the complaint, to the regional office for action.

This policy will be promoted to the parent community through an article (see attached) in the school newsletter twice each year (beginning of terms 1 & 3). The parent complaint brochure will be given to all parents upon enrolment and made available and on display in the main administration and campus foyers as well as on our website.

This policy will be reviewed in 2 years.

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PARENT GUIDE TO RAISING A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

We all expect quality and expert care and teaching for your child in order that they achieve their potential. Working together will give us the best chance of solving a problem that may arise during your child's years in school.

We also recognise that at times things may go wrong. If you have a concern or a complaint, we want you to let us know. It's important to learn from mistakes or misunderstandings so that we can improve your child's experience and learning, and also improve processes where possible.

The first step in working through a concern or complaint is to talk to the staff member concerned, and then the relevant Year Level Manager, Head of Campus or the Deputy Principal, Karen Fitzpatrick if you still are not happy. If your concern is still not resolved to your satisfaction then please contact the Principal, Sandy Richardson.

You can then contact the Education Director; Ros Maio on 83144025 to discuss the concern if you believe the Principal, Sandy Richardson has not satisfactorily resolved your concern.

Steps guiding how complaints should be made are explained in the brochure *Parent Guide to Raising a Concern or Complaint*.

Use this guide to help you think through what you are concerned about and how to resolve the matter respectfully and effectively.

ABOUT COMPLAINTS OR CONCERNS

This information may be helpful in explaining what a complaint is:

A complaint may be made by a parent if they think that the school has, for example:

- done something wrong
- failed to do something it should have done
- acted unfairly or impolitely.

Your concern or complaint may be about:

- the type, level or quality of services
- the behaviour and decisions of staff
- a policy, procedure or practice.

Sometimes a complaint is about something we have to do because of state or federal law. In such cases we are able to talk to you about the matter and help you understand the requirements and why they exist.

If you'd like more information please give us a call on 81614600 or visit the department's website at www.decd.sa.gov.au/parentcomplaint or email DECD.parentcomplaint@sa.gov.au. There is also a Freecall number 1800 677 435.