

PARKHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY: Parent Concerns and Complaints Policy

PROGRAM LEADER: Rodney McKinlay

DATE RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL: August 2014

RATIONALE

Parkhill Primary School's values are: Care; Unity; Respect; Honesty and Persistence. These provide the framework within which high standards of conduct are maintained between staff, parents and students at all times. Within this framework it is the School's responsibility to manage and resolve parent complaints fairly, efficiently and properly and in accordance with the relative legislation.

Our values are demonstrated by the school in relation to addressing parent concerns and complaints by:

- Providing a safe and supportive school culture and learning environment
- Building positive relationships between students, parents and staff
- Providing a safe working environment for staff
- Promoting a partnership between home and school.

AIMS

1. To develop and implement a process by which parents can confidently raise concerns in the knowledge that they will be listened to and their concerns will be professionally managed in a timely, confidential and appropriate manner.

IMPLEMENTATION

When addressing parent/guardian concerns or complaints, the Department and its schools must:

- Abide by relevant regulatory and legislative frameworks
- Maintain confidentiality
- Balance the rights and responsibilities of all parties
- Ensure all parties are aware of their right to advocacy
- Act in a manner that seeks to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties.

See *Raising a Parent Concern* process (OVERLEAF)

How a parent complaint or concerns will be handled:

- Concerns will be handled promptly, confidentially and in accordance with procedural fairness.
- Person or persons, who are the subject of a complaint, who make a complaint or provide information in the course of an investigation into a complaint, shall not be subject to prejudice, intimidation and harassment or be subject to any detriment because of their involvement.
- Parents visiting the school to raise a concern are advised that it is unlikely that staff will be immediately available to investigate. However, details regarding the concern can be taken by the office staff. Alternatively, office staff can make an appointment for the parent to meet with an appropriate person to discuss their concerns.
- Parents making complaints are to be well-behaved, respectful of other's privacy, and courteous. Parents who are unreasonable, threatening or discourteous can expect their discussions with staff to be terminated until such time as an alternative discussion time is arranged by the school.
- The Principal will determine whether or not an anonymous complaint will be investigated.
- Parents should ensure evidence is provided/available to support their concern and it is not just based on hearsay. Incidents involving one person's word against another's are very difficult to prove and may not be able to be resolved.
- Should a parent wish to write a formal complaint a *DEECD Parent Complaint Form* may be used as a guideline (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/contact/parentcomplaintform.pdf>).

Monitoring:

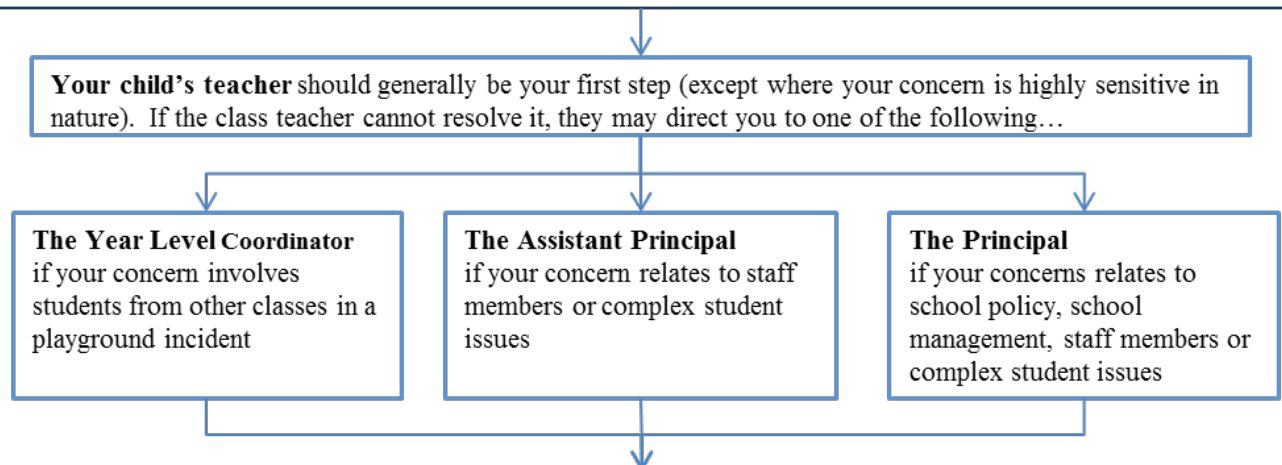
- The school should establish and maintain a system to record and monitor complaints and their resolution.
- However, in the first instance, when the complaint is easily resolved in a telephone call, a brief note in the school's/principal's/teacher's diary recording the issue and the resolution is enough.

Step 1: Clarify the issue (what exactly is your concern?)

Before you approach the school or your child's teacher:

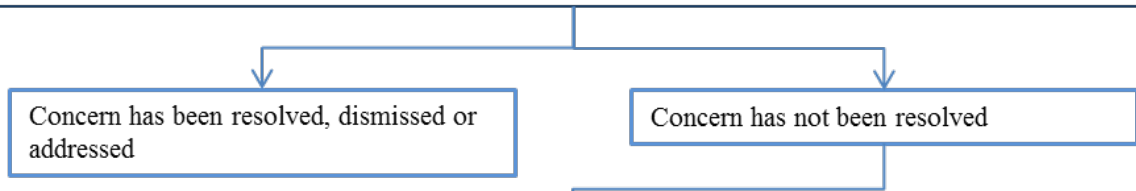
- be clear about the topic or issue you want to discuss
- ensure evidence is provided/available to support your concern and not just hearsay
- focus on the things that are genuinely affecting your child
- always remain calm and remember you may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue you wish to discuss
- think about what would be an acceptable outcome for you and your child
- be informed; check the departments policies or guidelines, where relevant

Make an appointment to speak to the following people to help resolve the concern. Generally always raise concerns with the class teacher first.



Step 2: Review or investigation at the school level

- Ensures that all parties in a disputed concern/complaint are aware of their entitlement to support through an advocate. An advocate can be a friend or colleague or an unpaid support person provided through an appropriate agency.
- The class teacher or Year Level Coordinator, together with any others who may be involved, should be given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address your concerns. Remember, it may not always be possible to resolve an issue to your complete satisfaction and that issues involving young children can take some time to resolve.
- Staff will communicate the outcomes of concerns, where possible to all relevant parties.
- If applicable, staff will work with you to establish an agreed plan of action and timeline.
- The principal can reject a concern or complaint that in their opinion is vexatious, or without substance, or does not warrant further action.
- Modifies other school policies and procedures as required as a result of addressing concerns and complaints.



Step 3: Contact may be made to The Department of Education and Early Childhood Education (DEECD)

- If you still feel that your concern has not been addressed satisfactorily after speaking to the Principal, you can then contact DEECD - Eastern Region

Step 4: Contact with the Department's Central Office should only take place if all other steps have not led to a satisfactory resolution. Where possible, all contact should be in writing.

- If it is clear that you have not followed the above steps your letter (and your concern) will be sent to the relevant regional office. You will be contacted if this happens.

- Further Information is available for Parents/Carers on the Departments Website <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complaininfo.aspx> .

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four year review cycle.

APPENDICES

- Nil

REFERENCES

- DEECD - School Policy and Advisory Guide
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/pages/parentcomplaints.aspx>
- DEECD – Parent Complaints and Further Resources
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complaininfo.aspx>
- DEECD – Parent Complaint Form
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/contact/parentcomplaintform.pdf>
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/575C47EA02890DA4CA25717000217213/\\$FILE/06-024a.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/575C47EA02890DA4CA25717000217213/$FILE/06-024a.pdf)