



## Parent Concerns and Complaints Procedures

### RATIONALE

This policy is to ensure that when complaints and concerns are raised that the focus of the outcome is always in the best interest of the student. We recognize that when concerns and complaints are addressed in a timely manner and parents and staff work in partnership, the best possible outcome for the student will be achieved.

### AIMS

To provide a process through which parents may raise concerns and also feel assured that their complaints and concerns are taken seriously.

The school will address any concerns or complaints with:

- courtesy
- efficiency
- fairness
- promptness, with regard to the timeline agreed with the person with the concern or complaint
- due regard to process, the principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework.

### Concerns and Complaints Covered by the Procedure

These procedures cover concerns and complaints about:

- general issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school Student Behaviour Code
- Incidents of bullying or harassment in the school yard or classroom
- Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- Communication with parents
- School fees or payments
- General administrative issues
- Any other school related matters except those listed below

These procedures do not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the Victorian Schools Reference Guide.

Those matters include:

- student discipline matters involving expulsion
- complaints about employee conduct or performance and complaints that should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action
- complaints by the Department's employees related to their employment
- student critical incident matters
- other criminal matters

### **Raising Concerns and Complaints**

In the first instance, a complaint or concern should be raised with the school.

The complainant should telephone, visit or write to:

- the student's teacher about learning issues and incidents that happened in their class or group
- the assistant principal if students from several classes are involved
- the principal about issues relating to staff members, very complex student issues, issues relating to school policy or school management
- If you are not sure who to contact, contact the Principal or Assistant Principal on 53424487

### **Expectations**

The school expects a person raising a concern or complaint to:

- 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 a 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 other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame
- recognize that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.

### **Help with Raising Concerns and 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. The school will ensure that the complainant is aware of these supports. A complainant who wishes to use these support services should ensure the person addressing the concern or complaint is aware of their intention and is in agreement.

### **Managing Parent Concerns and Complaints Information**

The school will maintain appropriate systems to record and monitor concerns and complaints and their resolution. These records will include the following details of all concerns and complaints received, even if the complaint appears to be minor:

- name and contact details (with permission) of the person with a 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 on 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.

### **Addressing Parent Concerns & Complaints**

Haddon PS is an open, friendly, safe and inclusive Learning Community in which students, parents, staff and the wider community work together so that all students can achieve personal excellence. We acknowledge that on occasions differences of opinion arise. We strongly believe that where concerns and complaints are addressed in a timely manner and students, parents and staff work in partnership, we will achieve our common goal - being the best possible outcome for the student. Our school is committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect and encourages good communication between our parents and the school. Teaching and learning works best when parents and teachers talk to each other and work together to solve problems.

- The school will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the Department.
- The school will give a complainant a copy of its parent concerns and complaints policy and procedures.
- The school will determine whether a concern or complaint should be managed through the school's concerns and complaints procedures or through other complaints processes of the Department.
- All concerns and complaints will be noted and acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint.
- The school will acknowledge all complaints made in writing. It will provide the complainant with a timeline for investigating the complaint.
- The Principal / Assistant Principal will investigate all 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. If a complaint involves many students and a range of issues, the school will need more time to investigate and resolve it.

### **Remedies**

If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the school may offer an appropriate remedy. 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
- a change of decision
- to revise its policies, procedures or practices
- an apology, expression of regret or admission of fault

The school will implement the remedy as soon as practicable.

### **Referrals of Concerns and Complaints**

If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, they should contact the Department's Regional Office.

The 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. The Division 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 and regional office did not resolve it to their satisfaction and will ask the complainant to outline their view on the course of action required to resolve the complaint. Where the complainant is unable to provide a written account the office from Group Coordination Division should act on the information provided.

### **Communication**

Haddon Primary School's Policy and Procedures for addressing concerns and complaints will be communicated to staff and parents in the following manner:

#### Parents

The school's policy will be:

- given to parents when their child enrolls
- printed in the Parent Information Handbook
- available on the Ultranet
- available from the principal by request through the school office

#### Staff

- All staff members will be given a copy of this policy and be briefed about the procedures to address concerns and complaints.
- Any training and/or support required by staff, appropriate to their responsibilities in implementing these procedures, will be provided.

### **Monitoring the Policy**

Haddon Primary School will monitor parent concerns and complaints consider issues raised through the parents complaints process. The school will review its information and about complaints and concerns to:

- identify common or recurring issues that may need addressing
- assess the effectiveness of these and other procedures and whether they are being followed

### A Brief Outline of the Procedure for Parents to Follow

#### How do I raise an issue or make a complaint?

Issues can be raised by phone, letter or by making an appointment to speak to the appropriate staff member at a convenient time.

#### How do I frame my concern?

When contacting the school plan what you will say so you can clearly explain what your concern is. Have some ideas about how the problem can be solved.

#### What can I expect from the school?

Confidentiality

Respect and understanding for your point of view

Courtesy

An efficient and prompt response (appropriate to the complexity of the issue raised)

A desire to resolve concerns and complaints amicably

A mutually agreeable outcome

A restored working relationship

#### What if my issue isn't resolved?

If you still have a concern after talking to your child's teacher you may wish to speak to the principal or assistant principal.

If the matter is not resolved by talking to the school you can contact the community liaison officer at DEECD Grampians Regional Office who will assist us to find a solution. 53378444

\*Further information about this process can be found at

[www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/parentcomplaint.htm](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/parentcomplaint.htm)

#### Definitions

- a "**concern**" is an issue of interest ( because of its importance and effect) which is raised informally in order to change or improve a situation e.g. I believe that the school's phys ed policy and program is inadequate. I don't think that it caters for students who have well developed skills and who need to be involved in competitive sport. I think the school should review it s policy in this area.
- A "**complaint**" is an expression of grievance or resentment where the complainant is seeking redress or justice e.g. My daughter has been left out of the school netball team for the third time in a row. She is an accomplished netballer and deserves to be part of the team. It is not fair that she has been left out and I want to do something about it. I believe that the school's phys ed policy and program is inadequate. I don't think it caters for students who have well developed skills and who need to be involved in competitive sport. I think the school should review its policy in this area.

