

Raising Concerns and Complaints

POLICY

1. PURPOSE

East Bentleigh Primary School is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning and working environment for students and staff. It recognises the importance of developing positive, respectful relationships between students, staff and parents.

2. AIMS

- To provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment.
- To address concerns and resolve complaints fairly, effectively, promptly and in accordance with relevant legislation.

3. GUIDELINES

- 3.1** The concerns and complaints procedures will cover areas such as issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's code of conduct, incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or school yard, learning programs, communication with parents, school fees and payments and other school related matters.
- 3.2** These procedures do not cover student disciplinary matters involving expulsions, complaints about employee conduct or performance, complaints by the Departments' employees related to their employment, student critical incident matters and criminal matters.
- 3.3** It is expected that a person raising a concern or complaint will do so promptly, and:
- provide complete and factual information,
 - maintain and respect the privacy 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 without judging or blaming, and
 - 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 an agreed timeline and in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework.
- 3.4** The school will make information about the procedures for addressing concerns and complaints readily available to parents and the school community, through this policy, the newsletter and parent information sessions.
- 3.5** The school will brief all members of staff about its procedures to address concerns and complaints annually, and will provide resources and guidelines about handling complaints.

3.6 Full details, guidelines and resources for staff are contained within the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 'Addressing parents' concerns and complaints effectively: policy and guides' 2009

4. IMPLEMENTATION:

4.1 In the first instances a complaint should be made to the school and directed to:

- The student's teacher if concerning learning issues or incidents that happen in class
- The Leadership Team about issues relating to staff members or complex student issues
- The Principal about issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex issues.
- If you are not sure of who to contact ring the school - 95703525

4.2 The school will record details of the concern or complaint and include the name of the person with a concern, the date, the form in which the complaint was received (eg telephone call, in writing, face-to-face), a brief description of the issue, details of the school officer responding to the complaint, action taken, the outcome of the action and any recommendations for future improvement.

4.3 The school will acknowledge all complaints and will indicate strategies to be used to address the complaint

4.4 Complainants may seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are unable to express their concerns clearly. An advocate may be a friend, a representative from School Council or someone who is available from a support organisation who does not receive a fee. All parties may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty coming to agreement. A complainant who is using support services should ensure the person addressing the concern is aware of their intention and is in agreement.

4.5 The school will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the department. Should the complaint involve complex issues, the school may take advice from the Department's regional office, which may take more time.

4.6 If a concern or complaint is substantiated, in whole or in part, the school will offer an appropriate remedy (eg further information, mediation, counselling, an apology, fee refund etc)

4.7 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.

- 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.

EVALUATION

The school will monitor parent concerns and complaints and consider issues raised through the parent complaints process, and any other relevant information (eg parent opinion survey). This policy will be reviewed on a 3 year cycle.

This Policy was ratified by School Council in

July 2010