

1. Rationale:

Greenvale Primary School recognises that parent concerns/complaints are a part of any school environment and that, as professionals, we should act on them in a proactive manner, using them to provide catalyst for school improvement. Parents need to know that their concerns are taken seriously and that a fair process has been undertaken to arrive at a resolution.

- The support of the community and their satisfaction with the school are critical to our interests and those of our students.
- The way in which we approach complaints made by parents reflects our school culture and values, the professional and personal competence of the staff, and the soundness of our procedures.
- Parents and students are the best and most active “public relations” and school promotion advocates.
- There is an increase in the expectations on schools and in the culture of accountability and continuous improvement we must ensure that we are positive in all issues with which we deal.
- We must be prepared to deal constructively with any situation which may begin as a minor complaint but can escalate.
- We need to acknowledge the rights of both parents and students and be positive in catering for their needs.
- School staff and other regular personnel need to create an environment that communicates to parents that we value them as clients.
- Confidentiality and discretion is essential for all involved parties.

2. Aims:

- To aim for a mutual resolution to the difficulty.
- To achieve school improvement.
- To consolidate/improve relationships for all parties involved.
- To demonstrate personal and professional integrity.
- To maintain everyone’s health and well-being.

3. Implementation:

This information will assist parents who are raising concerns or making a complaint that is related to the school or their child’s education.

Remember:

- The school should always be your first point of contact.
- Concerns are best resolved at the school.
- You can withdraw your complaint at any time.
- It may not always be possible to resolve an issue to your complete satisfaction.
- DET expects that most complaints will be resolved by the school - that is at Step 2 (or Step 3) of the following process.
- Define and separate the needs rather than the wants.
- Document everything in regards to the complaint.

How do I raise an issue or make a complaint?

Step 1: Clarify the issue (what is the problem?)

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

- Be clear about the issue you want to discuss.
- Focus on the things that genuinely affect your child.
- Always remain calm and remember you may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the issue you wish to discuss.

- Think about what an acceptable outcome would be for you and your child.
- Be informed; check the policies or guidelines, where relevant.

Step 2: Contact the teacher, then the Educational Leader if required

There are a number of ways you can raise concerns you have about your child. Please inform the school about the issue or concern. You are encouraged to:

- Speak/write with your child's teacher outlining your concerns.
- Make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with the class teacher.
- If a resolution is not reached, make an appointment to speak to the Educational Leader.
- Remember that the class teacher / Educational Leader, together with others who may be involved, should be given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address your concerns.

Step 3: Contact the Principal or Assistant Principal

If the issue remains unresolved after you have approached your child's teacher or the team leader you can then ask to see the Assistant Principal or Principal.

To do this, you are invited to make an appointment through the school office.

Please note that if your child's teacher is going to be present at the meeting it is more likely to occur outside of classroom hours.

Step 4: Contact the Regional Office

If you still feel that your complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily after speaking to the teacher and the Principal, you can then contact the Northern Western Victoria Regional Office.

A regional Community Liaison Officer will be able to provide you with advice and assistance and, if required, direct your complaint to other regional staff to respond.

The Regional Director will ensure any formal written complaint is reviewed.

It is the regional office's responsibility to:

- Ensure that complaints, wherever possible, are resolved at the school.
- Ensure that procedures at the school are in accordance with the DET regulatory framework.

The regional office may refer your complaint to other areas or branches within the DET. You will be notified of this and of any major delays in addressing your complaint.

Step 5: Contact the Central Office

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 if you have not followed the above steps your concern will be redirected to the relevant regional office. You will be notified if this happens.

4. Evaluation:

This policy shall be reviewed as part of the ongoing policy and process review.

References and Related Documents:

1. Addressing Parent's Concerns and Complaints Effectively Guidelines – Education Department 2009
2. Parents Complaints Brochure - DET

This policy was ratified by School Council in May 2016