

## PARENT CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

### PURPOSE

- Toolangi Primary School values positive relationships with parents and families and fosters strong school community partnerships.
- We have developed this policy to ensure that we have procedures in place to address concerns and complaints in a timely and responsible manner.

### APPROACH

Our approach to addressing concerns and complaints is based on a commitment to;

- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Build relationships between students, parents and staff.
- Provide a safe working environment for staff.

### POLICY STATEMENT

This policy and its associated procedures cover concerns and complaints about:

- General issues of student behaviours that are contrary to the school's code of conduct.
- Incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard.
- Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning.
- Communication with parents.
- School fees and payments.
- General administrative issues.
- Any other school-related matters except as detailed below.

This policy does not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide. These matters include:

- Students discipline matters involving expulsions.
- Complaints about employee conduct or performance and complaints that should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action.
- Complaints by Department's employees related to their employment.
- Student critical incident matters.
- Other criminal matters.

### IMPLEMENTATION

See appendix 1 and 2 of this policy: Raising a concern or complaint and parent concern and complaints process.

#### **Raising a concern or complaint:**

Parents are expected to follow the processes as outlined in this policy. All concerns should be directed to the school rather than other parents, students or community members.

**Help with raising concerns or complaints:**

Parents 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.

**Addressing concerns or complaints:**

The school will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the Department. Upon receipt of a concern or complaint the school will determine whether it should be managed through the School's Concerns and Complaints Process or through other complaints processes of the Department.

All 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 school will make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible hopefully within a week. Should the complaint involve complex issues, the school might need to take advice from the Department's Regional Office or central branch which may take more time. The school will inform the complainant of the new timeline for addressing the complaint and the reasons for any delays.

**Referral of concerns or complaints:**

If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, they may contact the Department's appropriate Regional Office (North East Region).

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 may 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. They may 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 officer from Group Coordination Division should act on the information provided.

**Communication and Training:**

The school will make information about procedures for addressing concerns and complaints readily available.

This information will include:

- The process involved in making a complaint.
- The complainant's responsibilities.
- The school's responsibilities.
- The process and timeframes for managing the complaint.

The school will:

- Provide staff with its policy and procedures to address concerns and complaints.
- Provide staff with access to training and appropriate support including advise from outside agencies when required.

**Review:**

The School will monitor parent concerns and complaints and consider issues raised through the parent complaints process, and any other relevant information from the parent opinion survey, when undertaking a review of the school's policies, procedures and operations.

The School Council will:

- Regularly review its policy and procedures as part of its cyclic policy.
- Keep documentation of parent complaints and concerns addressed to the council.
- Inform parents of cyclic policy review from School Council meetings.
- Make available policy for parents perusal.

***This policy will be revised during the life of the School strategic Plan; 2013 - 2017***

## APPENDIX 1

### RAISING A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

ABOUT WHAT/ISSUE	WHO TO CONTACT	HOW
Classroom activities, class curriculum, friendship issues and more complex issues such as student welfare and school curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your child's Class Teacher</li><li>• Principal, Kay Rowe</li><li>• Welfare Officer, Tess Kesting</li><li>• School Chaplin, Tracey Jones</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have a confidential chat or make an appointment to discuss the matter.</li></ul>
School Policy, School Management and Staff Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Principal, Kay Rowe</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In writing by hand, email or mail. Documentation may be required.</li></ul>
School Fees & payments and General enquiries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Principal, Kay Rowe</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Telephone to arrange an appointment.</li></ul>

#### PLEASE...

- Raise your concern as soon as you can after the issue occurs.
- Maintain and respect everyone's privacy and confidentiality.
- Be calm, courteous, honest and sincere.
- Recognise everyone has rights and responsibilities that must be respected.
- Strive to achieve an outcome acceptable to everyone involved.

#### ADDRESSING COMPLEX COMPLAINTS...

The School will be prompt, courteous, efficient and fair following the process below:

- Acknowledge complaints by telephone, email or mail.
- Provide timeline to investigate whenever possible.
- Record details in the school's register of complaints.

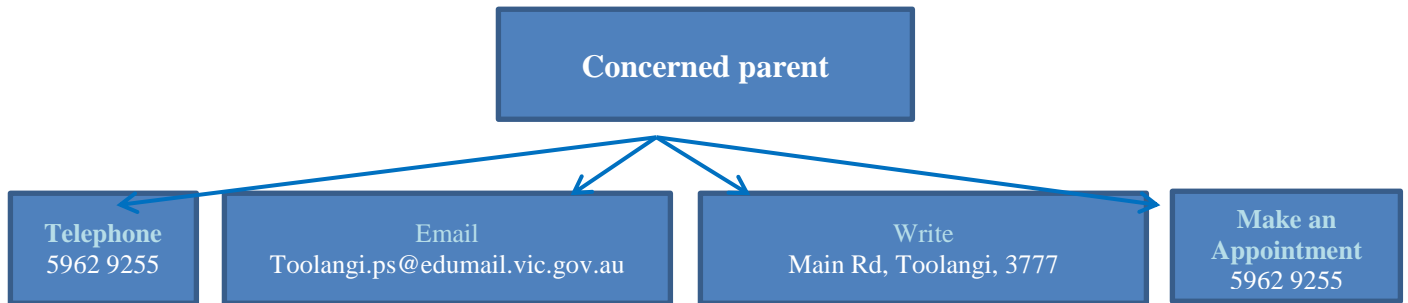
#### RESOLVING A JUSTIFIED COMPLAINT...

When a complaint is justified, the School may provide:

- An explanation or further information.
- Seek mediation, counseling or other support if required.
- Offer an apology, expression of regret or admission of fault.
- Review policies, procedures or practices.

**APPENDIX 2**

**PARENT CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS PROTOCOLS**



**ISSUE**

**WHO CAN HELP**

