



YARRAVILLE WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Parents' Complaints Procedure

RATIONALE

Yarraville West Primary School (YWPS) is committed to providing a productive learning environment by ensuring the school is a safe and secure environment for all members of our community. We believe that creating and maintaining a respectful and safe school is a shared responsibility reliant on strong relationships between students, parents and staff. YWPS aims for good communication between the school, students and their families to enable parents and teachers to work together to solve day-to-day problems as they arise.

The school recognises, however, that from time to time parents may have concerns or complaints about issues at the school that may be affecting their child. YWPS is committed to responding appropriately to such concerns to resolve them amicably, quickly and respectfully. This document outlines the procedures in place at YWPS to resolve parents' concerns or complaints. It describes the steps to be taken by both parents or guardians and the school.

GOALS

YWPS's procedures for responding to parents' concerns and complaints are implemented within the framework of the school's Dignity and Respect Policy, and are consistent with DEECD policies. This procedure provides clear guidelines on how to raise concerns, and what to do if your concerns cannot be resolved at the school level.

In resolving any concerns or complaints, all parties will:

- act in good faith and in a calm and courteous manner, maintaining confidentiality;
- work towards a mutually acceptable outcome; and
- recognise the rights and responsibilities of all involved.

These procedures cover concerns or complaints about:

- general issues of student behaviour;
- incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or school grounds;
- learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning;
- communication with parents;
- school fees and payments;
- general administrative issues;
- any other school-related matters.

If your concern is related to issues of school policy, these should be raised with the Principal.

Some matters *are not* covered by these procedures. These include issues for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, such as criminal matters, student critical incident matters, disciplinary matters involving expulsion, or employee conduct or performance matters dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action.

These procedures take effect from 25/10/ 2011.

A complaint is considered resolved if the complainant and school (or Region or Department) agree on an appropriate response or remedy. Remember that it may not always be possible to resolve an issue to your complete satisfaction.

IMPLEMENTATION

The underlying premise of these procedures is that parents' concerns and complaints are important, the school needs to know about them, and they are best and most effectively managed if dealt with promptly at the school level.

Parents raising a concern or complaint are expected to:

- raise their concerns promptly, as soon as possible after the issue arises;
- focus on the things that are genuinely affecting their child;
- always remain calm;
- think about what would be an acceptable outcome for them and their child and acknowledge that this is a common goal;
- show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value differences rather than judge and blame;
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties;
- recognise that it may not always be possible to resolve the issue to their complete satisfaction;
- follow the steps outlined in this complaints procedure; and
- be informed; check the Department's policies or guidelines, where relevant.

The school will:

- address concerns courteously, efficiently and fairly;
- respond promptly or within an agreed timeline;
- respond in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the DEECD framework; and
- if the concern or complaint is substantiated, offer an appropriate remedy and implement it as soon as practicable .

There are a number of ways you can raise any concerns you have about your child and their education. Your child's classroom teacher should always be the first point of contact with any concerns. Most issues can be resolved at this level, or with the involvement of the Principal or Assistant Principal. The school will make every effort to resolve concerns or complaints before involving other levels of the Department.

Contact your child's classroom teacher

Individual classroom teachers will inform parents at the beginning of each school year their preferred way and times for being contacted, but you can always write a note to your child's teacher outlining your concerns, or leave a message at the school office to make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with the class teacher. It is usually best to arrange any meeting times or phone calls at a time that is convenient for both you and your child's teacher and does not interrupt teachers during the time they need to be with their students.

The class teacher, 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.

Contact the Principal or Assistant Principal

If the issue remains unresolved after you have approached your child's teacher or other school staff, you can then ask to see the Assistant Principal or Principal. To do this, you will need to request an appointment through the school office. Please note that:

- the Principal may ask another senior staff member to speak with you on their behalf; and
- if a teacher is going to be present at the meeting it is more likely to occur outside of classroom hours.

After due consideration of the issues, the Principal may determine that the complaint is best addressed under other processes such as legislated rights of review or appeals.

Contact the Regional Office

If you still feel that your complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily after speaking to the teacher and Principal, you can then contact the regional office, which for YWPS is Western Metropolitan Region. Complaints are initially heard by the regional community liaison officer who will provide you with advice and assistance and, if required, direct your complaint to other regional staff to respond.

The Regional Office will:

- ensure that complaints, wherever possible, are resolved at the school;
- ensure that procedures at the school are in accordance with the Department's policies;
- support schools to resolve complex complaints; and
- provide access to training and support for staff in how to address parents concerns and complaints.

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

Contact the Department's central office

If the matter remains unresolved after discussions with the regional office, you can raise your complaint – in writing – with the Government School Education (Group Coordination Division) of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. 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. DEECD has a Complaint Lodgement Form (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/pcschools.htm>) to help you to put together all the information you need to submit a complaint in writing. The Regional Office can assist filling in the form, and it can be submitted by email, post or fax.

The Department's central office will try to respond within 20 school days. However, the more complex and sensitive the issues you raise, the more time will be needed to investigate or follow up with the relevant parties, and you will be informed if there may be major delays.

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

Contacts

YWPS Office

30 Powell St (PO Box 138)
Yarraville, 3013
Australia
Ph: 9314 7714

Western Metropolitan Regional Office

417 Barkly St
West Footscray VIC 3012
Phone: (03) 9291 6500
Fax: (03) 9291 6565
Website: <http://www.wmr.vic.edu.au>
Email: wmro@edumail.vic.gov.au

Regional Community Liaison Officer: Ph: 9291 6500

DEECD Central Office

Contact in writing: Deputy Secretary,
Office for Government School Education
c/ General Manager
Coordination and Strategy Division
GPO Box 4379
Melbourne VIC 3001

Email: community.stakeholders@edumail.vic.gov.au
Fax: 9637 2180

Ratified by YWPS School Council on Tuesday 25/10/2011.

Due for review by YWPS School Council in October 2014.