

WINDSOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

PARENT CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the concerns and complaints process at Windsor Primary School so that parents and members of the school community are informed of how they can raise concerns or complaints about issues arising at our school
- ensure that all concerns and complaints regarding Windsor Primary School are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

SCOPE

This policy relates to concerns and complaints brought by parents, carers, students or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school. In some limited instances, the school may need to refer the complainant to another Department of Education and Training process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions, for example, expulsion appeals.

POLICY

Windsor Primary School welcomes feedback, both acknowledging and constructive, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our families and are committed to understanding concerns and complaints and addressing them appropriately. We recognise that the concerns and complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

We value and encourage open and positive relationships with our school community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

When addressing a concern or complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- raise and discuss issues in a courteous and respectful manner
- acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome that is in the affected student's best interests and acceptable to all parties
- act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- recognise that all parties, including the broader school community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced
- recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

Windsor Primary School encourages parents, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a concern or complaint to:

- carefully consider the issues they would like to discuss
- remember they may not have all the facts relating to the issues that they want to raise
- think about how the matter could be resolved
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the Department

Concerns / complaints process

Windsor Primary School is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and school community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be verbally directed to your child's teacher, Year Level Coordinators, Assistant Principal or Principal depending on the concern. Where possible, school staff will work to ensure that all concerns are appropriately addressed.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal written complaint to the Assistant Principal or Principal.

The following process will apply once a complaint has been received in writing and receipt has been acknowledged:

1. **Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Principal, Assistant Principal or nominee will gather information to properly understand the situation. This process will also involve speaking to the complainant and possibly others to obtain details about the complaint raised.
2. **Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Assistant Principal/Principal or nominee to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. If after the meeting resolution is not possible, either party may choose to escalate the complaint. In some circumstances, the school may determine that a resolution meeting is not appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
3. **Timelines:** Windsor Primary School will acknowledge receipt of complaints as soon as possible (usually within 48 hours) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, the school may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of the complaint. The school will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting where appropriate within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, the school will consult with the complainant and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Resolution

Where appropriate, Windsor Primary School may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- an apology or expression of regret
- a change of decision
- a change of policy, procedure or practice
- offering the opportunity for student counselling or other support
- other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, the school may also ask the complainant, or the complainant may choose to attend a meeting with an independent third party, or participate in a mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute.

The support person can be a family member, a friend, a community member or a person provided through a support or advocacy agency. The complainant must advise the school that they want to include a support person, advocate or another representative when making a complaint, and provide the name, contact details and relationship to the complainant of the nominated person. Similarly, the school must inform the complainant when they intend to involve other people including Department staff to assist with the complaint process.

Failure to notify of the inclusion of third parties can result in the rescheduling or cancellation of the meeting.

Escalation

If a mutually agreed resolution cannot be reached or the complaint is about the Principal and the complainant does not feel comfortable raising the complaint with them, they can escalate the complaint to the local regional office for resolution (South East Victoria Region – 8765 5600).

If the matter still cannot be resolved by the regional office, the complaint can be further escalated to the Department's Central Office or the Department may refer the matter to the Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution.

Windsor Primary School may also refer a complaint to the regional office if the school believes that all has been done to address the complaint.

For more information about the Department's *Parent Complaints* policy, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Parent complaints policy](#).

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was last reviewed and approved by School Council in June 2022 and is scheduled for review in 2026.

