

Policy No: WEL002 (# 82)

RAISING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Written By: Education Subcommittee 2011

Date approved by School Council:

Purpose:

To provide a framework for all parties involved in resolving concerns or complaints.

Chelsea Heights Primary School believes that raising and dealing cooperatively with concerns and complaints plays a constructive role in the continuous improvement and maintenance of a safe and supportive learning environment. The school's approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on our values of:

- Respect
 - o respecting the right of all members of the school community to raise issues and have their concerns heard and dealt with
 - o listening respectfully to each other
- Cooperation
 - o all members of the school community which includes students, staff and parents working together in a calm and courteous manner
- Responsibility
 - o all members of the school community taking responsibility for their part in development of the best possible resolution.

Implementation:

1. Staff will be briefed annually about the school's concerns and complaints procedure.
2. The policy will be included in the School's Information booklet given to all new parents and distributed in the school newsletter annually.
3. All complaints will be noted and acted on promptly in an effort to resolve concerns.
4. The complainant should telephone, visit or write to:
 - The student's teacher about learning issues or incidents of concern that occurred in their class or group (please respect that a teacher's priority is to teach the students between 9am and 3.30pm)
 - The Year Level Coordinator if students from several classes are involved
 - The Assistant Principal or Well Being Coordinator about issues relating to complex student issues
 - The Principal about issues relating to staff members, school policy or school management
5. The school expects a person raising a concern or complaint to:
 - Do so as soon as possible after the issue occurs and to provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
 - Maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties and 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, rather than judge and blame
 - Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.

6. Complainants can seek the services of a friend for support or an advocate who does not receive a fee for service
7. The school will monitor parent concerns and complaints as well as use data from the Parent Opinion Survey to identify common or recurring themes that may need addressing.
8. In the event that a complaint cannot be resolved at the school level, complainants will be referred to the appropriate area of the Department.

Evaluation:

The Raising Concerns and Complaints Policy shall be reviewed after the first 12 months following implementation and then every 3 years by the Education Sub-Committee of School Council.

Related Policies and References:

- Information Privacy Act 2000
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007
- Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct
- This policy does not apply to matters where there are existing legislated rights of review of appeal – see: *Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide*.

Office for Government School Education: Addressing Parents' Concerns and Complaints Policy and Guide.

Supporting Documents

Possible Responses or Remedies

Managing parent concerns and complaints information

When a concern or complaint is easily resolved in a telephone call, a brief note identifying the issue and the resolution will be recorded in the diary of the person taking the complaint. For more complex issues a Record of Concerns and Complaints form (opposite) will be completed and filed by the person dealing with the issue.

The school will record the following details of concerns or complaints received:

- Name and contact details (with permission) of the person with a concern or complaint
- The date the concern was expressed or complaint made
- The form in which the concern or complaint was received (such as face-to-face, by telephone, in writing, by email)
- A brief description of the concern or complaint
- Details of the school officer responding to the concern or complaint
- Date the school officer agrees that next contact is to be made with the complainant if applicable
- Any recommendations for future improvement in the school's policy or procedures.

Remedies

If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the school will offer an appropriate remedy. At its discretion and depending on the circumstances, the school will offer one of the following:

- An explanation or further information about the issue
- Acknowledgement of each other's perspectives and an agreement on ways to manage differences
- Agreement on what constitutes acceptable behaviour
- An undertaking to put in place structures that will support change to acceptable behaviour
- Mediation, counselling or other support
- An apology, expression of regret or admission of fault
- To change its decision
- To change its policies, procedures or practices
- To cancel a debt (such as for school payments)
- A fee refund

The school will implement the remedy as soon as practicable.

Complaint dismissed

A complaint may only be dismissed:

- After it has been investigated and
- If an investigation has determined that the complaint cannot be substantiated

Concerns and Complaints

