

ARMADALE PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY
SCHOOL No. 2634

Raising Concerns or Complaints Policy 2015	
Authorisation: By the Armadale Primary School on 30 th November 2015 Recommended: By the Curriculum and Policy Sub –committee November 2015	Review Date: It is recommended that this policy is reviewed by November 2016

1. PURPOSE

To outline procedures within Armadale Primary School for effectively addressing parents' concerns and complaints.

1.1 For the purposes of the policy

- 1.1.1 A 'concern' is an issue of interest (because of its importance and effect) which is raised informally in order to improve or change a situation.
- 1.1.2 A 'complaint' is an expression of grievance or resentment where the complainant is seeking redress or justice

1.2 The school's approach to handling concerns and issues is based on our school values of teamwork, respect, flexibility, support, creativity and relationships through:

- Promoting and modeling the school values in all interactions
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment
- Building relationships between students, parents and staff
- Providing a safe working environment for staff

1.3 This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Student Engagement Policy.

1.4 This policy is based on the [Policy and Guidelines booklet](#) developed by the Department of Education and Training (the Department).

2. OBJECTIVES

This policy provides clear procedures that cover raising concerns or complaints about:

- 2.1 General issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's student engagement policy
- 2.2 Incidents of bullying and harassment in the classroom or schoolyard
- 2.3 Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- 2.4 Communication with parents
- 2.5 School fees and payments
- 2.6 General administrative issues
- 2.7 Any other school-related matters except as detailed below

Matters not covered by this policy and the associated guidelines, for which there are existing rights of review or appeal include:

- 2.8 Student discipline matters involving expulsions
- 2.9 Complaints regarding employee conduct or performance that should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action
- 2.10 Student critical incidents
- 2.11 Other criminal matters.

The Principal or South Eastern Regional Office can advise about specific procedures for complaints of these types.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 EXPECTATIONS

- 3.1.1 Armadale Primary School expects a person raising a concern or complaint (the complainant) to:
- do so in a prompt manner as soon as the issue occurs
 - provide a detailed factual account of the concern via a face-to-face meeting and/or in writing to the appropriate person
 - maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
 - 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 perspective and value difference, rather than judge and blame
 - recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.
- 3.1.2 Armadale Primary School will address any concerns or complaints:
- courteously
 - efficiently
 - fairly
 - promptly or within the suggested timeframe or agreement with the complainant and
 - in accordance with the Department's regulatory framework

3.2 RAISING THE CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

- 3.2.1 A parent can raise a concern or complaint about any aspect of the school's operations
- 3.2.2 In the first instance, a concern or complaint should be made to the school. The complainant should telephone, visit or write to the appropriate contact person as listed in Table 1, below.
- 3.2.3 The complainant should set out the details of the concern or issues via a face-to-face meeting, and/or in writing to the appropriate contact person.

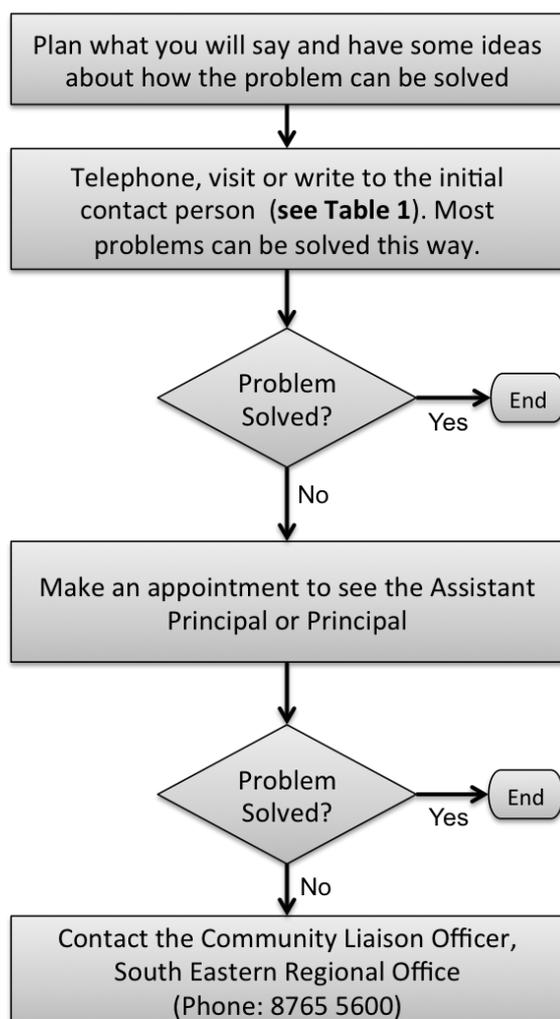
Table 1: Initial Contact person

Type of Concern or Complaint	Initial contact person
Learning issues or student incidents that happen in the classroom	See the class teacher (<i>or specialist teacher where appropriate</i>)
Concerns or incidents that happen outside the classroom	See the class teacher
Concerns or issues where students from several classes are involved (e.g. homework, curriculum)	See the Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator
Concerns relating to staff members	See the Assistant Principal or Principal
Complex student issues	See the Assistant Principal or Principal
Issues relating to student safety and/or grounds and facilities	See the Assistant Principal or Principal
Placement of students in classes for the coming year	See the Principal
Issues relating to school policy or management	See the Principal
Issues related to school-wide communication	See the Principal

For contact details for any staff members, call the office on (03) 9822 7003 or visit the [Armadale Primary School website](#).

- 3.2.4 In cases where the concern or complaint has not been resolved through initial contact, the complainant should make an appointment to see the Assistant Principal or Principal.

Parent Guidelines: Raising a concern or complaint



Note: The Regional Office may refer the concern or complaint to the Group Coordination Division

3.3 HELP WITH RAISING CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

- 3.3.1 Personal support is recommended in situations where the complainant and others involved in the complaint process have emotional issues related to the concern or complaint.
- 3.3.2 The support of an advocate should be enlisted when the complainant feels that they are unable to express their concern clearly. An advocate can be a friend or support person whom the complainant knows personally. Alternatively, an advocate can be someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation who does not receive a fee for service.

3.3.3 The school will ensure that the complainant is aware of these supports.

3.4 MANAGING PARENT CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS INFORMATION

3.4.1 Armadale Primary School will maintain a register of concerns or complaints. However, in the first instance, when the concern or complaint is easily resolved in the telephone call or conversation, a brief note in the diary of the teacher/principal/ assistant principal recording the issue and the resolution may be all that is required.

3.4.2 Where the concern or complaint cannot be easily resolved in a telephone call or conversation, the following details of all concerns or complaints received will be logged in the Armadale Primary Concerns or Complaints Register:

- 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, in writing, by email, by phone)
- A brief description of the concern or complaint
- Details of the designated person responding to the concern or complaint
- Action taken on the concern or complaint
- The outcome of the concern or complaint (e.g. complaint resolved, complaint dismissed, complaint referred to appropriate external agency (e.g. Regional Office))
- Communication made to the complainant regarding the concern or complaint
- Any recommendations for the future improvement in the school's policy and procedures.

3.5 RESOLVING THE CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

3.5.1 Armadale Primary School will make every effort to resolve concerns or complaints before involving any other levels of the Department.

3.5.2 The school will acknowledge all concerns or complaints promptly via email or mail. It will provide the complainant with a timeline for investigating the concern or complaint.

3.5.3 The school will give the complainant a copy of this policy upon receiving the concern or complaint.

3.5.4 The designated person will investigate the concern or complaint and provide a response to the complainant via a face-to-face meeting and/or in writing.

3.5.5 The school will make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible.

3.5.6 Should the concern or complaint involve many students and a range of issues, the school may need more time to investigate and resolve it.

3.5.7 Should the concern or complaint involve complex issues, the school might need to take advice from Department's Regional Office which may take more time. The school will advise the complainant of any new timeline for addressing the concern or complaint and the reasons for any delay. In most cases, the school will try and resolve a concern or complaint within 20 school days.

3.6 RESOLUTION OF CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

3.6.1 If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the school will offer an appropriate resolution in consultation with the complainant. The school will endeavor to keep the complainant up to date with progress during this process.

3.6.2 At its discretion and depending on the circumstances, the school may offer:

- An explanation or further information about the issue
- Mediation, counseling or other support
- An apology, expression of regret or admission of fault
- To change its decision
- To review (and potentially change) its policies, procedures or practices
- To review a debt (such as for school payments)
- A fee refund.

3.6.3 The school will implement the resolution as soon as practicable.

3.7 REFERRAL OF CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

3.7.1 If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by Armadale Primary School, they should contact the Community Liaison Officer at the Department's South Eastern Regional Office on (03) 8765 5600. The officer from the region will 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 did not resolve it to their satisfaction.

3.7.2 If the concern or 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 will 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 and will ask the complainant to outline their view on the course of action required to resolve the concern or complaint. If the complainant is unable to provide a written account the officer from Group Coordination Division should act on the information provided.

3.8 MONITORING CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

3.8.1 The School Council will monitor issues raised through the Concerns or Complaints Policy, and any other relevant information from the parent opinion survey when undertaking a review of the school's policies, procedures and operations.

3.8.2 The school will review concerns or complaints made over time to identify common or recurring issues that may need addressing and assess the effectiveness of these and other procedures and whether they are being followed.

3.9 COMMUNICATION OF THE POLICY

The school will make information about procedures for addressing concerns or complaints readily available to parents and the school community, in clear and easy-to-understand language and, where appropriate, in a range of formats that are accessible to everyone so that no-one is disadvantaged.

The school will:

- 3.9.1 Annually brief all members of staff about its procedures to address concerns or complaints
- 3.9.2 Provide staff with (or provide access to) training and support appropriate to their responsibilities under the procedures
- 3.9.3 Ensure staff who manage complaints demonstrate the personal attributes outlined in the Good Practice Guide: Ombudsman Victoria's guide to complaint handling for Victorian public sector agencies