



Definition:

School Community feedback may be from parents, local community members, other schools or local networks. Feedback may be in the negative or positive and all present opportunities for discussion and improvement within the organisation.

Purpose:

Complaints and grievances need to be heard to enable the issue to be resolved. It is appropriate that a process is in place to resolve issues at the informal and when necessary at the formal level. The aim of the complaints process is to discuss and resolve the matter within a general framework of cooperation. The complaints may give rise to opportunities for improvement within the general structure of the organisation. Where the complaint relates to alleged child abuse the complaint is to be directed immediately to the Principal.

The school's approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on our values of:

- Respect shown for all parties & building positive relationships between students, parents and staff
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment
- Providing a safe work environment for staff.

Guidelines & Implementation:

1. As part of the school community you can expect:

- To receive high quality teaching and learning practices for your child
- To be provided with information about your child's progress.
- The class teacher to develop an individual learning plan if your child is outside the expected level of achievement.
- The staff to care for the safety of your child.
- The staff to listen and treat you with respect and consideration of your needs.
- To gain further consultation with other qualified staff.

2. A complaint or concern may be about:

- General issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's discipline & welfare policy
- Incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or school yard
- Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- Communication with parents
- School fees and payments
- General administrative issues

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTIES IN THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Expectations:

EPS expects a person raising a concern or complaint to:

- Do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue arises
- Provide complete and factual information about the issue
- 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 point of view and value difference
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.

ELSTERNWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

COMMUNITY COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS POLICY



Date passed by School Council: 2016
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The school will address any concerns and complaints received from parents in the following manner:

- Courteously
- Efficiently
- Fairly
- Promptly or within agreed timeline
- In accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework.

Raising concerns or complaints:

The complainant should telephone, visit or write to:

- The student's teacher about learning issues or incidents that happened in their class.
- The Principal or Assistant Principal about issues relating to staff members, complex student issues, school policy or school management.

Complainants 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. A complainant who wishes to use these support services should ensure the person addressing the concern or complaint is aware of their intention and is in agreement.

Stages of the Process:

Stage 1. A school community member can make a complaint in a number of ways:

- A letter
- A phone call
- A personal visit – please make an appointment or speak with the teacher at 8.45am.
- An email (elsternwick.ps.@edumail.vic.gov.au)

The complainant needs to identify themselves with a phone number or email to enable the staff to respond. (Anonymous complaints cannot be followed up for further information or resolution)

It is best that the complaint be identified early to enable a timely resolution.

Sometimes the issue may be painful, difficult or embarrassing, - do not be afraid to discuss the concern. The most suitable staff member will discuss the issue with you.

Stage 2.

If appropriate the complaint will be passed to the class teacher to make contact.

The teacher will organise a further meeting with the appropriate staff, parent and child.

Stage 3. If the issue remains unresolved, the parent can take

- Speak with the Student Support Coordinator, Assistant Principal or Principal.
- Contact the Regional Office : 8765 5600

Stage 4. A written response and plan of action may be provided to the complainant.

A file note of the complaint and resolution will be kept.

Typical time frame:

Initial contact within 48 hours

Investigation 2-5 days - depending upon available staff or visitors

Further contact with parents – 5-20 days

Process:

1. Parent speaks with Teacher - if no resolution
2. Parent speaks with Assistant Principal or Principal. – if not resolution –
3. Parent contact the Regional Office – 03-87655600.



Unreasonable complainant conduct:

All parties are expected to behave with courtesy according to the school values and expected behaviours.

Unreasonable complainant conduct is behaviour that:

- Is clearly and significantly outside the expectations of confidentiality, cooperation, courtesy and respect
- Calls for staff resources and time unjustified by the nature or significance of the complaint
- Is vexatious
- Is orientated towards conflict – eg. Put downs , derogatory language , swearing or physical violence

If this does occur, the follow steps are enacted:

1. A plan to address the complaint and complainant's interaction with the Department.
2. Inform the complainant of the plan.
3. If in the case of violence or threats: Emergency Management Unit is contacted with an outline of relevant details of incident – they contact relevant DET personnel.
4. If a student is the offender - parent is contacted & possible suspension or expulsion occurs.
5. If a parent – a letter is sent with a warning and/ or a trespass notice.
6. If a staff member – local complaints process enacted.
7. Counselling as needed for the relevant parties

Evaluation: Reviewed when needed

Resources:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/community/policyparentsconcerns.pdf>

Ratified: