



COMPLAINT HANDLING POLICY

Rationale

All schools are required to develop, maintain and publicise a fair, effective and efficient complaint-handling process, so that complaints about events or decisions at the school can be addressed.

Purpose

All schools handle stakeholder complaints on a range of matters. Complaints are best addressed in an environment where stakeholders feel able to speak up about issues concerning the education and welfare of students, staff and parents. This is reflected in open, two-way communication within the school, clear roles and responsibilities for all members of the school community, realistic expectations about what can be achieved by the school and an effective, published complaints handling procedure.

Guidelines

Stakeholders of Abbotsford Primary School who have a complaint should, in the first instance, make the complaint to the school, except when the complaint is about the principal of the school. Complaints about the school principal should be referred to the Department of Education and Training (DET) - North Western Victoria Regional Office.

The principal is responsible for the efficient and effective organisation, management and administration of the school including the school's complaint-handling processes.

Information about how stakeholders can make a complaint and have it resolved at Abbotsford Primary School is available on the DET complaints web page.

When addressing a complaint, it is expected that stakeholders will:

- show respect and understanding of each other's point of view;
- operate within applicable legislation;
- acknowledge that their goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties;
- act in good faith and in a calm and courteous manner.
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.

Abbotsford Primary School staff must observe the code of conduct for Victorian public sector employees.

For further information, please see:

[Creating Respectful and Safe School Communities](#)
[Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees](#)

School responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the school to respond to and address written (letter and email) and verbal (face-to-face and phone) complaints raised by stakeholders from their school community.

Abbotsford Primary School will consider complaints by:

- raising the issues in the complaint with relevant staff and/or members of the school community;
- consulting, where appropriate, with relevant sections of the DET and/or external agencies for technical or other advice;
- discussing the school's findings with the person making the complaint in an attempt to reach an agreed resolution;
- considering the engagement of a mediator where a complaint has the potential to become intractable;
- publicising the school's complaint-handling procedures within the school community;
- reviewing the school's complaint-handling procedures regularly;
- ensuring that complaints received are recorded and actions taken to resolve the complaint are well documented;
- actively assisting stakeholders with the complaint process, informing them that at any point of the complaint process they are able to be supported by an advocate/support person.

Refer to Appendix A - Complaint Flowchart

Role of the region

- The principal may contact the regional director and request the region's intervention to help resolve a complaint. The principal would need to have exhausted the school's stakeholder complaint-handling procedures and be of the belief that the complaint would not be able to be resolved at the school level. The stakeholder will be advised that their complaint will be handled by personnel from the region.
- If a stakeholder is not satisfied that their complaint has been resolved by the school, or if their complaint is about the principal of the school, they may refer their complaint to the North West Victoria Region.

Relevant Legislation

All concerns and complaints must be addressed in line with the DET's legislative and regulatory framework which includes:

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Protected Disclosure Act 2012*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Wrongs Act 1958*

This process was ratified by the Abbotsford Primary School Council in March 2017.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four-year review cycle.

COMPLAINT FLOWCHART

