



4.19 COMPLAINT RESOLUTION: PARENTS

POLICY

Beaumaris North Primary School is committed to the facilitation of good communication between parents/carers and the school by providing a complaint resolution process where all parties are treated with dignity and respect.

PURPOSE

The aim of this policy is:

- To ensure parents/carers can access an efficient and transparent process when addressing concerns or making a complaint that is related to the school or their children's education.
- To outline the processes involved in making and addressing a complaint.

EXPECTATIONS

Following the Department of Education & Training (DE&T) Guidelines it is expected that all parties will:

- Maintain the confidentiality of all parties, in line with Departmental policy and legislative requirements.
- Acknowledge that their 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.

The school will address any concerns and complaints received from parents:

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

IMPLEMENTATION

1. A complaint may be made verbally or in writing.
2. A complaint may be withdrawn at any time.

3. A complaint and any resulting actions following will be documented.
4. The school will make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible. If the complaint involves many students and a range of issues, the school will need more time to investigate and resolve it. Should the complaint involve complex issues, the school might need to take advice from the Department's Regional Office which may take more time. The school will tell the complainant the new timeline for addressing the complaint and the reasons for any delays. In all cases, the school will try to resolve a concern or complaint within 20 school days.
5. Mediation between parties will be arranged if required. School Support Staff eg DE&T Guidance Officer, BNPS Wellbeing Officer may be involved in the process.
6. If the concern or complaint is related to their child's education, parents/carers should contact the child's teacher to make an appointment for a meeting. Matters of personal concern that should be raised confidentially and directly with the relevant teacher through an appointment in the first instance include: individual student needs, academic progress, behaviour and student discipline issues, non-attendance or truancy, challenging or changing family circumstances.
 - During the meeting and at all times during the process, confidentiality is essential and must be maintained by both parties.
 - 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.
 - Parents should explain clearly their concern regarding their child's education to the teacher.
 - A plan will be discussed and developed to address the concern or complaint within a reasonable time frame.
 - If parents feel that the concern or complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily, they should inform the teacher that they will be contacting the Principal or Assistant Principal and then an appointment with Principal or Assistant Principal will be arranged.
 - If parents feel that the matter is unresolved at school level, they may wish to discuss it further with the Community Liaison Officer at the Regional Office of the Department of Education & Training.
 - If parents feel that the matter is still unresolved at the Regional level, they may address their complaint in writing to the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

7. Matters of general concern best raised with the school principal through an appointment include: school facilities, canteen management, sports days, excursions, school fees and charges, student assessment and reporting, timing of special events, student-free days, before and after school care, homework policy or student dress codes.
 - During the meeting and at all times during the process confidentiality is essential and must be maintained by the parties concerned.
 - 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.
 - Parents should clearly explain their concern regarding the school policy, individual or preceding incident.
 - If a complaint is made against an individual, that person may be informed of the nature of the complaint and have the right to respond.
 - A plan will be discussed and developed to address the concern or complaint within a reasonable time frame.
 - If parents feel that the concern or complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily at school level, they should inform the Principal or Assistant Principal that they will be contacting the Community Liaison Officer at the Regional Office of the Department of Education and Training.
 - If parents feel that the matter is still unresolved at the Regional level, they may address their complaint in writing to the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.
8. Guidelines for Parents or Guardians in clarifying the issue/incident. Parents /Guardians should:
 - Be clear about the issue or topic you want to discuss.
 - Focus on the things that are genuinely affecting your child.
 - Always remain calm and remember that you may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue you wish to discuss.
 - Think about what would be an acceptable outcome for your child.
 - Be informed. Check or request direction in relation to the school policy relating to the incident.
9. Mediation between parties will be arranged if required. School Support Staff e.g. DE&T Guidance Officer, BNPS Wellbeing Officer may be involved in the process.
10. All parties involved should adhere to the Department of Education's 2006 *Dignity and Respect* Statement located at:
<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/schacc/dignityrespectstatement.pdf>

This policy has been developed under Department of Education and Training guidelines using the following references:

[https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/commrel/contacts/POLICY AND GUIDES Addressing parents concerns.pdf](https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/commrel/contacts/POLICY_AND_GUIDES_Addressing_parents_concerns.pdf)

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/contact/parentcomplainbrochure.pdf>

Ratified by School Council August 2016

Next Review Date 2019