

PARENTS and CARERS - RAISING CONCERNS & GRIEVANCES

POLICY

	FRANKSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL Parents and Carers- Raising Concerns & Grievances	Developed 2018 Review: 2021
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RATIONALE

This policy will assist parents and carers to address the concerns and grievances they may have about their child's education; and assist Frankston Primary School staff to confidently address any concerns or grievances.

AIM:

Frankston Primary School aims to approach the handling of all concerns and complaints based on our values of:

- Providing a safe, supportive and productive learning environment
- Building relationships between students, parents and carers, and staff
- Providing a safe working environment for staff
- Resolving complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to cover concerns and complaints about:

- General issues of student behaviour
- Incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard
- Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- Communication with parents and carers
- School fees and payments
- Any other school-related matters except those detailed below –

This policy *does not* cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in DET policy.

These matters include:

- Student discipline matters involving expulsions
- Complaints about employee conduct or performance
- Complaints by the DET's employees related to their employment
- Student critical matters
- Other criminal matters

This policy is not applicable where a complainant has employed another party to represent them, such as a solicitor – in these circumstances will be referred to the DET's Legal Services Branch.

The Principal will use local complaints resolution procedures, where appropriate, for resolving complaints in relation to issues that fall within the school's area of responsibility. All cases of serious misconduct – sexual offences, criminal charges, or other serious incidents – must instead be referred to DET Complaints and Investigations Unit.

About Parent's and Carer's Concerns and Complaints:

Parents and carer's concerns and complaints most commonly relate to:

- The management of an incident between students at a school
- The educational or other progress of their child
- The development and implementation of school and general education policy.

For the purposes of this policy:

- 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.
- A 'grievance' is an expression of grievance or resentment where the complainant is seeking redress or justice.

The school will address all concerns and complaints in line with the DET's legislative and regulatory framework, which includes the:

- *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.*

Concerns and complaints must be addressed in line with the DET's 2006 *Dignity and Respect Statement*. The statement says that:

- Our school is committed to providing safe and supportive work environments where diversity is valued and everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity.
- Discrimination, sexual and other forms of harassment, bullying, violence and threatening behaviour are unacceptable.
- All employees, students, parents and carers and visitors in our school are expected to behave accordingly.
- Our school and school council, will act to ensure that the safety, security, health and wellbeing of all employees, students, parents and visitors are protected.

When Making a Complaint:

- Parents and carers first point of contact should always be the school
- Concerns are best resolved at the school
- The DET expects that most concerns and complaints will be resolved by the school

IMPLEMENTATION:

HOW SHOULD PARENTS and CARERS RAISE AN ISSUE OR MAKE A COMPLAINT/GRIEVANCE WITH FRANKSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL?

Parents and Carers approaching the school:

- The school recommends for parents and carers to contact the school promptly, as soon as possible after the issue arises
- The school recommends for parents and carers to be clear about the topic or issue they want to discuss, providing complete and factual information – is this an issue where the child’s teacher should be the first point of call and the issue discussed with their child’s teacher first or with the Principal or Assistant Principal
- The school recommends parents and carers to focus on the things that are genuinely affecting their child
- The school understands it can be hard but recommends for parents and carers to remain calm as parents and carers may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or concern they wish to discuss

Frankston Primary School will:

- Address all concerns and complaints courteously, efficiently, fairly and promptly within a reasonable timeframe.
- Maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties at all times.

Contacting Frankston Primary School: There are a number of ways parents and carers can raise any concerns they have about their child and their child’s education:

Parents and carers can -

- Write a note to their child’s teacher outlining concerns
- Make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with their child’s class teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal – staff will return all phone calls in a timely manner to make a suitable meeting time to all parties
- Email the school email account – frankston.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au

The school will:

- Ensure all concerns and grievances are noted and acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint – this may involve the staff member referring the concern or grievance to the most appropriate staff member for resolving the concern/grievance
- The school will make every attempt to resolve a concern or grievance as quickly as possible. If a concern/grievance involves many students or a range of issues, the school will need more time to investigate and resolve it
- The school will communicate to the parent and carer the process and timeframe for addressing their specific concern or complaint
- The school will make every effort to resolve concerns and grievances before involving other levels of the DET
- The school will not respond to any correspondence either verbally or in written form that is defamatory or uses abusive or threatening language.

- Staff who are responding to a complaint via telephone and feel threatened or abused may advise the parent/carer that the conversation will be terminated and referred to the Principal.

Remedies:

If a concern or grievance is substantiated in whole or part, the school will offer an appropriate remedy. For example, at its discretion and depending on the circumstances, the school might offer:

- An explanation or further information about the issue
- Restorative Conferences, mediation, counselling or other support
- An apology, expression of regret or admission of fault
- To change a decision

The school will implement the remedy as soon as practicable.

Referral of Concerns or Complaints:

If a parent or carer with a concern or grievance is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, they may contact the DET’s appropriate regional office.

If the complaint cannot be resolved by the complainant, school and regional office working together, the regional office may refer it to the DET’s Group Coordination Division.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Parents and Carers are able to access the DET’s policy and more information about parents raising concerns and complaints via the DET website: www.education.vic.gov.au – Parents/Parent Complaints.

[Parent Complaints - Government Schools](#) - a website for parents outlining the Department's complaint process. Includes advice on how to raise concerns.

[Parent Complaints - Government Schools - General Information](#) - a downloadable brochure for parents providing information about the Department's complaints process.

DEVELOPED	2018
PRINCIPAL	Renée Kennedy
SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT	Chad Wilson
EVALUATION	This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three year review cycle, or as required due to changes in relevant Acts, Laws, DET mandates, or should situations arise that require earlier consideration.

