



FRANKSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Parent Concerns and Complaints Policy

Developed
2019
Review:
2022

Rationale

This policy is intended to support the resolution of complaints in a manner that enables students, families, schools and the community to maintain a positive relationship and active engagement in education.

Definition:

A 'parent' – a person in relation to a child, includes a guardian and any person who has parental responsibility for the child including parental responsibility under the Family Law Act of the Commonwealth, and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

This also applies to:

- A person who is authorised to act on behalf of the parent such as a support person or an advocate
- A mature minor student (refer to Mature Minor DET Policy)
- An adult student

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 DET policy and relative legislation.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the concerns and complaints process at Frankston Primary School so that parents and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school
- ensure that all concerns and complaints regarding Frankston Primary School are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

Scope

This policy relates to concerns and complaints brought by parents, carers, students or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school.

In some limited instances, we may need to refer the complainant to another Department of Education and Training (DET) process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions.

These matters may include existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in DET policy, such as:

- Student discipline matters involving expulsions
- Employee conduct or performance
- Student critical matters
- Other criminal matters

Implementation

Frankston Primary School welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our families and are committed to understanding concerns and complaints and addressing them appropriately. We recognise that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

We value and encourage open and positive relationships with our school community and understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

When addressing a concern or complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- be considerate of each other's views and respect each other's role
- be focused on resolution of the complaint, with the interests of the student involved at the centre
- act in good faith and cooperation
- behave with respect and courtesy
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- operate within and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with any applicable legislation and Department policy.
- recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

Frankston Primary School encourages parents, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- Carefully consider the issue you would like to discuss and contact the school promptly after the issue arises
- Be clear about the topic or issue – and remember you may not have all the facts relating to the issue that you want to raise
- Consider 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
- Think about how the matter may be resolved
- Be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the Department of Education and Training and Frankston Primary School.

Complaints process

Frankston Primary School is always happy to discuss with parents, carers and community members any concerns that they may have. 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 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 or in person and feel threatened or abused, may advise the parent/carer that the conversation will be terminated and referred to the Principal or other appropriate authorities.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the Principal or Assistant Principal.

If you would like to make a formal complaint, in most cases, depending on the nature of the complaint raised, our school will first seek to understand the issues and will then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint together. The following process will apply:

Complaint received:

- Either email the school, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the Principal or Assistant Principal to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand the concern or complaint.

Information gathering:

- Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Principal, Assistant Principal or nominee if more appropriate, may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.

Response:

- Where possible, a face-to-face resolution meeting will be arranged to discuss the concern or complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. In some circumstances, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate and alternate communication will be utilised.

Timelines:

- Frankston Primary School will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within two school days) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner.
- Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Frankston Primary School may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. We will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting where appropriate within 10 working days of the complaint being raised.
- In situations where further time is required, Frankston Primary School will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Resolution

If a concern or grievance is substantiated in whole or part, the school may seek to resolve a concern or complaint by:

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

- A change of decision
- A change of policy, procedure or practice
- Other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

Escalation

If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved by the school, or if your complaint is about the Principal and you do not want to raise it directly with them, then the complaint may contact the DET's appropriate regional office.

Frankston Primary School may also refer a parent complaint to our South Eastern Victorian Regional Office if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

Further information

For more information about the Department's *Parent Complaints* policy, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Parent complaints policy](#).

DEVELOPED	2019
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.