

PARENT CARER COMPLAINT POLICY

General Statement

Hume Valley School has values, which underpin all its operations. These values are respect, responsibility, acceptance, caring, fairness, and honesty. The values are expected to be exhibited in all interactions between members of the school community – students, staff and parents.

Rationale

The procedures described in this policy are for those times when parents/carers have concerns they wish to discuss with teachers and/or the principal. These procedures cover concerns and complaints about:

- learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning,
- communication with parents,
- general administrative issues,
- general issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's code of conduct,
- incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard,
- school fees and payments,
- any other school-related matters except as detailed below.

These procedures do not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the School Policy and Advisory Guide. These matters include:

- student discipline matters involving expulsions,
- student critical incident matters,
- other criminal matters.

Implementation

Expectations of parents/carers

The school expects a person raising a concern or complaint to:

- do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs,
- provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint,
- 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.

Raising a concern

Parents/carers should first raise concerns with:

- class teacher regarding learning issues and incidents which occurred within the class,
- sub school leader if students from more than one group are involved,
- the assistant principal regarding issues relating to staff members or complex student issues,
- the principal or campus principal regarding issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or other complex student issues.

Before parents/carers approach the school or child's teacher, they should:

- be clear about the topic or issue,
- focus on the things that are genuinely affecting their child,
- remain calm and remember they may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue,
- think about what would be an acceptable outcome for themselves and their child.

Expectations of the school

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

- courteously,
- efficiently,
- fairly,
- promptly, or within the timeline agreed upon with the person raising the concern or complaint,
- in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework.

Procedures

1. Contact the school

There are a number of ways parents/carers can raise concerns about their child and their education. Parents/carers may:

- write a note to their child's teacher outlining their concerns,
- make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with the class teacher, the sub-school leader ensuring that they inform the school about the issue they wish to discuss,
- consider speaking with the school's student welfare coordinator,
- arrange a meeting time or phone call through the school office (this is more convenient for both parents/carers and staff in minimising interruptions for teachers during the time they need to be with their students),
- contact the class teacher or Sub School Leader, together with any others who may be involved, and provide them with a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address concerns.

2. Contact the principal or assistant principal

Most concerns are resolved by following the first two steps listed above; however, if the issue remains unresolved parents/carers may then ask to see the assistant principal or principal. To do this, they will need to request an appointment through the school office. Please note that:

- the principal may ask another senior staff member to speak with parents/carers on their behalf,
- if a teacher is going to be present at the meeting it is more likely to occur outside of classroom hours,
- if the concern is related to issues of school policy, these should be raised more formally (in writing) with the principal or the school council.

3. Contact the regional office

If after following the above processes parents/carers feel that their complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily they may then contact the relevant regional office (North Western Victorian Region). A regional community liaison officer will be able to provide advice and assistance and, if required, direct complaints to other regional staff to respond. If the complaint is referred to the regional director they will ensure any formal written complaint is reviewed. It is the regional office's responsibility to:

- ensure that complaints, wherever possible, are resolved at the school,
- ensure that procedures at the school are in accordance with the Department's regulatory framework.

4. Contact the Department's central office

Contact with the Department's central office should only take place if all other steps have not led to a satisfactory resolution. Where possible, all contact should be in writing.

There is a *Complaint Lodgement Form* available for parents/carers to use, <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx>.

This form should be used only when all avenues to have a complaint resolved at the school have been exhausted and parents/carers wish to register a complaint in writing with the school's Regional Office or with the Office for Government School Education.

References

School Policy and Advisory Guide.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complaintslanding.aspx>

Evaluation

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

Ratified By Hume Valley School Council	May 2016
Review Date:	May 2019