

Grievance and Complaints Procedures

Koroit and District Primary School

Rationale:

At Koroit and District Primary School we aim for a positive and supportive working environment for all members of our school community. We respect the rights of members of our school community to make a complaint and manage grievances in a respectful, confidential, impartial and timely manner that reflect the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.

Koroit and District Primary School is open to the concerns of parents and students and any complaints will be received in a positive manner and will be taken seriously.

Aims:

Koroit and District Primary School has both a desire and a responsibility to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained by staff, parents and students at all times, and that complaints are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.

Our approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on our intention:

- To provide a safe and supportive learning environment.
- To build positive and genuine relationships between students, parents and staff.
- To provide a safe working environment for all staff.
- To resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with DET guidelines.

Implementation:

The Principal is required to use the local complaints resolution procedure, where appropriate, for resolving complaints in relation to issues that fall within our school's area of responsibility.

All cases of serious misconduct: sexual offences, criminal charges, or other serious incidents must be referred to the DET Conduct and Ethics Branch.

It is incumbent upon the Principal to act where unacceptable conduct is observed or brought to his or her attention.

A complainant may, at any stage, choose to take their complaint directly to an external agency such as the Victorian Institute of Teachers, Merit Protection Boards, Australian Education Union, Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission or the Ombudsman.

It is important that all complaints, ensuing procedures and outcomes are fully documented.

The Principal may choose to respond to a complaint through an informal process in cases where the complaint is minor, the complainant wishes the matter to be dealt with informally or the complaint has arisen from lack of or unclear communication.

Formal processes will be used when informal processes haven't been successful, a complainant seeks a formal process, or the Principal believes the complaint warrants formal investigation.

Full details regarding formal complaint resolution procedures are contained within the DET 'Local Complaints Resolution Procedures' handbook, and contain the following steps:

- 1) Investigating the complaint including formal interviews, written statements, conveying the details of the complaint to the respondent in writing, providing the opportunity for a written response.
- 2) Dismissing or accepting the complaint. Acceptance may involve the Complaints & Investigations Unit, verbal or written warnings, conciliation, or counselling etc.
- 3) Preparation of a detailed confidential report.
- 4) Monitoring of the situation.

Parties dissatisfied with the process can appeal to the previously mentioned external agencies.

All matters must be treated with utmost confidentiality, and professional respect at all times.

Our school Council President may be informed of complaints at the discretion of the principal and, within the guidelines of DET Policy.

Our school will:

Make information about procedures for addressing concerns and complaints readily available to parents and the school community, in clear and easy-to-understand language.

The information will include:

- 1) How a person can make a complaint.
- 2) The person's responsibilities.
- 3) Information to be provided by the person.
- 4) Who the person should contact and their contact details.
- 5) The process and timeframes for managing complaints.

Our school's procedures for addressing concerns and complaints will be:

- Published on the school's website.

Brief all members of staff (including volunteers) about its procedures to address concerns and complaints annually.

Provide staff with (or provide access to) training and support appropriate to their responsibilities under the procedures

Ensure staff who manage complaints demonstrate the personal attributes outlined in the good practice guide (Ombudsman Victoria's guide to complaint handling for Victorian public sector agencies).

Evaluation

Our school will monitor parent concerns and complaints and consider issues raised through the parent complaints process, and any other relevant information from the parent opinion survey, when undertaking a review of the school's policies, procedures and operations.

The school will review its information about complaints made over time to:

- Identify common or recurring issues that may need addressing.
- Assess the effectiveness of these and other procedures and whether they are being followed.
- Use information provided to the school through the parent opinion survey on the views of parents.

The Koroit and District primary School's Complaints and Grievances Policy will be reviewed as per School Council Policy and School Council will evaluate its relevance in line with DET guidelines and community expectations as represented by parent members on School Council.

The School Council will regularly review its policy and procedures to effectively address parent concerns and complaints as part of its cyclic policy and procedures review schedule.

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

REFERENCES

DET: Addressing parents' concerns and complaints effectively: policy and guides

Approved by School Council on	18 th April, 2017
Review Date	April, 2020

