

<b>Bundoora Primary School</b>  Policy Manual	<b>MANAGEMENT POLICY</b>  Complaints and Grievances Policy	<b>Last ratified by School Council in:</b>  28 <sup>th</sup> March 2018
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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The purpose of this policy is to:

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

## **GUIDELINES**

This policy relates to 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 process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions, for example, expulsion appeals.

Bundoora Primary School welcomes feedback, both positive and corrective, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our families and are committed to understanding 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 within our school community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

## **PROGRAM**

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

- raise and discuss issues in a courteous and respectful manner;
- acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome that is in the affected student or person's best interests and acceptable to all parties;
- act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate;
- recognise that all parties, including members of the broader school community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced;
- recognise that schools and the Department of Education and Training may be subject to legal constraints regarding their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

## **Preparation for raising a concern or complaint**

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

- carefully consider the issues they would like to discuss;
- remember that they may not be privy to all of the facts relating to the issue being raised;
- think about how the matter might be resolved;
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the DET and Bundoora Primary School.

## Complaints process

Bundoora Primary School is always willing to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. A parent or carer's concern relating to their child should, in the first instance, be directed to the child's teacher. Where this is not possible, or if the concerned party is not satisfied with the teacher's response, the matter should be directed to the Year Level Coordinators (Professional Learning Team {PLT} Leaders.) Where ever possible, school staff will work with the concerned party to ensure that all issues raised are appropriately addressed.

Where concerns are believed to have not been resolved as outlined above, parents and carers or community members may wish to meet with the Principal or Assistant Principal to raise their concerns.

If members of the school community wish to make a formal complaint, in most cases - depending on the nature of the complaint raised – Bundoora Primary School will first seek to understand the issue and then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

The following process will apply in the case of a formal complaint:

1. **Complaint received:** To arrange a meeting with the Assistant Principal or Principal, to outline the complaint, the concerned party should email, telephone or schedule a meeting through the front office. During the meeting, the aim will be to hear details of the concerned party's issue. If it is more convenient for the complainant, they may put their concerns in writing to the Assistant Principal or Principal.
2. **Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Principal, Assistant Principal or nominee 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.
3. **Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Assistant Principal/Principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. If, after the resolution meeting, a mutually satisfactory outcome is not reached, the Assistant Principal/Principal will work with the complainant to produce a written summary of the complaint that may be required if further action is to be taken. In some circumstances, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
4. **Timelines:** Bundoora Primary School will acknowledge receipt of a complaint as soon as possible (usually within 48 hours) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, the school may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of the issue.

Bundoora Primary School 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, the school will consult with the complainant and discuss any interim solutions, relevant to the circumstances, that can be put in place.

## **Resolution**

Where appropriate, Bundoora Primary School may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- an apology or expression of regret;
- a change of decision;
- a change of policy, procedure or practice;
- offering the opportunity for student counselling or other support;
- other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent/carer and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, Bundoora Primary School may also ask a complainant to attend a meeting with an independent third party or participate in mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute.

## **Escalation**

If a parent/carer or community member is not satisfied that their complaint has been resolved by the school, or if their complaint is about the Principal, then the complaint should be referred to the North West Region of the Department of Education and Training by contacting 03 9488 9488 or emailing [nwvr@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:nwvr@edumail.vic.gov.au).

Bundoora Primary School may also refer a complaint to North West Region, if the school believes that all measure to address the complaint have been exhausted and the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome.

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

## **EVALUATION**

The *Complaints and Grievances Policy* and Procedures will be reviewed regularly, as part of the school's policy review process.

This policy was last updated in March 2018 and is scheduled for review in 2020.