

## Complaints Resolution Policy

### Background

Huntingdale Primary School welcomes feedback 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 with 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.

When addressing a 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.

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 a complainant to another policy or area if there are different processes in place to manage the issue including:

- Complaints and concerns relating to fraud and corruption will be managed in accordance with the department's [Fraud and Corruption Policy](#)
- Criminal matters will be referred to Victorian Police
- Legal claims will be referred to the Department's Legal Division
- Complaints and concerns relating to child abuse will be managed in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office



## **Purpose**

To:

- Provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment.
- Provide an outline of the complaints process at Huntingdale Primary School so that parents, students and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school
- Ensure that all complaints and concerns regarding Huntingdale Primary School are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.
- Resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with Department of Education and Training's (DET) procedures.
- Implement DET's Values of Accountability, Human Rights, Impartiality, Integrity, Leadership, Respect and Responsiveness.

## **Implementation**

- The Principal has the overall responsibility of implementing this policy, but may delegate certain roles to suitably qualified staff.
- The school will provide parents with at the start of each year a 'Communication between home and School' document. This outlines who parents should contact if they have a question or complaint.
- The classroom teacher/s should be the first point of contact for all complaints. If the parent feels the complaint has not been resolved, they should then contact the Assistant Principal for further advice. All serious issues of misconduct should be made directly to the Principal.

## **Complaints and concerns process for students**

- Huntingdale Primary School acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning.
- We encourage our students to raise issues or concerns as they arise so that we can work together to resolve them.
- Students with a concern or complaint can raise them with a trusted adult at school, for example, with their classroom teacher, the Assistant Principal and Principal. This person will take the concern or complaint seriously and will explain to you what steps can be taken to try to resolve the issue and support the student.
- Students can also ask a parent, carer or another trusted adult outside of the school, to talk to the school about the issue instead. Information about our parent/carer complaints and concerns process is outlined further below. The parent/carer process also applies to students who are mature minors, refer to: [Mature Minors and Decision Making](#).
- Other ways students can raise a concern or complaint with us include:
  - Talking to a school captain or a member of the Student Leadership Council about your concern and any suggestions you have for resolving it and asking them to speak to the Principal or Assistant Principal
  - Participating in our Attitudes to School Survey (for Grades 4-6)
  - Writing a note and placing it in the box at the office- the Office Manager will pass it on



Further information and resources to support students to raise issues or concerns are available at:

- [Report Racism Hotline](#) (call 1800 722 476) – this hotline enables students to report concerns relating to racism or religious discrimination
- [Reach Out](#)
- [Headspace](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#) (call 1800 55 1800)
- [Victorian Aboriginal Education Association \(VAEAI\)](#)

### **Complaints and concerns process for parents, carers and community members**

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

- Huntingdale Primary School encourages parents, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:
  - Carefully consider the issues you would like to discuss
  - Remember you may not have all the facts relating to the issues that you want to raise
  - Think about how the matter could be resolved
  - Be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the DET
  -

#### **Support person**

- Parents are welcome to have a support person to assist you in raising a complaint or concern with our school.
- Please advise us if you wish to have a support person to assist you, and provide their name, contact details, and their relationship to you.

#### **Raising a concern**

- Huntingdale School is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have.
- Please consult the 'Communication between home and School' to see who you should direct your concern to
- Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

#### **Making a complaint**

- 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

- Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the Assistant Principal or Principal, to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are. We can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether online, in person or over the phone. We will:
  - Listen and acknowledge the situation
  - Answer questions that they can at the time
  - Discuss a plan of action, for example, investigating further. An agreed time will be negotiated to be able to complete agreed actions.

### 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.

### Response and Resolution

- 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 we are unable to resolve the complaint together, we will work with you to provide a summary of the complaint in the event you would like to take further action about it.
- In some circumstances, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.

### Timelines

- Huntingdale Primary School will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner.
- Depending on the complexity of the complaint, we 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, we will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

### Resolution

Where appropriate, Huntingdale 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 and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

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



## 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 should be referred to the North Eastern Victorian Regional Office **Phone:** 1300 333 231  
**Email:** [nevr@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:nevr@edumail.vic.gov.au)
- Huntingdale Primary School may also refer a complaint to the North Eastern Victoria Regional Office if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.
- For more information about the Department's *Parent Complaints* policy, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Parent Complaints policy](#).

## Record keeping and other requirements

To meet Department and legal requirements, our school must keep written records of:

- Serious, substantial or unusual complaints
- Complaints relating to the Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, to meet regulatory requirements - refer to Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes for further information
  
- Our school also follows Department policy to ensure that record-keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints or concerns.
- Complaints will be documented by staff.
- All matters must be treated with utmost confidentiality, and professional respect at all times.
- International Students also have a specific website for managing complaints  
<http://study.vic.gov.au/en/brochures-and-forms/Pages/BrochureForms.aspx>

## Further information and Resources

The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

- [Complaints - Parents](#)

The Department's parents' website:

- [Raise a complaint or concern about your school](#)
- [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this policy:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

## Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every two years or following a relevant child safety incident or as needed to comply with DET policy changes.



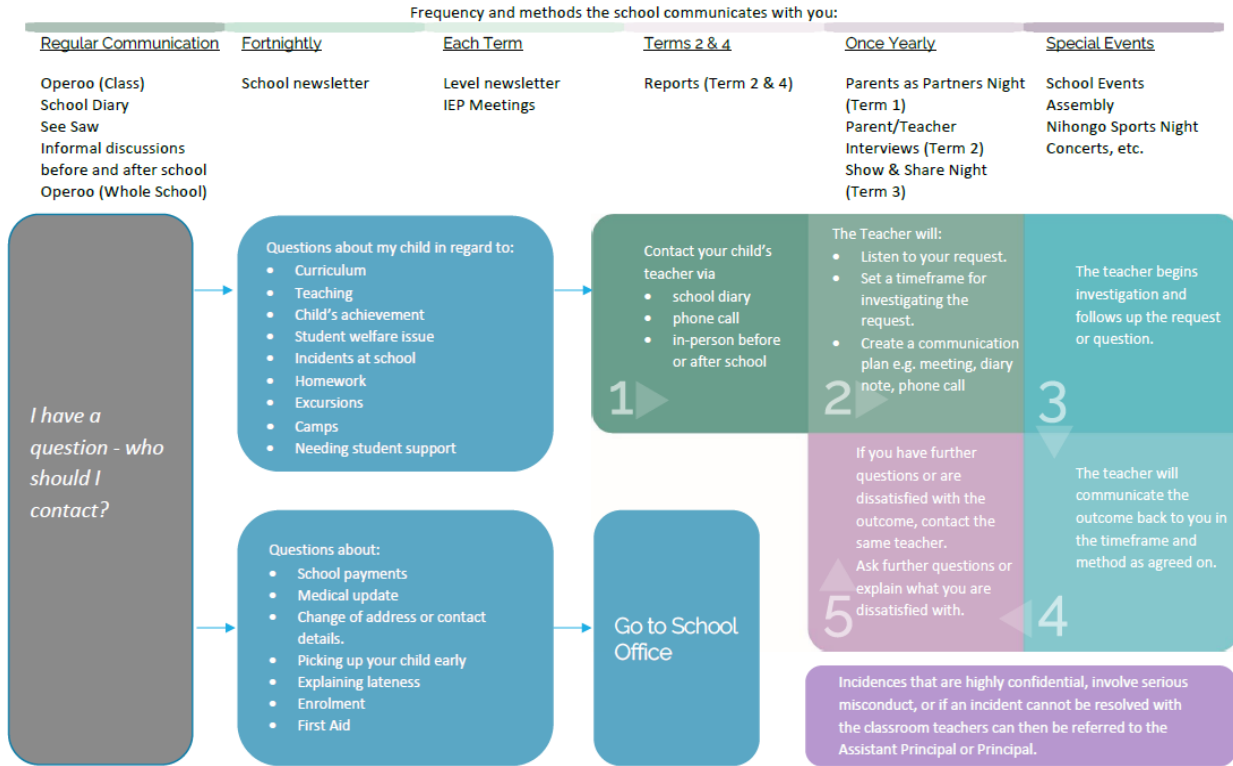
### Document Status

Policy last reviewed	21 June 2022
Consultation	21 June- School Community (Operoo), Staff (email) <u>Previous</u> Principal 26 April 2021 Education & Future Directions sub-committee 28 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 Education & Future Directions sub-committee May 21, 2019 February 2018
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2024



## 2022 Communication between home and school for Parents

Your classroom teacher offers you a range of opportunities to communicate with them.



Incidents that are highly confidential, involve serious misconduct, or if an incident cannot be resolved with the classroom teachers can then be referred to the Assistant Principal or Principal.

## 2022 Communication between home and school for Teachers

You should make every effort to communicate with the parents regularly and positively in your classroom. The classroom teacher is the first port of call for parents, and they will come to you with many questions, requests, comments, and stories!

