

Parent Concerns and Complaints Policy

Rationale:

- Kingsville Primary School recognises that the involvement of parents in their child's education and the development of strong family-school partnerships is important for children's development and learning. Kingsville also recognises that in all partnerships there may be times of disagreement and issues of concern that will need to be resolved. This policy provides the Kingsville community with a procedure for investigating parent concerns and complaints.

Aims:

- To provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment.
- To resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.

Implementation:

Parents wishing to raise a concern or complaint should contact Kingsville Primary School in the first instance and telephone, visit or write to:

- the student's teacher, if the issue occurred in the student's class or group
- the year level coordinator, if students from several classes are involved
- the Assistant Principal, if the issue relates to staff members or complex student issues
- the Principal, if the issue relates to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex student issues

If the complainant is not sure whom to contact, they should contact the Assistant Principal.

The office is able to provide contact details for all staff members.

The school's contact details are:

- Phone: 93145869
- Email: kingsville.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au

Parents may seek the services of an advocate if they feel they are unable to clearly express their concerns. An advocate can be a friend, colleague or someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation that does not receive a fee for service.

All parties involved in addressing a complaint may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty in coming to an agreement.

Expectations:

Kingsville expects a parent 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, rather than judge and blame
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced

- exercise patience and respect for the subsequent process of assessment and reconciliation undertaken

Kingsville will address any concerns and complaints received from parents:

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

Addressing Concerns and Complaints:

Kingsville will record the following details of all complaints received, even if the complaint is minor:

- name and contact details (with permission) of the person with a concern or complaint
- the date the concern or complaint was made
- a brief description of the concern or complaint
- action taken on the concern or complaint
- the outcome of action taken on the concern or complaint
- any recommendations for future improvement in school's policy or procedures

Kingsville will:

- make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the Department
- determine whether a concern or complaint should be managed through the school's concerns and complaints process or through other complaints processes of the Department
- act on all complaints promptly, by the staff member who receives the complaint and by any staff to whom the complaint is referred on to
- make every effort to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible

Outcomes and Remedies:

Complaint Substantiated

If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, Kingsville Primary School will offer an appropriate resolution. For example, at its discretion and depending on the circumstances, the school may offer:

- an explanation or further information about the issue
- mediation, counselling or other support
- an apology, expression of regret or admission of fault
- to change its decision
- to change its policies, procedures or practice
- to cancel a debt (such as for school payments)
- a fee refund

The remedy will be implemented as soon as practicable.

Complaint Dismissed

A complaint can only be dismissed:

- After it has been investigated
- If an investigation has determined that the complaint cannot be substantiated or
- If on investigation and explanation, the complainant withdraws the complaint

An explanation will be given to the complainant of why the complaint has been

dismissed.

Complaint Unresolved

A complaint is considered to be unresolved if the complainant does not agree on a course of action and/or remedy, or if remedy cannot be implemented. In such cases, Kingsville must involve the Department's Regional Office to assist in resolving the complaint.

It may not be possible to fully resolve all complaints to the complainant's satisfaction. This may happen if the complainant has unreasonable expectations or if the Department's policies or regulations are contrary to their views.

Anonymous Complaints

Kingsville Primary School is required to investigate all complaints. However, staff may not be able to fully investigate a complaint if they cannot effectively liaise with the complainant.

Furthermore, anonymous complaints raise issues of natural justice for respondents who have a right to know particulars of the allegations made against them. The Principal should determine the extent to which an anonymous complaint received by the school shall be investigated. If the anonymous complaint involves the Principal the Department's Regional Director should make the decision whether it is to be investigated.

Complaints or Concerns about the Principal

In the first instance, the Parent is encouraged to raise the matter with the Principal. If the Parent feels unable to do this, or is unsatisfied with the Principal response, then the Parent should raise the matter with the regional office.

Unreasonable Complainant Conduct

The Principal can determine if a complainant's conduct is unreasonable. Unreasonable complainant conduct is behaviour that:

- Is clearly and significantly outside the expectations of confidentiality, cooperation, courtesy and respect
- Calls for staff resources and time unjustified by the nature or significance of the complaint
- Is vexatious (that is, an action or complaint that is brought without merit, often to cause annoyance to another person)
- Is orientated towards conflict.

(Refer to Unreasonable complaint conduct: interim practice manual at www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au)

If the Principal determines a complainant conduct is unreasonable they will:

- develop a plan to address the complaint and complainant's interaction with staff
- inform the complainant of the plan
- ensure all staff adhere to the plan as closely as possible

Advice may need to be sought from the Department of Education and Training regional director. If the complainant uses threatening and violent behaviour all Department of Education and Training employees should follow the Occupational Violence Policy.

Referral of Concerns and Complaints

If a parent with a concern or complaint is not satisfied following the investigation and complaints process with the outcome determined by the school, they should contact the Department's Regional Office.

Further Information

Further information about the Department's complaints policy and procedures can be found at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/parentcomplaints.aspx>

At this site there are links to Parents Complaints - further resources and information. Communication:

Kingsville Primary School will make information about the procedures for addressing concerns and complaints readily available to parents and the school community. This policy will be published on the school website and will be available at the school office.

Last Reviewed: 2018	Next Review: 2020
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