



Complaints Policy

Rationale

A complaint may be of a minor or a serious nature.

It may concern:

- A school policy which is seen as unfair or unreasonable,
- A decision which is seen as unfair or unreasonable,
- Unprofessional conduct by staff,
- Discrimination,
- Harassment, or
- A particular incident at the school.

Hesket Primary School and the Department of Education and Training (DET) expect that all staff and members of the school community develop relationships based on dignity and respect.

Hesket Primary School and DET is committed to providing safe and supportive work environments where diversity is valued and everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity.

Discrimination, sexual and other forms of harassment, bullying, violence and threatening behaviour are unacceptable. All employees, students, parents and visitors in our school and other DET workplaces are expected to act accordingly.

The Department (which includes this school and its School Council), will act to ensure that the safety, security, health and wellbeing of all employees, students, parents and visitors in the school and other DET workplaces are protected.

Aims

- To ensure that effective protocols for dealing with different kinds of complaints are followed and clearly communicated to the school community
- To ensure that all complaints are dealt with promptly in a fair and consistent manner
- To promote the spirit of cooperation in the resolution of complaints
- To support the school's interactions with the parent community through the provision of guidelines and procedures that will assist in the resolution of complaints from students, parents, community members and staff.

Implementation

- Complaints will be dealt with promptly and in a fair and consistent manner.
- Everyone has the right to be heard and have his or her opinions considered.
- The school community will be educated in raising issues and concerns appropriately and to understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Processes within the DET publications, Local Complaints Resolution Procedures, and Managing Unsatisfactory Performance will be adhered to.
- All members of the school community have the right to take their complaint to an appropriate external agency.
- All complaints ultimately must be resolved at the school level and the Principal is the key person in seeking a satisfactory outcome.
- Parents will be informed via the newsletter of the Complaints Resolution Policy and protocols.
- Complaints Resolution information will be available from the school office and the DEECD website (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/pcschools.htm>) at all times.
- School Councillors and staff will actively support and reinforce the policy and protocols with all members of the school community.

Procedures for Raising Concerns

- Raise the matter with the school via personal contact, telephone, diary entry or written communication.
- Speak with the most appropriate person to deal with the concern. The school can advise on this.
- If the issue is not resolved make an appointment to speak with the Principal.
- The School and complainant will monitor the situation with follow up phone calls or meetings if required.
- Support of outside agencies such as guidance officers or social workers may be required.
- If the matter is still unresolved the Principal or complainant can seek advice from the Regional Office.
- If the matter is unresolved at the Regional level, complaints can be addressed in writing to the Deputy Secretary, Office for Government School Education, c/o Manager, Community and Stakeholder Relations Branch, 33 St Andrews Place, East Melbourne VIC 3000.

<p>Informal resolution An informal process may be used where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. The complaint is of a minor natureb. The complainant wishes the matter dealt with informallyc. The complaint has arisen from lack of or unclear communication. <p>Informal resolution may involve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Discussion between one or more partiesb. The complainant dealing with the situation themselves but seeking advice as to possible strategies to resolve the matterc. The complainant asking another person to speak on their behalfd. Where an informal process of complaints resolution is not successful, and the complainant wishes to pursue the matter, the Principal will implement the formal process.	<p>Formal Process</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A complaint of a serious nature needs to be raised with the Principal.2. The formal process comprises the following steps:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Investigating the complaintb) Determining the appropriate action (dismiss or accept the complaint)c) Preparing a reportd) Monitoring the situatione) Where the Principal is the subject of a serious complaint, the matter must be referred to the Regional General Manager.f) In cases of serious misconduct by a staff member, the Principal must contact the Department's Complaints and Investigations Unit. Such serious incidents include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Sexual or criminal allegations,○ Serious negligence,○ Harassment,○ Drug or alcohol misuse.
--	--

Outcomes

- All members of the school community will be aware of their rights and responsibilities in raising concerns.
- All members of the school community will be informed of the appropriate persons to approach with concerns.
- Ideally, resolutions will be achieved which are mutually acceptable to both parties.
- Concerns will be dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently.
- Unnecessary escalation of the situation will be minimised.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3-4 years as part of the Heskett Primary School's review cycle.