

# COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY





For annual review, or as deemed necessary based on Department of Education policy updates

POLICY UPDATE		
POLICY	DATE	BY WHOM
Complaints Mgt	7 Feb 2018	Niel Smith

## **RATIONALE**

West Greenwood Primary School exists for the betterment of all of its stakeholders. If and when disputes or complaints arise, it is incumbent upon us to investigate and, where possible, resolve the situations as efficiently as possible. The collaboration between the school community and the wider community is an important part of that process whereby the transparency and fairness of the procedures are clearly understood by all parties.

## **GUIDELINES**

- Staff at West Greenwood Primary School are responsible for managing the resolution of disputes and complaints lodged with us.
- We will make every effort to resolve disputes and complaints lodged with us promptly according to the principles of procedural fairness.
- In instances where a complaint or dispute cannot be resolved, the complainant, Principal or Regional Executive Director can forward written complaints to the Director General of the Department of Education and Training.
- Complaints judged to be vexatious, trivial or without substance, or where no further action is warranted will not be progressed. You will be advised of this decision in writing.

### **Making a Complaint**

Complaints can be made :

Verbally;  
by letter; or  
by email.

Help is available at West Greenwood Primary School to support complainants to formulate, write and lodge a complaint. Complaints can be lodged with the school using any of the contact methods listed above.

The following information should be provided when making a complaint:

- your name and contact details;
- copies of any relevant correspondence or documents relating directly to the complaint;
- the nature of the complaint; and
- what you consider is needed to resolve the complaint.

In the case of a verbal complaint where you do not want to be identified or to lodge the complaint in writing, we will endeavour to work directly with you to resolve the matter.

### **Responsiveness**

- We will acknowledge written complaints within 2 school days. We seek to resolve local complaints within 14 days. If, because of the serious nature of the complaint, it is deemed necessary to forward it to another section of the Department, we will do this without delay. In all cases, you will be kept informed of the progress of your complaint.

### **Enquiring on a complaints progress**

- You may enquire as to the progress of your complaint at any time by directly contacting the appropriate person. At the time of lodging a verbal complaint, or in the acknowledgement letter for a written complaint, this person will be identified for you.

### **Outcome of a complaint**

- If you are dissatisfied with West Greenwood Primary School's attempts to resolve your complaint, you may wish to escalate your concerns to the North Metropolitan Education Regional Office. Information for escalating a concern complaint can be obtained from NMERO on 9285 3600

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Information for Parents
2. Complaints Resolution Flowchart

## APPENDIX 1 INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

### TALKING TO YOUR SCHOOL

#### INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the home and the school plays a very important part in a child's education. We can not overestimate the critical role parents play in successful learning: parents contribute much to their child's development and are among the most important influences on the way in which the child approaches learning.

Teachers are responsible for the more formal aspects of children's learning, and successful teaching builds on the home experiences of the child. This is most effective where there is an active partnership with parents.

Two-way communication is a critical factor in the partnership between parents and the school. Where a partnership exists, it is easier for parents to feel confident about the teaching and learning taking place in the classroom and to solve problems.

#### WHAT MIGHT YOU TALK TO YOUR SCHOOL ABOUT?

##### *Issues particular to your child:*

attitude;  
academic progress;  
participation;  
behaviour;  
how he/she gets along with teachers and other students socially and emotionally;  
physical development and well-being;  
development of responsibility;  
non-attendance or truancy; and  
learning program issues.

##### *School or class issues:*

quality of teaching;  
homework;  
learning environment;  
general student behaviour;  
pastoral care for students;  
school policies and procedures; and  
conduct of staff.

##### *Access to support services:*

school and district level student services;  
visiting teachers for students with disabilities;  
visiting teachers for ESL students;  
specialist facilities – language development centres, intensive language centres, socio-psycho educational research units, education support schools, centres and units;  
programs for students experiencing difficulties with learning;  
programs for gifted and talented students; and  
instrumental music program.

#### INFORMATION THAT IS AVAILABLE FROM YOUR SCHOOL

The school should provide you with the following information:

Department of Education policies and policy changes;  
what is expected in relation to homework;  
school implementation plan of the Behaviour Management in Schools policy;  
information about participation in the School Board, Parents and Citizens' Association  
school contributions, charges and fees;  
excursions; and  
the school dress code.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM?

Seeking information as early as possible can solve many problems. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's progress, the homework set or the assessment procedures, contact the class teacher. The best way to do this is to contact the school office to arrange a mutually convenient time for a telephone conversation or meeting.

Interpreters, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officers, and Aboriginal Liaison Officers are available to assist parents in communicating with their school. Please contact your local school or regional education office if you would like the assistance of an interpreter, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officer or an Aboriginal Liaison Officer. You can have a friend or adviser present during any discussion.

Parents have the opportunity for greater involvement in the school through the Parents and Citizens' Association and the School Board. These provide the opportunity for parents to express opinions on policy issues in the school.

## WHEN YOU HAVE A PROBLEM

Try to identify the problem clearly before going to the school. If there is more than one problem, list them to ensure that the extent of the problem is clear to the school.

Decide whether the problem is a concern, an enquiry or a complaint. This will help in finding a solution.

Make an appointment to talk with the teacher. This can be arranged through the school office. If your concern is about the conduct of a staff member, you may prefer to discuss the matter with a school administrator.

Try to stay calm. Even if you don't feel it, being calm will help to get your concerns across more clearly than if you are upset or angry. It may help to take someone with you.

## PROCEDURES FOR MAKING COMPLAINTS

At all stages, staff will work with you to work out an agreed plan of action and timeline.

## IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE IN RESOLVING A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

Staff will help you:

- obtain information about school policies and procedures

- make enquiries about student programs, performance and behaviour

- clarify a problem and register a concern with the school

- direct letters of enquiry or complaint.

## STEPS FOR PARENTS

### SCHOOL LEVEL RESOLUTION

Stage 1: Discussion with staff member

Contact the class teacher or other relevant staff member to discuss your complaint. This is best done by making an appointment through the school office. The staff will work with you to resolve the problem.

Stage 2: Review or investigation at the school level

Contact the principal who will work with you and the staff member to resolve the problem. You may wish to formalise your complaint. To do this, you may write to the principal who will acknowledge the complaint with a written reply as soon as possible, even if a resolution is not available at this stage.

The principal will consider the issue and identify what action is to be taken and by when, and will clarify the process if a formal complaint is to proceed. The principal may seek the support of the Co-ordinator Regional Operations or other relevant regional staff. This action and timeline will be confirmed with you in writing. You should be aware that when a complaint is made in writing about the conduct of an individual staff member, that staff member will receive documentation of the substance of the complaint and, in most cases, the name of the complainant.

## REGIONAL LEVEL RESOLUTION

### Stage 3: District resolution

If resolution is not reached at the school level, contact the Co-ordinator Regional Operations at your regional education office for assistance in resolving the issue. This will involve an independent review of the situation and may include mediation. The Co-ordinator Regional Operations can be contacted through your Regional Education Office.

## APPENDIX 2 COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION FLOWCHART

