**POLICY DETAILS**

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| **Policy Title** | Managing Complaints and Grievances Policy |
| **Creation Date** | 19th August 2021 |
| **Review Date** |  |
| **Ratified** | By School Council |

**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
* A particular incident at the school

Darraweit Guim Primary School and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) expect that all staff and members of the school community develop relationships based on dignity and respect.

Darraweit Guim Primary School and DEECD 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 DEECD 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 DEECD 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 DEECD 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.
* It is hoped that all complaints can be resolved at the school level and the Principal is the key person in seeking a satisfactory outcome.
* Parents will be informed by the Parent Handbook of the Managing Complaints and Grievances Policy
* Complaints resolution information will be available from the school office and the DEECD website ([Human resources: Grievances - Public Service (education.vic.gov.au](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/Pages/grievPSS.aspx)) at all times.
* School Councillors and staff will actively support and reinforce the policy and protocols with all members of the school community.
* 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.

**PROCEDURES FOR RAISING CONCERNS**

* 1. Make a time to meet with the school Principal
  2. They will then:

1. Investigate the complaint
2. Determine the appropriate action to resolve the complaint
3. Develop a confidential plan that may be established with the complainant for resolution
4. Monitor the situation
5. Prepare a report (if the situation deems necessary)
6. Make notes on relevant students files (if necessary)
7. Follow up with the complainant to the outcome achieved

In most situations, the school Principal should be able to rectify the complaint or grievance to an acceptable outcome.

If you are finding that your complaint remains unresolved after following the above procedures, or the complaint is about the school principal, you will need to:

1. Contact the Regional General Manager – North West Victoria Region - 9488 9488.
2. obtain more information about lodging a formal grievance about employment decisions or actions, including appointments or leave, to the Merit Protection Board.
3. seek advice on raising concerns about unprofessional conduct from the Employee Conduct Branch on 03 7022 0005.
4. report suspected fraud, corruption and serious conflicts of interest (for example, on contracts) to the Department's Speak Up service by phone 1800 633 462 or email educationspeakup@pkf.com.au
5. In cases of serious misconduct by a staff member, the Principal must contact the Department’s Complaints and Investigations Unit. Such serious incidents include:
   1. Sexual or criminal allegations,
   2. Serious negligence,
   3. Harassment,
   4. Drug or alcohol misuse
6. If the matter is a criminal issue – you will need to make a report with your local Police Station. You will be instructed on this by the Principal, if it is necessary

***What you should do to assist with your complaint or grievance:***

1. Keep written records of your issue, meetings, follow up and progress
2. Do not discuss with other parents – this is a confidential process and all parties must be protected
3. Ensure you speak with the most appropriate person to deal with the concern. The school can advise on this.
4. Do not take matters into your own hands and approach other parents or children
5. Support your child (if it is regarding them) and explore options that may be available externally if required. These may be counselling or guidance. The Principal can advise you of these services if required.
6. You can have a third party present, if required.
7. Situations cannot be discussed if any party is aggressive or threatening. If the complainant becomes aggressive or threatening to staff, appropriate action will be taken to ensure staff safety.

The school will keep a record of all complaints and grievances lodged in writing, or of a serious nature. These will be held in a locked location within the Administration offices. Notes will be made for particular students and these will be held on the students file. Complaints and grievances that are discussed and resolved immediately will not be recorded in writing at the school.

Most complaints or grievances can be sorted quickly and efficiently if they are brought up in the early stages of the situation. If a complaint or grievance is left unattended for some time, it is harder to control the situation.

**POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed in conjunction with the school Principal each year by the elected School Council. Any changes will be made in accordance to the Victorian Education Department and VRQA guidelines. All revisions will be documented.

**REVISION HISTORY**

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| Version | Date | Revisions Made |
| 1 | 15/9/09 | Policy created |
| 2 | 10/5/17 | Policy overhauled. Minor inclusions and exclusions. Inclusion of Revision History and Policy Details. Change of name to Managing Complaints and Grievances Policy. Inserted Footer details |
| 3 | 19/08/21 | Policy overhauled. Minor inclusions and exclusions. Inclusion of Revision History and Policy Details. Updated numbers, with the inclusion of fraud |