



COMPLAINTS POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Plenty Parklands Primary School so that students, parents and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints about issues arising at our school
- ensure that all complaints and concerns are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

SCOPE

This policy relates to complaints brought by students, parents, carers, 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 Victoria 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.

POLICY

Plenty Parklands welcomes feedback, both positive and negative and is committed to continuous improvement. As part of our interdependent relationship, 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:

- raise and discuss issues in a courteous manner adhering to the school's values of 'A fair go for all, Honesty, Respect, Trust, Personal Achievement and Care' and what these values mean.
- acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome that is in the affected student's best interests and reasonable to all parties.
- act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate.
- recognise that all parties, including the broader school community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced.
- recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to disclose information in some circumstances.

Complaints and concerns process for students

We acknowledge 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 a complaint, can raise them with a trusted adult at school. For example with their classroom teacher, or a specialist teacher, or a senior member of staff. The person will take the concern seriously and will explain steps that can be taken to try to resolve the issue and support the student.

Other ways include:

- talking to a member of the JSC
- participating in the Attitudes to School Survey (Year 4-6 students)
- writing feedback on the classroom feedback station

Complaints and concerns process for parents, carers and community members

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

Plenty Parklands 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 Plenty Parklands and the Department.

You 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 and provide their name, contact details and their relationship to you.

Plenty Parklands is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to your child's teacher. Where possible, staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to discuss this further with the year level leader or wellbeing coordinator, Assistant Principal or 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 issue/s 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 your child's teacher or through the office 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 in writing, in person or over the phone.
- **Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the staff member/Assistant Principal/Principal, 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:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged 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 produce a written 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 be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
- **Timelines:** Plenty Parklands will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within two school days) 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 the 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 that can be put in place.

Resolution

Where appropriate, Plenty Parklands 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 the school values and intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, we 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 staff at the Regional Office.

Plenty Parklands may also refer a complaint to the Regional Office if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

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 child information sharing scheme and family violence information sharing scheme, to meet regulatory requirements.

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.

Communication

This policy will be communicated to our school community:

- available publicly on the school's webpage
- included in the staff Induction process and manual
- annual reference in our school newsletter
- discussed at student forums
- hard copy available from school office upon request
- referred to school council each 2 years to review

Policy last reviewed	July 2022
Consultation	Staff School Council JSC
Approved by	Principal and endorsed by School Council in July 2022
Next scheduled review date	July 2024

INTERPRETER – if you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the office