Aim
The school’s approach to handling concerns and complaints from parents is based on our values of:
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment
- Building relationships between students, parents and staff
- Providing a safe working environment for staff
- Bringing possible solutions along with any concern or complaint.

Concerns and Complaints Covered by These Procedures
These procedures cover concerns and complaints about:
- General issues about student behaviour that are contrary to the school’s code of conduct
- Incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the yard
- Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- Communication with parents
- School fees and payments
- General administrative issues
- Any other school related matters except as listed below:
  - student discipline matters involving expulsions
  - complaints about employee conduct or performance and complaints that should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action
  - complaints by the Department’s employees related to their employment
  - student critical incident matters
  - other criminal matters.

Ownership and Scope
The school will develop its procedures to address concerns and complaints in collaboration with parents and the school community.

The Principal will meet with parents who raise any issues, with the proviso that any issues come with a possible solution.

E.g. Placement of children into the following year’s grades will be based upon the following criteria:
- Children will be given the opportunity to provide teachers with a list of two to three friends prior to grades being created.
- If possible children will have at least one person of that list in their new grade
- The school cannot be held responsible if a parent removes their child once a grade is created and this then removes another child’s one friend from the new class
- Parents will be informed through the newsletter when they can write to the Principal regarding educational requests for their child. These requests are not a request for a particular teacher, but must be based on the learning and/or social needs of the child.
• Not all parent requests can or will be acceded too. The final decision over this rests with the Principal.

Expectations
The school expects a person 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.

The school 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.

Raising Concerns or Complaints
The complainant should telephone, visit or write to:
• the student’s teacher or home group teacher about learning issues and incidents that happened in their class or group
• the Principal or the Assistant Principal about issues relating to
  o staff members or complex student issues
  o school policy, school management, staff members
  o unresolved matters

To contact any staff member, call the office on 9870 6098.

Help with Raising Concerns or Complaints
Complainants can seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are unable to express their concern clearly. An advocate can be a friend or someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation who 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 coming to an agreement.

The school will ensure that the complainant is aware of these supports. A complainant who wishes to use these support services should ensure the person addressing the concern or complaint is aware of their intention and is in agreement to act as a support.

Managing Parent Concerns or Complaints
The school will keep records of concerns and complaints. This may include:
• name and contact details (with permission) of the person with a concern or complaint
• the date the concern was expressed or complaint made
• the form in which the concern or complaint was received (such as face-to-face, by
  o telephone, in writing, by email)
• a brief description of the concern or complaint
• details of the school officer responding to 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 the school's policy or procedures.

However, in the first instance, when the complaint is easily resolved in a telephone call, a brief note in the school's/principal's/teacher's diary recording the issue and the resolution may be all that is required.

The Principal and Assistant Principal will regularly update each other on any issues which they have dealt with so that they can step in if needed to deal with any ongoing complaint if one or the other is unavailable.

### Addressing Concerns or Complaints

- The school may give a complainant a copy of its Concerns and Complaints policy and Procedures.
- The school will 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.
- All complaints will be noted and acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint.
- The school will acknowledge all complaints made in writing. It will provide the complainant with a timeline for investigating the complaint.
- The Principal or Assistant Principal will investigate all complaints and will provide a response to the complainant.
- Concerns and complaints about general school matters (such as the timing of events, school policies and facilities) will be addressed by the Principal or a relevant staff member.
- The school will make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible.
- If your complaint involves many students and a range of issues, the school will need more time to investigate and resolve it.
- Should the complaint involve complex issues, the school might need to take advice from the Department which may take more time. The school will tell the complainant the new timeline for addressing the complaint and the reasons for any delays. In all cases, the school will try to resolve a concern or complaint as soon as possible.

### Remedies

If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the school will offer an appropriate remedy. For example, at its discretion and depending on the circumstances, the school might 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 practices
- to cancel a debt (such as for school payments)
- a fee refund.

The school will implement the remedy as soon as practicable.

### Referral of Concerns or Complaints

If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, they should contact the Department.

The officer from the Department will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and the complainant’s opinion about why the school did not resolve it to their satisfaction.
The Department may ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and the complainant’s opinion about why the school did not resolve it to their satisfaction and will ask the complainant to outline their view on the course of action required to resolve the complaint. Where the complainant is unable to provide a written account the officer will act on the information provided.

**Communication and Training**

The school will make information about procedures for addressing concerns and complaints readily available to parents and the school community, in clear and easy to understand language and, where appropriate, in a range of community languages and formats that are accessible to everyone so that no-one is disadvantaged.

The information will include:
- how a person can make a complaint
- the person’s responsibilities
- information to be provided by the person
- who the person should contact and their contact details
- the process and timeframes for managing complaints.

The school’s procedures for addressing concerns and complaints will be:
- published on the school’s website
- referred to in the School Information handbook
- noted in the school newsletter.

The school will:
- brief all members of staff (including volunteers) about its procedures to address concerns and complaints annually
- provide staff with (or provide access to) training and support appropriate to their responsibilities under the procedures
- ensure staff who manage complaints demonstrate the personal attributes outlined in the *Good Practice Guide: Ombudsman Victoria’s guide to complaint handling for Victorian public sector agencies*.

**Monitoring the Parent Concerns and Complaint Policy**

The school will monitor parent concerns and complaints and consider issues raised through the parent complaints process, and any other relevant information from the Parent Opinion Survey, when undertaking a review of the school’s policies, procedures and operations.

The School Council will regularly review its policy and procedures to effectively address parent concerns and complaints as part of its cyclic policy and procedures review schedule.

The school will review its information about complaints made over time to:
- identify common or recurring issues that may need addressing
- assess the effectiveness of these and other procedures and whether they are being followed
- use information provided to the school through the Parent Opinion Survey on the views of parents.

**School Council ratified this policy in 2014**

**Next review of this policy is in 2018**
Parents’ concern or complaint

School Principal determines appropriate process

School procedures to address concerns and complaints initiated

Legislated complaints process initiated

Regional office support available to address complex complaints

Central office (Group coordination division) review of unresolved complaints

OUTCOME
- Complaint resolved
- Complaint dismissed
- Complaint unresolved referred to appropriate external agency eg. Ombudsman Victoria

OUTCOME
- Complaint resolved
- Complaint dismissed
- Complaint addressed

OUTCOME
- Complaint dismissed
- Complaint resolved unsatisfactory performance procedures commenced
- Serious misconduct procedures commenced