

## Raising Concerns and Complaints Policy **Status:** Review Sept 2014 School Council

### Rationale:

Rolling Hills Primary School will handle concerns and complaints based on our values of building relationships between students, staff and parents. The school's approach is related to creating a safe and supportive learning and working environment for students and staff. All parties will act in good faith, in a calm and courteous manner.

### Aims:

- To provide a framework to enable all parties involved to resolve concerns or complaints.

### Guidelines:

- Information Privacy Act 2000
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007
- Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct
- This policy does not apply to matters where there are existing legislated rights of review or appeal – see: *Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*

### Implementation:

- Staff will be briefed annually about the school's concerns and complaints procedure which commences with the relevant class teacher, proceeds to the Level Coordinator and ultimately to the Assistant Principal/Principal.
- Parents will be advised via a number of channels of the avenues for them to raise a concern and the person with whom the concern should be raised.
- All complaints will be noted, acted on promptly in an effort to resolve concerns and will remain confidential.
- To make an appointment, the complainant should telephone (9726 4454), visit or write to:
  1. the student's teacher about learning issues or incidents of concern that occurred in their class or group
  2. the year level coordinator if students from several classes are involved
  3. the assistant principal about issues relating to staff members or complex student issues and the assistant principal will communicate any information appropriately and sensitively.
  4. the principal about issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex student issues
- The school expects a person raising a concern or complaint to:
  1. do so as soon as possible after the issue occurs and to provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
  2. maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties and acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
  3. act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner
  4. show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame
  5. recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.
- Complainants can seek the services of a friend for support or an advocate who does not receive a fee for service. The school will ensure that a parent is aware of these supports.
- The school will monitor parent concerns and complaints as well as use data from the Parent Opinion Survey to identify common or recurring themes that may need addressing.
- In the event that a complaint cannot be resolved at the school level, complainants will be referred to the appropriate area of the Department.

## **Supporting Documents** **Possible Responses or Remedies**

### **Managing parent concerns and complaints information**

When a complaint is easily resolved in a telephone call, a brief note identifying the issue and the resolution will be recorded by the person taking the complaint and this should be passed on to the relevant person.

The Assistant Principal/Principal will record the following details of complaints received:

- name and contact details 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 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.

### **Remedies**

Types of remedies the school will consider if it accepts a concern or complaint is justified, and when the remedy will be implemented.

If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the school will offer an appropriate remedy. At its discretion and depending on the circumstances, the school will offer one of the following:

- an explanation or further information about the issue
- acknowledgment of each other's perspectives and an agreement on ways to manage differences
- agreement on what constitutes acceptable behaviour
- an undertaking that unacceptable behavior will change
- mediation, counselling or other support
- an apology
- 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.

### **Complaint dismissed**

A complaint can only be dismissed:

- after it has been investigated
- if an investigation has determined that the complaint cannot be substantiated.

### **Evaluation:**

The Raising Concerns and Complaints Policy shall be reviewed every 3 years by the Education Sub-Committee of School Council.

**References:** Office for Government School Education: Addressing parents' concerns and complaints policy and guide. <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/parentcomplaint.htm>

## ***Supporting Document:***

### **Managing parent concerns and complaints information**

Name and contact details (with permission) of the person with a concern or complaint	
Date	
Form in which the concern or complaint was received e.g. face-to-face, telephone etc	
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	