

COMPLAINTS

RATIONALE

This policy relates to complaints brought by parents, careers, students or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school. In some limited instances, we may need to refer the complainant to another Department of Education and Training process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions, for example, expulsion appeals.

GUIDELINES

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

IMPLEMENTATION

Ashby Primary School welcomes feedback, both positive and constructive, and is committed to continuous improvement. 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 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:

- be considerate of each other's views and respect each other's role;
- be focused on resolution of the complaint, with the interests of all parties involved the student involved at the centre;
- act in good faith and cooperation;
- behave with respect and courtesy;
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate;
- operate within and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with any applicable legislation and Department policy;
- recognise that the ability of schools and the DET to act on or disclose information in some circumstances may be subject to legal constraints.

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

Ashby Primary School encourages parents, careers 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 by having a solution focused mindset;
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the Department and Ashby Primary School.

Complaints process

Ashby Primary School is always willing to discuss with parents/careers and community members any concerns that they may have. When a complaint is being made, consideration is to be made with whom to direct the complaint to.

That is, who within Ashby Primary School is the most reasonable, first point of contact. For example; your child's teacher, OSHC Care Coordinator, member of the school leadership team, Assistant Principal or Principal. Where possible, the school 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 make a formal complaint to the Principal or Assistant 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 issues and will then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint together. The following process will apply:

1. **Complaint received:** Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the most reasonable first point of contact (Teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal), to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issue/s is/are. We can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.
2. **Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the staff member overseeing the process 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.
3. **Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the relevant staff, including the Assistant Principal or Principal if required, to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all involved. 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.
4. **Timelines:** Ashby Primary School 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, Ashby Primary School may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your 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, Ashby Primary School will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Resolution

Where appropriate, Ashby Primary School 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 school values that are intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, Ashby Primary School 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;

- The Department of Education, Geelong Office
- Phone: 1300 333 232

Ashby Primary School may also refer a complaint to The Department of Education, Geelong Office if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

For more information about the Department's Parent Complaints policy, including the role of the Regional Office, please visit the following link: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/school-complaints.aspx>

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Please refer to our school website and the supporting policies linked here: <https://www.ashbyps.vic.edu.au/planning>

EVALUATION:-

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four year review cycle or more often if needed due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

CERTIFICATION

The policy was ratified at the School Council meeting held at Ashby Primary School on the August 20, 2019 and is to be reviewed in 2023.

Signed _____
(School Council President)

Signed _____
(School Principal)