



RAISING CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS

Preamble:

Cambridge Primary School's approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on our beliefs of:

- being a community where children, parents and teachers work in partnership
- focusing on the development of the whole child as a lifelong learner
- providing a stimulating, supportive, safe and caring environment
- developing curriculum that caters for all students needs
- acknowledging and celebrating individuality and the international diversity of our community
- promoting critical thinking, risk-taking and an enquiring spirit
- encouraging and supporting students to take responsibility for their learning
- empowering children for life beyond Cambridge Primary School

1. Aims:

- to provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment
- To resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation

2. Implementation:

Concerns and complaints covered by the procedures

- general issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's school values and student welfare policy
- incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard
- learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- communication with parents
- School levies and payments
- general administrative issues
- any other school-related matters except as detailed below.

These procedures do not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the *Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide*.

Those matters include:

- 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.

Expectations

At Cambridge Primary School it is expected that a person raising a concern or complaint is 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

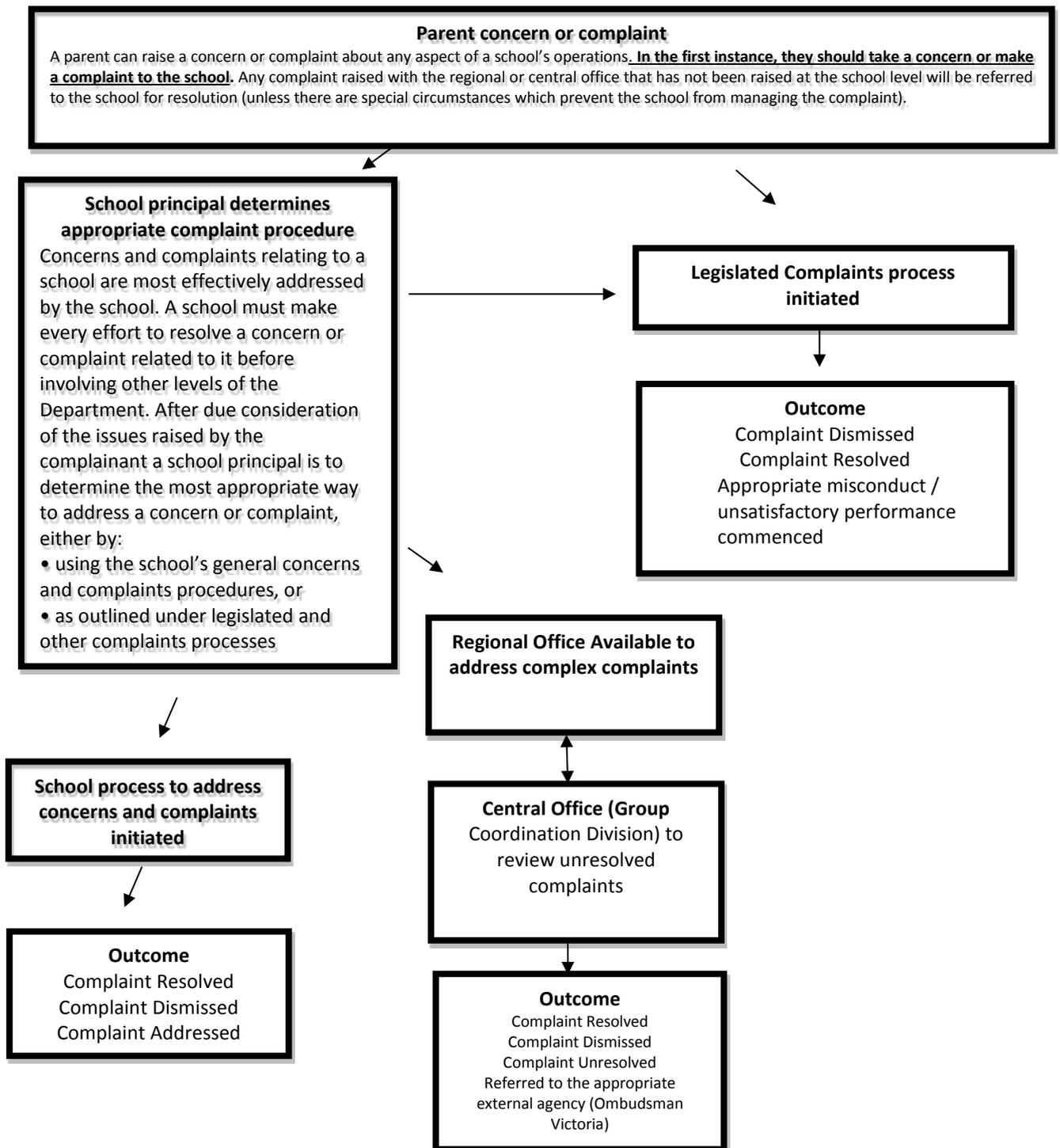
- show respect and understanding of each other's point of view
- recognise that all parties have equal rights and responsibilities

Cambridge Primary School will address any concerns and complaints received from parents:

- courteously
- efficiently
- fairly
- promptly and within an agreed timeline
- in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Department of Education and Training's (DET) regulatory framework.

Addressing Complaints or concerns

At Cambridge Primary School the DET Complaint Management Process as follows:



At Cambridge Primary School all parents complainants should telephone the school to make an appropriate appointment or write to:

- the student's class teacher about learning issues and incidents that happened in their class or group
- the Professional Learning Team I (PLT) leader if students from several classes are involved
- the assistant principals about issues relating to staff members or complex student issues
- the principal about issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex student issues.

Cambridge Primary School will:

- make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the DET
- give the complainant a copy of the complaints' procedures
- determine whether a concern or complaint should be managed through the school's concerns and complaints process or through other complaints processes of DET
- describe the process by which the school will handle the concern or complaint
- ensure all complaints are noted and acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint
- provide the complainant with a timeline for investigating the complaint
- address concerns and complaints about general school matters (such as the timing of events, school policies and facilities) by the principal or a relevant staff member
- ensure complaints involving many students and a range of issues, are given adequate time to investigate

Managing parent concerns and complaints information

Cambridge Primary School will record:

- the name and contact details of the person with a concern or complaint, the date the concern was expressed and the 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.

If the complaint is easily resolved through 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.

Unreasonable complainant conduct

Unreasonable complainant conduct at Cambridge Primary School is behaviour that:

- is clearly and significantly outside the expectations of confidentiality, cooperation, courtesy and respect
- calls for staff resources and time unjustified by the nature or significance of the complaint
- is vexatious (that is, an action or complaint that is brought without merit, often to cause annoyance to another person)
- is oriented towards conflict.

The school Principal, Regional Director or the General Manager, Group Coordination Division will determine if a complainant's conduct is unreasonable. If so determined, they will:

- develop a plan to address the complaint and the complainant's interaction with the DET

- inform the complainant of the plan
- ensure all DET staff adhere to the plan as closely as practicable

Should the complaint involve complex issues, Cambridge Primary School will take advice from DET's regional office or Legal Branch 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, Cambridge Primary School will try to resolve a concern or complaint within 20 school days.

Resolutions

At Cambridge Primary School if a concern or complaint is substantiated, at its discretion and depending on the circumstances, Cambridge Primary 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.

Referral of concerns or complaints

If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by Cambridge Primary School, they should contact the South Western Metropolitan Region (9291 6500) and speak to the Community Liaison Officer.

- The officer from the region 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.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved, the regional office may refer it to the DET's Group Coordination Division
- The Division 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 and regional office did not resolve their concern/complaint to their satisfaction and will ask the complainant to outline their view on the course of action required to resolve the issue.
- Where the complainant is unable to provide a written account the officer from Group Coordination Division should act on the information provided.

3. Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle

Ratification Date November 2015	Review Date Year 2018	Policy Number 54	Version Number 3	Date Produced May 2009
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