

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Jells Park Primary School</b> <b>Raising and Addressing Concerns and Complaints Policy</b></p>
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### **Purpose**

Jells Park Primary School prides itself on the positive and supportive working relationship it has actively fostered with parents and the wider community over many years. The school has worked consistently to develop and extend excellent communications with all such parties in a variety of innovative ways. From time to time, things may go awry and concerns are voiced and complaints made regarding aspects of school life. The school believes it is vital that such concerns and complaints be heard and addressed with due care and respect using agreed procedures and processes set out by the school community and in accordance with DET.

### **Guidelines**

1. The school's approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on its belief in the value of Respect, by treating others with empathy, compassion and dignity and the value of Honesty, by demonstrating integrity and fairness and behaving in a trustworthy manner.
2. The policy covers concerns and complaints about such things as:
  - issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's code of conduct.
  - incidents of bullying or harassment in the school environment.
  - learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning.
  - communication with parents.
  - placement of students in classes for the following year.
  - payments and contributions.
  - general administration issues.
3. The policy does not cover concerns and complaints about matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide. Such 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 made by the Department's employees related to their employment.
  - student critical incident matters.
  - other criminal matters.
4. The school expects a person raising a concern or complaint to:
  - do so promptly after the issue has occurred.
  - 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 others point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame.

- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.

### **Implementation**

1. The school will address any concerns and complaints received from parents in a courteous, effective, fair and prompt manner.
2. The school will attend to concerns and complaints in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework.
3. All staff members will be informed annually about the school's policy and procedures to manage a concern or complaint from a parent. Staff who regularly deal with such issues will receive access to training and support, as necessary, for their responsibilities in such aspects.
4. A complaint may be by telephone, visit, email or write to:
  - the student's teacher about learning issues, incidents outside during recess or lunchtimes or procedures in the classroom.
  - the Assistant Principal, if there are students from several classes involved.
  - the Principal about issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex student issues.

Parents may contact the school office to make an appointment to speak with specific staff members or to clarify procedures for expressing concerns or complaints.

The School Office phone number is: 9560 6494

5. Concerns or complaints that are easily resolved by a phone conversation, an email communication or brief meeting, may be managed by the Assistant Principal, as necessary.
6. More complex concerns and complaints will be acted upon promptly by the person receiving the concern or complaint who, if not the Principal or Assistant Principal, will seek support and guidance from the Principal or Assistant Principal. A written record will be kept of the issue/s, which will include the complainant's name, date, form in which it was received, a brief and clear description of the concern or complaint, immediate action to be taken and longer term responses necessary. Further information will be recorded as the process is worked through with longer term actions to be taken, outcome/s, ongoing recommendations for future improvements in the schools policy or procedures etc added to the written record.
7. The school will acknowledge all complaints and will provide the complainant with a timeline for investigating the issue/s. The timeline may need to include enough time to seek advice from the Regional Office.
8. Complainants may seek the services of an advocate to assist in expressing their concern or complaint.
9. The school will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the Department.
10. If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the school will offer an appropriate remedy which, depending on circumstances, may range from an explanation, an apology, mediation, counselling or other support, a change of a decision, a change to its policies, procedures or practices etc.
11. All parties may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty reaching an agreement.
12. If a concern or complaint cannot be resolved by the complainant, school and regional office working together, any party may refer the matter to the Central Office.
13. The school will make information about the policy and the procedures for

expressing concerns and making complaints readily available to the school community.

14. The school website will contain a link to the Department's Policy and Guidelines 'Addressing parents concerns and complaints effectively'.

15. The school will review data from the records of parent concerns and complaints and from the annual Parent Survey and, may recommend modifications to the procedures prior to a normal policy review date.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- Australian Standard in complaints handling (AS ISO 10002-2006).
- Ombudsman Victoria Good Practice Guide. [www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au)
- DET– contact lists, policies and guidelines, general information.  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/complaints/pages/default.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/complaints/pages/default.aspx)

### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the four-yearly review cycle, or earlier if necessary.