

**Mount Waverley Primary School**  
**Concerns and Complaints Policy**



***'Achieving Excellence Together'***

**2019**

**Principal: Greg Paine**

**School Council President: Michael Seelig**



## MOUNT WAVERLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Concerns and Complaints Policy

#### RATIONALE

Mount Waverley Primary School (MWPS) is committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect and encourages good communication between students, parents / carers and staff. Teaching and learning work best when parents / carers and staff talk to each other and work together to solve problems.

**Note:** This policy does not apply to matters about which there are existing rights (and processes for) review and appeal, such as matters relating to serious employee misconduct, student critical incidents and criminal activities.

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

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

This policy relates to complaints brought by parents, carers, 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.

#### POLICY GUIDELINES

MWPS welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our families and are committed to understanding concerns and 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 school community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the **Dignity and Respect Statement:**

The Department is committed to providing safe and supportive work environments where diversity is valued and everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity. Discrimination, sexual and other forms of harassment, bullying, violence and threatening behaviour are unacceptable. All employees, students, parents and visitors in schools and other Departmental workplaces are expected to act

accordingly. The Department, MWPS and School Council will act to ensure the safety, security, health and wellbeing of all employees, students, parents and visitors in schools and other Departmental workplaces are protected.

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

1. **Complaint:** is an expression of grievance or resentment where the complainant is seeking redress or justice.
2. **Concern:** a 'concern' is an issue of interest (because of its importance and effect), which is raised informally in order to improve or change a situation.

The types of concerns and complaints this policy covers include:

1. general issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's code of conduct
2. incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the schoolyard
3. learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
4. communication with parents
5. school fees and payments
6. general administrative issues

When addressing concerns or 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 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 schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

#### **POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

##### **Preparation for raising a concern or complaint**

MWPS encourages parents, carers 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
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the Department and MWPS (see "Further Information and Resources" section below).

##### **Complaints process**

MWPS is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to your child's teacher or Year Level

Leaders. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure your concerns are appropriately addressed.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal complaint directed to the MWPS Assistant Principal - Student Wellbeing, Assistant Principal - Curriculum or the School Principal noting a resolution could not be reached by the class teacher or Year Level Leader.

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 Assistant Principal or Principal, to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues 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 Principal, Assistant Principal or nominee 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 Assistant Principal/Principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. 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:** MWPS 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, MWPS 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, MWPS will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

## Resolution

Where appropriate, MWPS 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, MWPS 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 North Eastern Regional Office (Department of Education and Training ).

MWPS may also refer a complaint to North Eastern Regional 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 see: [Parent complaints policy](#).

### **DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THIS POLICY**

MWPS Purpose, Philosophy of Teaching and Values Statement

MWPS Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy

MWPS Elimination of Sexual Harassment Policy

MWPS Parent Teacher Communication Policy

MWPS Visitors, Volunteers and External Educational Providers in Schools Policy

All concerns and complaints must be addressed in line with the Department's legislative and regulatory framework, which includes the:

1. Education and Training Reform Act 2006
2. Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007
3. Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
4. Information Privacy Act 2000
5. Wrongs Act 1958. Dignity and respect statement

### **DET advice and advisory guide:**

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/parentcomplaints.aspx>

### **EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed by the Leadership Team on a cyclical basis in accordance with the policy review schedule or as required.

<b>Policy Area:</b>	<b>Tabled at School Council:</b>	<b>Next Review:</b>
<b>Administration and Operations</b>	<b>November 2019</b>	<b>2023</b>