



# COMPLAINTS POLICY



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school.

## INTRODUCTION:

Keelonith Primary School welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication, and positive, trusting relationships 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.

## PURPOSE

This policy is in place to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Keelonith 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
- ensure that all complaints regarding Keelonith Primary School are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

## SCOPE

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 a complainant to another policy or area if there are different processes in place to manage the issue including:

- complaints and concerns relating to fraud and corruption (managed in accordance with the department's [Fraud and Corruption Policy](#))
- criminal matters (referred to Victorian Police)
- legal claims (referred to the Department's Legal Division)
- complaints and concerns relating to child abuse will be managed in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures (available on the school website).

## COMMUNICATION

This policy will be available on the school website. An annual newsletter item will refer parents to this policy and aspects of the policy will be included in the newsletter as necessary.

Staff will be referred to this policy during induction and at the start of each school year. A copy of this policy will be available on the COMPASS Student Management System for staff access.

CRTs and volunteers will be provided with a copy of this policy on induction.

Following review and any changes to this policy, all those with a vested interest will be informed through appropriate avenues such as the newsletter, COMPASS Student Management System, staff forums and class activities.

## POLICY

### 1. EXPECTATIONS OF ALL PARTIES

When addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- raise and discuss issues in a courteous and respectful manner
- act in good faith to achieve an outcome that is acceptable to all parties, with the student at the centre
- be considerate of the views of others
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved
- recognise that all parties, including the broader school community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced
- recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

### 2. STUDENTS RAISING CONCERNS

[We acknowledge that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. Students are encouraged to raise issues or concerns as they arise as this enables staff to act in a timely manner. Often student concerns can be resolved with a clear explanation or through guidance provided at the time. This prevents the concern from escalating and causing the child distress.

Students with concerns during a class activity or lesson can:

- raise their hand and address the concern directly with the teacher
- move quietly to the teacher and explain what is going on for them
- ask to speak to the teacher privately during or after the class
- direct their concern to one of the educational support staff
- ask a friend to raise their concern with the teacher, education support staff or trusted adult
- communicate their concern through a communication device, appropriate signal or agreed process.

If students do not feel comfortable raising their concern with adults in the class activity or lesson, they can:

- speak to any trusted staff member after the class
- talk to their parent, carer, or another trusted adult outside of the school and request they raise the issue with school on their behalf.

During scheduled break times, staff provide play support to students and can be approached to assist students with their concerns, Again, students may prefer to raise their concern with a trusted adult, parent, or carer later.

### 3. PARENTS RAISING CONCERNS

We encourage parents, carers, or members of the community to raise concerns as soon as possible after they arise. Before raising a concern, please:

- 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 Keelonith Primary School (see "Further Information and Resources" section below)
- consider if you would like a support person to assist you. In this case, the school should be provided with the name, contact details and relationship to you of the support person.

In the first instance, all concerns should be raised with the staff member concerned, unless they are of a serious nature, in which case contact should immediately be made with the principal or assistant principal.

### 3. COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Concerns, in the first instance, should be directed to the classroom teacher and/or the adult directly involved. Where possible, school staff 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. In the instance of a formal complaint, the school will first seek to understand the issues and then convene a resolution meeting. The following process will apply:

#### **a) Complaint received**

Formal complaints may be made via email, telephone or through a meeting arranged with the principal or assistant principal. In some instances, the school will request that formal complaints are made in writing.

## **b) 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.

## **c) Response**

Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged 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**

We will acknowledge the receipt of complaints as soon as possible (usually within 48 hours) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, further information may need to be gathered to fully understand the circumstances. 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, consultation will occur with all parties and interim solutions considered.

## **5. RESOLUTION**

The method of resolution to complaints will vary according to the individual circumstances and events surrounding individual complaints. Resolution may be in the form of:

- an apology or expression of regret
- a change of decision
- a change of policy, procedure or practice
- provision of counselling or other support for the student involved
- other actions consistent with the school values.

In some circumstances, complaints may be best resolved through a meeting with an independent third party or mediation with an accredited mediator.

## **6. ESCALATION**

a) If a parent or community member is not satisfied that their complaint has been resolved by the school, or if their complaint is about the principal, then the complaint should be referred to the North West Metropolitan Region (1300 338 691 or [nwvr@education.com.au](mailto:nwvr@education.com.au)).

b) The school may also refer a complaint to the North West Metropolitan Region if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

c) For more information about the Department's *Parent Complaints* policy, including the role of the Regional Office, please see - [Raise a complaint or concern about your school](#).

## **7. RECORD KEEPING AND SHARING INFORMATION**

To meet Department and legal requirements, our school must keep written records of:

- serious, substantial or unusual complaints
- complaints relating to the Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, to meet regulatory requirements.

Our school also follows Department policy to ensure that record-keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints or concerns.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

### School Documents

- Statement of Values and Philosophy
- Communication with School Staff Policy

Department Resources

- [Raise a complaint or concern about your school](#)
- [Report Racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)

**REVIEW**

Department guidelines mandate that this policy is updated every two years.

Policy last reviewed	June 2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2023

This policy will also be updated in extenuating circumstances.