Moonee Ponds Primary School
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FEEDBACK (CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS) POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Moonee Ponds Primary School on 9375 2511.

RATIONALE

Moonee Ponds Primary School (MPPS) recognises the importance of fostering positive relationships with parents and families and developing strong school community partnerships. These partnerships are critical to supporting our children's development and learning, and are essential for building a collaborative learning community. In all partnerships there are times when disagreements and issues of concern need to be resolved. At MPPS, our approach to handling concerns and complaints is within the context of our school values: Respect, Optimism, Care and Collaboration:

- Respect
  Treat yourself and others with consideration and regard. Be thoughtful and tolerant of one another's point of view and differences. Abide by our school expectations.
- Optimism
  Be positive. Persist when experiencing difficulty. Set goals and believe that you can accomplish them. Have confidence and look for the positive, even in difficult situations.
- Care
  Show kindness for yourself and others. Look after your belongings, your classroom and the environment. Take pride in what you do. Show understanding and be considerate of each other's situation, feelings and motives.
- Collaboration
  Work together towards achieving common goals through demonstrating effective cooperation, communication and problem-solving skills.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the feedback (concerns and complaints) process at MPPS so that students, 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 and concerns regarding MPPS are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

SCOPE

This policy relates to complaints brought by students, parents, carers 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 will be managed in accordance with the department's Fraud and Corruption Policy
- Criminal matters will be referred to Victorian Police
- Legal claims will be 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 at http://www.mpp.vic.edu.au/child-safe-standards/

POLICY

The implementation of this policy is structured within the following sections:

1. Expectations
2. Complaints and concerns process for students
3. Complaints and concerns process for parents, carers and community members
4. Support person
5. Raising a concern
6. Making a complaint
7. Resolution
8. Escalation
9. Record keeping and other requirements

1. Expectations

MPPS welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, 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 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.

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 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.

2. Complaints and concerns process for students

MPPS acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. MPPS encourages our students to raise issues or concerns as they arise so that we can work together to resolve them.

Students with a concern or complaint can raise them with a trusted adult at school, for example, with your classroom teacher or another trusted adult in the School. This person will take your concern or complaint seriously and will explain to you what steps we can take to try to resolve the issue and support you.

You can also ask your parent, carer or another trusted adult outside of the school, to talk to us about the issue instead. Information about our parent/carer complaints and concerns process is outlined further below. The parent/carer process also applies to students who are mature minors, refer to: Mature Minors and Decision Making.

Other ways you can raise a concern or complaint with us include:

- talking to a member of the student representative council about your concern and any suggestions you have for resolving it
- participating in our Attitudes to School Survey (for Years 4-6) and through other feedback opportunities within the classroom
- participating in our student forums when they are held

Further information and resources to support students to raise issues or concerns are available at:

- Report Racism Hotline (call 1800 722 476) – this hotline enables students to report concerns relating to racism or religious discrimination
- Reach Out
- Headspace
- Kids Helpline (call 1800 55 1800)
- Victorian Aboriginal Education Association (VAEAI)

3. Complaints and concerns process for parents, carers and community members

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint: MPPS 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 MPPS (see "Further Information and Resources" section below).

4. Support person

You are welcome to have a support person to assist you in raising a complaint or concern with our school. Please advise us if you wish to have a support person to assist you, and provide their name, contact details, and their relationship to you.

5. Raising a concern

MPPS 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:

STEP 1:
The Student's Teacher or home group teacher about learning issues and incidents that happened in their class or group

STEP 2:
The Year Level Leader if students from several classes are involved

STEP 3:
The Assistant Principal 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.

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

For contact details of any staff member, call the office on 9375 2511 or email staff directly through the Compass School Management System portal. If you are not sure who to contact, contact the Assistant Principal or Principal on 9375 2511.

6. Making a complaint

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 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. 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: MPPS 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, MPPS 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, MPPS will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Please note that unreasonable conduct (e.g. vexatious complaints) may need to be managed differently to the procedures in this policy.

7. Resolution

Where appropriate, MPPS may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- an explanation or further information about the issue,
- 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, MPPS 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.

8. 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 South Western Victoria Region by contacting swvr@edumail.vic.gov.au or phone 1300 333 232.

MPPS may also refer a complaint to South Western Victoria Region 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 https://www.vic.gov.au/raise-complaint-or-concern-about-your-school#speaking-to-your-school

9. Review of complaints

Moonee Ponds Primary School will consider whether complaints relating to child safety identify any causes or systemic child safety risks and take steps to address those risks and continuously improve our child safety practices.

10. Record keeping and other requirements

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 - refer to Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes for further information

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.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on school website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at student and parent forums as needed
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

- Complaints - Parents

The Department's parents' website:

- Raise a complaint or concern about your school
- Report racism or religious discrimination in schools

Policy review and approval

Consultation	School Council and shared through the school newsletter and website (Aug-Oct)
Approved by	School Council in June 2026
Next scheduled review date (2 years)	June 2028

Appendix:

1. Procedures For Addressing Concerns And Complaints: Common Questions And Answers When Making A Complaint
2. Procedures For Addressing Concerns And Complaints: Rights And Responsibilities
3. Procedures For Addressing Concerns And Complaints: Concerns And Complaints Flow Chart Or Point Of Contact

Appendix 1

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COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WHEN MAKING A COMPLAINT

When making a complaint:

- Your child's school should always be your first point of contact
- Concerns are best resolved at the school
- The Department expects that most complaints will be resolved by the school

How do I raise an issue or make a complaint?

1. Clarify the issue (what is your concern?)

Before you approach the school or your child's teacher:

- Be clear about the topic or issue you want to discuss.
- Focus on the things that are genuinely affecting your child.
- Always remain calm and remember you may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue you wish to discuss.
- Think about what would be an acceptable outcome for you and your child.
- Be informed; check the Department's policies or guidelines, where relevant.
- Ask the school for a copy of the MPPS Feedback (Concerns and Complaints) Policy.

2. Contact the school

There are a number of ways you can raise any concerns you have about your child and their education. You can:

- Make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with your child's class teacher, the year level leader or homegroup teacher; ensuring that you inform the school about the issue you wish to discuss,
- Write a note to your child's teacher outlining your concerns.
- Consider speaking with the school's student welfare coordinator, if you feel that this would be appropriate.
- Arrange any meeting times or phone calls through the school office (this is more convenient for both you and your child's teacher and does not interrupt teachers during the time they need to be with their students).

The class teacher or year level coordinator, together with any others who may be involved, should be given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address your concerns. Remember, it may not always be possible to resolve an issue to your complete satisfaction.

3. Contact the Principal or Assistant Principal

Most concerns are resolved by following the first two steps above. However, if the issue remains unresolved after you have approached your child's teacher or other school staff, you can then ask to see the Principal or Assistant Principal. To do this, you will need to request an appointment through the school office.

Please note:

- The Principal may ask another senior staff member to speak with you on their behalf.
- If a teacher is going to be present at the meeting, the meeting is more likely to occur
- outside of classroom hours.

If your concern is related to issues of school policy, it should be raised more formally (in writing) with the Principal or the School Council.

Appendix 2

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Procedures For Addressing Concerns and Complaints

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Rights for Parents/Guardians

- For their children to be safe from harm at all times.
- All parents and children to be treated equally.
- To be involved in their child's school.
- That parents/guardians have a right to provide input into child's school and procedures through their School Council.
- To be kept informed by their class teacher/school.
- That all concerns and complaints will be investigated and will be treated seriously.
- That the school will respond to all concerns and complaints.
- That all serious concerns will be forwarded to the principal.
- For any concern to be treated confidentially and records treated with privacy.
- That teachers will communicate with parents/guardians directly.
- To be listened to and spoken to privately and politely.
- When possible, that an appropriate time and place will be selected to express any concerns.
- That teachers will support parents' understandings of any concerns, by providing all the information needed.

2. Rights for Staff:

- That all staff will be treated with respect and spoken to politely and/or listened to.
- That parents/guardians will make an appropriate time and place to express any concerns.
- That all parents/guardians will initially speak to the appropriate teacher.
- That parents and guardians will contact the teacher in person or via email.
- That parents/guardians will maintain confidentiality whilst their concerns are being investigated.
- That parents/guardians will respect the school code of conduct or discipline policy.

3. School Responsibilities:

- Ensure all reasonable steps have been undertaken to resolve parent/guardian concerns and complaints.
- Contact the Regional Office for support with any complex complaints.
- Ensure all new staff members are aware of the school and Department's policies and procedures in relation to addressing parent concerns and complaints.
- Annually brief all staff members (including volunteers) on the policy and procedures.
- Provide staff with (or provide access to) training and support appropriate to their responsibilities under the procedures.
- Establish and maintain administrative processes to manage concerns and complaints raised at the school.

Appendix 3

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Procedures For Addressing Concerns and Complaints

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS FLOW CHART OR POINT OF CONTACT

STEP 1
Discussion or meeting with the Class teacher:
to resolve concerns and complaints relating to student learning or specific student incidents in the teacher's class or group.

⇨ Resolved – no further action

⇨ Unresolved – refer to **STEP 2**

STEP 2
Discussion or meeting with the Year Level leaders:
to provide support when students from other classes are involved.

⇨ Resolved – no further action

⇨ Unresolved – refer to **STEP 3**

STEP 3
Discussion or meeting with
Assistant Principal: to resolve concerns and complaints relating to staff members or complex student welfare/discipline issues.
Principal: to resolve concerns and complaints relating to school policy, school management, staff members or complex student issues.

⇨ Resolved – no further action

⇨ Unresolved – refer to **STEP 4**

STEP 4
Contact the Department of Education (DE)