



# Quarry Hill Primary School

Website: [www.quarryhillps.vic.edu.au](http://www.quarryhillps.vic.edu.au)

Phone: 03 5442 3537

Email: [quarry.hill.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:quarry.hill.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au)

Fax: 03 5442 7590

## Parents Concerns and Complaints Policy

Quarry Hill Primary School's approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on our values of:

- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment
- Building relationships between students, parents and staff
- Providing a safe working environment for staff.

### Concerns and Complaints Covered by the Procedures

- General issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy
- Incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard
- Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- Communication with parents
- Parent contributions and payment
- 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*.

These 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

The Principal will use local complaints resolution procedures, where appropriate, for resolving complaints in relation to issues that fall within the school's area of responsibility. All cases of serious misconduct – sexual offences, criminal charges or other serious incidents - must instead be referred to DET Complaints and Investigations Unit.

## **Expectations**

Quarry Hill Primary School expects a person raising a concern or complaint to

- Do so promptly. 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 and value difference, rather than judge and blame.
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.

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

- Courteously
- Efficiently
- Fairly
- Promptly, or within the timeline agreed with the person with the concern or complaint.
- In accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework.

## **Raising Concerns or Complaints**

In the first instance, a concern or complaint should be raised with the school in person, by telephone, or in writing to:

- The student's class teacher or specialist teacher about learning issues and incidents that happen in their class or group.
- 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.

For contact details of any staff member, call the office on 5443 3537

## **Help with Raising Concerns or Complaints**

- Complainants can seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are unable to express their concern clearly. An advocate can be a friend or someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation who does not receive a fee for service.
- All parties involved in addressing a complaint may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty coming to agreement,
- Quarry Hill Primary School will ensure that the complainant is aware of these supports.
- A complainant who wishes to use these support services should ensure the person addressing the concern or complaint is aware of their intention and is in agreement.

## **Managing Parent concerns and Complaint Information**

Quarry Hill Primary School will record the following details of complaints received:

- Name and contact details (with permission) of the person with concern or complaint.
- The date the concern was expressed or the complaint made.
- The form in which the complaint was made (such as face-to-face, by telephone, email, in writing)
- A brief description of the concern or complaint.
- Details of the school officer responding to the concern or complaint
- The outcome of the action taken on the concern or complaint
- Any recommendations for future improvement in the school's policy and procedures.

However, in the first instance, when the complaint is easily resolved in a telephone call, a brief note in the school/staff member's planner recording the issue and the resolution may be all that is required.

- Quarry Hill Primary School will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving the Department.
- Quarry Hill Primary School will give a complainant a copy of its complaints procedures.
- Quarry Hill Primary School will determine whether a concern or complaint should be managed through the school's concerns and complaints process or through other complaints processes of the Department.
- All complaints will be noted and acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint.
- The School (Principal) will acknowledge all complaints made in writing. It will provide the complainant with a timeline for investigating the complaint.

Concerns and complaints about general school matters (such as timing of events, school policies) will be addressed to the Principal or relevant staff member.

Quarry Hill Primary School will make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible. If your complaint involves many students and a range of issues, the school will need more time to investigate and resolve it,

Should the complaint involve complex issues, the school might need to take advice from the Department's regional office 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, the school will try to resolve a concern or complaint within 20 school days.

### **Resolutions**

If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the school will offer an appropriate resolution. At its discretion and depending on the circumstances, Quarry Hill 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

The school will implement the resolution as soon as practicable.

### **Referral of Concerns or Complaints**

- If the person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by Quarry Hill Primary School, they should contact the Regional Office.
- The officer from the region will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved by the complainant, school and Regional Office working together, the Regional Office may refer it to the Central Complaints Team for a process review.
- If further referral or advice is required from an external agency the parent may contact the Victorian Ombudsman.

### **Protective disclosures**

Where a parent has real or substantial concerns that, as a result of raising a complaint refer to [Protected Disclosures Act 2012 – Making and Handling Protected Disclosures](#)

### **Unreasonable Complaint conduct**

All complaints in accordance with the school's complaint-handling procedures including when parent behaviour is thought to be unreasonable. Refer to [Victorian Ombudsman Unreasonable complaint conduct manual](#)

### **Anonymous complaints**

The department considers all complaints to be considered. However it recognises that its staff might not be able to fully consider a complaint if they cannot effectively liaise with parents.

### **Complaint escalations**

Parents should be made aware that they are able to take their complaint to the Victorian Ombudsman if they are dissatisfied with the outcome or response from the Department.

### **Communication**

Quarry Hill Primary School will make the policy outlining procedures for addressing concerns and complaints readily available to parents and the school community.

This information will include:

- How a person can make a complaint
- The person's responsibilities
- Information to be provided by the person
- Who the person should contact and their contact details

- The process and timeframes for managing complaints
- How the school will communicate its complaints procedures to parents and the school community.

### **Monitoring the Parent Complaints Policy**

Quarry Hill Primary School will monitor parent concerns and complaints and consider issues raised through the parent complaints process, and any other relevant information from the parent opinion survey.

The School Council will regularly review its policy and procedures to effectively address parent concerns and complaints as part of its cyclic policy and procedures review schedule.

Quarry Hill Primary School will review its information about complaints made over time to:

- Identify common or recurring issues that may need addressing
- Assess the effectiveness of these and other procedures and whether they are being followed.

### **Related Legislation**

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

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Protected Disclosure Act 2012*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Wrongs Act 1958*

### **Reference**

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

# PARENT COMPLAINT FLOWCHART

