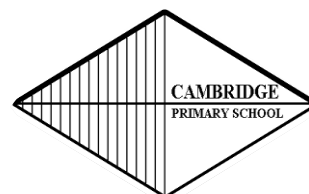


Raising Concerns and Complaints Policy



Purpose

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

- Being a community where children, parents and teachers work in partnership.
- Focusing on the development of the whole child as a lifelong learner.
- Providing a stimulating, supportive, safe and caring environment.
- Developing curriculum that caters for all students needs.
- Acknowledging and celebrating individuality and the international diversity of our community.
- Promoting critical thinking, risk-taking and an enquiring spirit.
- Encouraging and supporting students to take responsibility for their learning.
- Empowering children for life beyond Cambridge Primary School.

Guidelines

1. Concerns and complaints covered by the procedures

- general issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's code of conduct
- incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard
- learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- communication with parents
- school fees and payments
- 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*.

Those 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.

2. Expectations

At Cambridge Primary School it is expected that a person raising a concern or complaint is to:

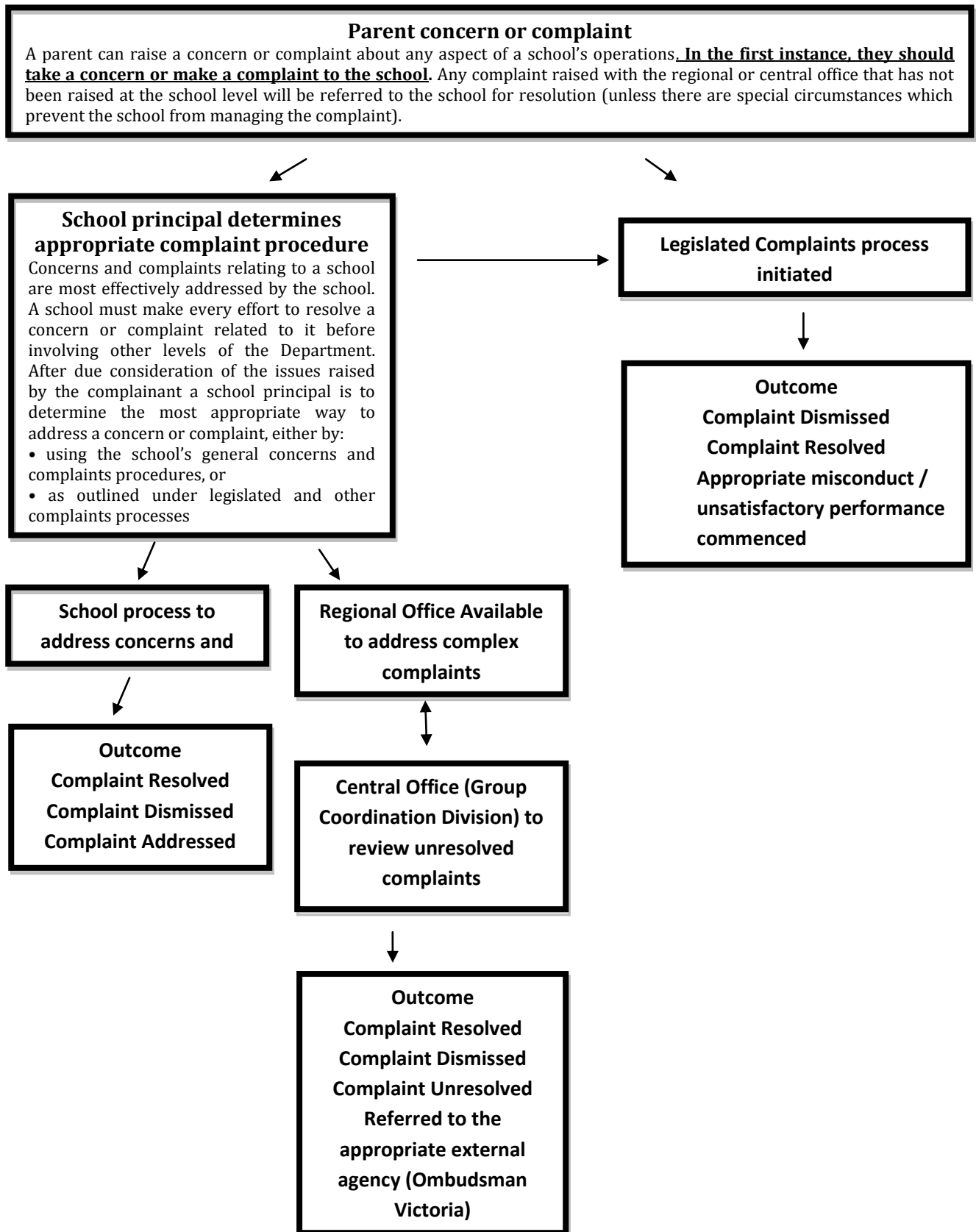
- do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs
- provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- act in good 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.

Cambridge 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.

3. Addressing Complaints or concerns

At Cambridge Primary School the DEECD Complaint Management Process as follows:



At Cambridge Primary School all parents complainants should telephone the school after making an appropriate appointment or write to:

- the student's class teacher about learning issues and incidents that happened in their class or group

- the section leader if students from several classes are involved
- the assistant principals 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.

Cambridge Primary School will:

- make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the DEECD.
- give a complainant a copy of its complaints procedures
- the 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.
- describe the process by which the school will handle the concern or complaint.
- all complaints will be noted and acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint.
- the school will provide the complainant with a timeline for investigating the complaint.
- concerns and complaints about general school matters (such as the timing of events, school policies and facilities) will be addressed by the principal or a relevant staff member.
- if a complaint involves many students and a range of issues, the school will need more time to investigate and resolve it.

4. Managing parent concerns and complaints information

Cambridge Primary School will:

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

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

5. Unreasonable complainant conduct

Unreasonable complainant conduct at Cambridge Primary School is behaviour that:

- is clearly and significantly outside the expectations of confidentiality, cooperation, courtesy and respect.
- calls for staff resources and time unjustified by the nature or significance of the complaint.
- is vexatious (that is, an action or complaint that is brought without merit, often to cause annoyance to another person)
- is oriented towards conflict.

The school Principal, Regional Director or the General Manager, Group Coordination Division will determine if a complainant's conduct is unreasonable. If so determined, they will:

- develop a plan to address the complaint and the complainant's interaction with the DEECD.
- inform the complainant of the plan
- ensure all Departmental officers adhere to the plan as closely as practicable.

Should the complaint involve complex issues, Cambridge Primary School will 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, Cambridge Primary School will try to resolve a concern or complaint within 20 school days.

6. Resolutions

At Cambridge Primary School if a concern or complaint is substantiated the examples of following remedies will be implemented. For example, at its discretion and depending on the circumstances, Cambridge 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
- to cancel a debt (such as for school payments)
- a fee refund.

7. Referral of concerns or complaints

If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by Cambridge Primary School, they should contact the Department's appropriate regional office.

- The officer from the region will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and the complainant's opinion about why the school did not resolve it to their satisfaction.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved by the complainant, school and regional office working together, the regional office may refer it to the Department's Group Coordination Division.
- The Division will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and the complainant's opinion about why the school and regional office did not resolve it to their satisfaction and will ask the complainant to outline their view on the course of action required to resolve the complaint. Where the complainant is unable to provide a written account the officer from Group Coordination Division should act on the information provided.

Evaluation

- Review annually the amount of complaints or concerns through the school register.
- Policy reviewed as part of the policy review cyclic plan.

<u>Ratification Date</u> July 2009	<u>Review Date</u> 2012	<u>Policy Number</u>	<u>Version Number</u> 1.	<u>Date Produced</u> May 2009
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