

COMPLAINTS POLICY

RATIONALE:

Amsleigh Park Primary School welcomes feedback 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, positive and respectful relationships with our school community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be trusting relationships between families and our school.



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school general office on 9544 1553 or via email: amsleigh.park.ps@education.vic.gov.au

GOALS:

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide an outline of the complaints process at Amsleigh Park Primary School, so that parent 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 Amsleigh Park Primary School 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. Please see our website at www.amsleigh.vic.edu.au for a copy of this policy.

GUIDELINES:

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.
- Please see [appendix](#) for some helpful information when addressing a concern.

Complaints and concerns process for students

Amsleigh Park Primary School acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. Amsleigh Park Primary School 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, principal, assistant principal, office staff or any trusted adult within 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 Grades 4-6)

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)

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint:

Amsleigh Park Primary School encourages parents, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- Carefully consider the issue 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 of Education and Amsleigh Park Primary School (see 'Further Information and Resources' section below)

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.

Raising a concern

Amsleigh Park Primary School 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 classroom teacher. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

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 or 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:** Amsleigh Park Primary School 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, Amsleigh Park Primary School 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, Amsleigh Park Primary School 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.

Resolution

Where appropriate, Amsleigh Park Primary School 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, Amsleigh Park Primary School 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 East Victoria Regional Office by contacting

Amsleigh Park Primary School may also refer a complaint to North East Victoria 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 process, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Raise a complaint or concern about your school.](#)

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.

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

- Available publicly on school website
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Annual reference in school newsletter
- 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](#)

STATUS:

Reviewed: 2nd March 2023

Consultation: School Council: 2nd March 2023

Approved by: Principal – Michael Cormick

Next Review: March 2025

Appendix:

PARENTAL COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE

RATIONALE

The Department of Education and Training (the Department) recognises that it is in the best interest of students to form a trusting and cooperative relationship between parent and school. Amsleigh Park Primary School is committed to good communication and treating everyone according to our school values of Respect, Integrity, Motivation, Resilience and Inclusion. We will endeavour to work with parents in a positive manner seeking to enhance the partnership between families and the school. The following procedure has been developed by the school to ensure all parties understand how a parent can communicate with a staff member.

Communication at Amsleigh Park Primary School

1. Choose the best person with whom to communicate your concern, e.g. classroom/specialist teacher, principal, assistant principal or teacher leader.
 - Matters that are best first addressed by the classroom teacher or specialist teacher may include: individual student needs, academic progress, assessment, behaviour and discipline issues, friendship or social wellbeing concerns, non-attendance at school and challenging or changing family circumstances.
 - Matters that are best addressed by the principal / assistant principal may include: school facilities, parent payments, student reporting, Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD), serious wellbeing concerns, bullying behaviours, school policy, dress codes and/or serious discipline issues. The principal will also be available to speak to parents about any other concerns they may have and wish to raise with a more senior member of staff
2. Contact the school office or classroom teacher to make an appointment outside of 8.45am and 3.30pm as teachers have a duty of care to students during these times.
3. If the situation requires urgent or immediate attention the staff member will make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. Urgent matters include any issues that affect immediate student safety, health or wellbeing. Any urgent matters should be taken via the school office and can then be dealt with by the principal or assistant principal.
4. For non-urgent matters, the classroom teacher, principal team or PLC Leader will contact you via telephone, email, or have a face-to-face meeting in a timely manner.
5. Your initial contact will be acknowledged in a timely manner and followed through by the appropriate member of staff. Some instances may require further information. In this instance an undertaking will be given by the staff member for a subsequent appointment.

Please read this communication procedure in conjunction with the Parents complaint policy if needed.

Addressing an issue or concern at Amsleigh Park Primary School

Amsleigh Park Primary School is committed to good communication and treating everyone according to our school values of respect, Integrity, motivation, inclusion and resilience. We will endeavour to work with parents in a positive manner seeking to enhance the partnership between families and the school. The following process has been developed by the school to ensure all parties understand how a parent can communicate a concern with a staff member and what they might reasonably expect to happen.

6. Choose the best person with whom to communicate your concern, e.g. classroom teacher, principal or school leader.
 - Matters that are best addressed by the classroom teacher or specialist teacher may include: individual student needs, academic progress, assessment, behaviour and discipline issues, non-attendance at school and challenging or changing family circumstances.
 - Matters that are best addressed by the principal or sub-school leader may include: school facilities, school fees and charges, student reporting, school policy, dress codes and/or serious discipline issues. The principal will also be available to speak to parents about any other concerns they may have and wish to raise with a more senior member of staff.
7. Contact the school office or classroom teacher to make an appointment outside of 8.45am and 3.30pm as teachers have a duty of care to students during these times. Parents should refrain from approaching teachers during class time, which compromises this duty of care.
8. If the situation requires urgent or immediate attention the staff member will make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. Urgent matters include any issues that affect immediate student safety, health or wellbeing. Any urgent matters should be taken via the school office and can then be dealt with by the principal and/or assistant principal.
9. For non-urgent matters the classroom teacher, principal or PLC leader will commit to an arrangement to either contact you via telephone or have a face-to-face meeting in a timely manner.
10. Where possible it is best if a concern can be resolved quickly. There may be some instances where further information is required. In this instance an undertaking will be given by the staff member for a subsequent appointment.
11. If the matter requires any specific follow up information or outcome to be provided to the parent the staff member will indicate when they might expect a response, and how this response will be communicated to them.
12. The staff member who dealt with the concern will be responsible for following up with the parent.
13. If a parent has raised a concern with a classroom teacher and is not satisfied with the response they should contact the principal to discuss their concerns further.
14. If a parent believes their complaint has not been resolved appropriately they can access information from the Department of Education about raising a complaint.