

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

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Amsleigh Park Primary School so that students, parents, carers 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 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. For example:

- 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 Victoria 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 [[insert hyperlink](#)]
Policy

Amsleigh Park Primary School 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:

- actively listen to one another, be considerate of each other's views, and respect each other's role
- be student focused

- be resolution focused and attempt to preserve working relationships
- act co-operatively and in good faith
- behave with respect and courtesy
- be inclusive, considerate, and respect the cultural safety of all people, including Aboriginal people, and the human rights of all parties including but not limited to disability, age, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, and marital status
- consider communication needs and preferences
- ensure that complainants and students related to complainants are not victimised for making a complaint or asserting their rights
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved unless permitted or required to share information by law
- operate within, and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with, all applicable legislation and department policies.

Under the Child Safe Standards, schools are required to have a complaint handling policy that clearly outlines the process for making a complaint. This includes complaints from both students and parents/carers.

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 their classroom teacher, assistant principal and principal. 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/carers complaints and concerns process is outlined further below. The parent/carers process also applies to students who are mature minors. Refer to: [Mature Minors and Decision Making](#).

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 \(VAEAI\)](#)
- Complaints and concerns process for parents, carers and community members

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

Our school also offers interpreting and translation services to parents and carers who have limited or no English language skills to assist in communicating their concerns.

Making a complaint

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents, carers or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the 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. Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the general 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. Amsleigh Park Primary School will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 2 school days and will seek to resolve complaints within 15 school days. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, some complaints may take more than 15 school days. 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.
3. 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 school and regional staff to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised. In some instances, the leadership team may reach out to subject matter experts for advice. The school may also reach out to the complainant for further information or to clarify concerns.
4. Depending on the nature of the complaint the principal and/or assistant principal will decide on the appropriate response which could involve a written response or a resolution meeting.
5. Where required, 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. 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.

In some instances, the school in consultation with the region may suggest mediation, conciliation or other alternative methods of resolving the complaint based on the complexity and urgency of issues raised in the complaint.

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/carer 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.

In some instances, the resolution may include actions that must be taken by both the school and the complainant.

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, you may contact the department by phone on [1800 338 663](tel:1800338663), via the [Enquiries form](#) or by email at enquiries@education.vic.gov.au.

Amsleigh Park Primary School may also refer a complaint to North East Victorian Regional if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

For more information about the department's parent/carer complaints process, including the role of the regional office, please see: [Make a complaint about your school](#)

Review of complaints

Amsleigh Park 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.

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 forums/through communication tools
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following department policies and resources are relevant to this Complaints Policy:

- [Complaint resolution](#)
- [Make a complaint about your school](#)
- [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)
- [Report sexual abuse if you're a current or former student](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Complaints Policy and can be accessed via the school website.

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

STATUS:

Policy last reviewed	15-6-26
Consultation	Staff School Council School Community
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	15-06-28

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.

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.

1. 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.
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. Parents should refrain from approaching teachers during class time, which compromises this duty of care.
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 and/or assistant principal.
4. 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.
5. Amsleigh Park will make every effort to resolve complaints according to the processes as outlined in this policy.