

SKIPPS PARENT & CARERS' COMPLAINTS POLICY

Rationale:

1. St Kilda Park Primary School (SKIPPS) values parent/carer feedback, including parent/carer concerns about the school. The school community is committed to our school values of Respect, Resilience, Creativity and Enthusiasm. Diversity is valued, relationships within our school community are based upon dignity, respect and the right to be heard, and we are committed to providing safe and supportive work and learning environments.

What is a parent or carer complaint?

2. A parent/carer's concern or complaint regarding the school may be of a general or specific nature, and raise minor or major issues. Examples of a concern regarding the school's operations include but not limited to a concern regarding:
 - a. A school policy or procedure considered to be unfair or unreasonable or inappropriate
 - b. A decision which is considered to be unfair or unreasonable or inappropriate
 - c. An activity that is considered to be inappropriate or inconsistent with the school's values or purpose, or that is conducted in such a way as to be inappropriate or inconsistent with the school's values or purpose,
 - d. Unprofessional or inappropriate conduct by staff, students, parents or other members of our school community.
 - e. A particular incident at school
 - f. Discrimination, harassment or bullying

Aims:

1. To support the school's interactions with the parent community through the provision of effective policies and procedures that will assist in the resolution of complaints.
2. To ensure that effective policies and procedures for dealing with different kinds of complaints are developed and implemented.
3. To ensure these policies and procedures are clearly communicated to the school community
4. To ensure that all complaints are dealt with in a fair, consistent and confidential (where appropriate) manner.
5. To respond to those involved in a timely manner.
6. To promote the spirit of cooperation in the resolution of complaints.

Implementation:

1. All complaints will be considered and dealt with in a fair, consistent and confidential manner.
2. The school community will be educated in raising issues and concerns appropriately and to understand their rights and responsibilities.
3. Processes within the DET publications, Local Complaints Resolution Procedures, and Managing Unsatisfactory Performance will be adhered to.
4. All members of the school community have the right to take their complaint to an appropriate external agency.
5. All complaints ultimately must be addressed and resolved at the school level and the Principal is the key person in seeking a satisfactory outcome.
6. Parents will be informed via the newsletter and the school's website of this policy and complaint resolution procedures.
7. School Councillors and staff will actively support and reinforce the policy and protocols with all members of the school community.

General Procedures for raising concerns

1. Raise the matter with the school via personal contact, telephone, diary entry or written communication.
2. Speak with the most appropriate person to deal with the concern (classroom teacher, coordinator, Assistant Principal). The school can advise on this.
3. If the issue is not resolved make an appointment to speak with the Principal.
4. The School and complainant will monitor the situation with follow up phone calls or meetings if required.
5. Support of outside agencies such as guidance officers or social workers may be required.
6. If the matter is still unresolved the Principal or complainant can seek advice from the Regional Office.
7. If the matter is unresolved at the Regional level, complaints can be addressed in writing to the Deputy Secretary, Office for Government School Education, c/o Manager, Community and Stakeholder Relations Branch, 33 St Andrews Place, East Melbourne VIC 3000.

Informal resolution

An informal process may be used where:

- a. The complaint is of a minor nature
- b. The complainant wishes the matter dealt with informally
- c. The complaint has arisen from lack of or unclear communication.

Informal resolution may involve:

- a. Discussion between one or more parties
- b. The complainant dealing with the situation themselves but seeking advice as to possible strategies to resolve the matter
- c. The complainant asking another person to speak on their behalf
- d. Where an informal process of complaints resolution is not successful, and the complainant wishes to pursue the matter, the Principal will implement the formal process.

Formal Process

1. A complaint of a serious nature needs to be raised with the Principal.
2. The formal process comprises the following steps:
 - a. Investigating the complaint
 - b. Determining the appropriate action (dismiss or accept the complaint)
 - c. Preparing a report
 - d. Monitoring the situation
 - e. Where the Principal is the subject of a serious complaint, the matter must be referred to the Regional Senior Advisor.
 - f. In cases of serious misconduct by a staff member, the Principal must contact the Department's Complaints and Investigations Unit.

Such serious incidents include:

- Sexual or criminal allegations,
- Serious negligence,
- Harassment,
- Drug or alcohol misuse.

Outcomes

1. All members of the school community will be aware of their rights and responsibilities in raising concerns.
2. All members of the school community will be informed of the appropriate persons to approach with concerns.
3. Ideally, resolutions will be achieved which are mutually acceptable to both parties.
4. Concerns will be dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently.
5. Unnecessary escalation of the situation will be minimised.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

August 2015