COMPLAINTS POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the Hampton Primary School office on 9598 1412.

PURPOSE

- Provide an outline of the complaints process at Hampton Primary School so that parents and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school and/or concerning students from Hampton Primary School
- Ensure that all complaints regarding Hampton Primary School are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

SCOPE

This policy relates to complaints brought by parents, carers, students or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school.
In some limited instances, we may need to refer the complainant to another policy or area if there are different processes in place to manage the issues 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

IMPLEMENTATION

Hampton 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

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- 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.

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS PROCESS FOR STUDENTS

Hampton Primary School acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. Hampton 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, Year Level Coordinators, Wellbeing staff, Principal Class, Koorie Education Support Officers, Education Support staff. 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)

COMPLAINTS & CONCERNS PROCESS FOR PARENTS, CARERS & COMMUNITY

Preparation for Raising a Concern or Complaint

Hampton 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 Hampton 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

Hampton Primary School is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Parent/carer concerns in the first instance should be directed to your child's teacher. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

Directing your Concerns

Please note: In the event of an emergency or urgent situation that involves the physical or mental wellbeing of a student, please contact the Principal or Assistant Principal immediately

Talk with	About	For Example	How	Response time
Class teacher	Your child's progress and/or wellbeing or the curriculum	• Home reading • Not wanting to go to school • Positive feedback for the teacher • Child unhappy in class or in playground • Educational event info e.g. NAPLAN • Excursion • Absence note • Assisting in the classroom	Generally it is not appropriate to raise an issue face to face during school hours as this doesn't allow the teacher involved to give you their full attention whilst they are teaching the class. • Email • Note to the teacher • If necessary, arrange a meeting • Voicemail left at the office	Generally acknowledged within 2 working days with a proposed course of action
Year Level Strategic Leaders and/or Learning Specialists / Leading Teachers	Your child's progress and/or happiness or the curriculum because: • you see the issue as a team-wide concern or query • Students from several classes in the same year level are involved.	• Positive feedback for the team/individual • Inconsistent messages/expectations from teachers within the team • Bullying matters across classes within the level • Positive feedback to the teachers in the team or teacher performance • Clarification about a learning unit • Organisational matters and whole-level communication	• Email • Note to teacher • If necessary arrange a meeting • Voicemail left at the office	Generally acknowledged within 2 working days with a proposed course of action
Assistant Principal	• School-wide matters • Your child's progress or wellbeing and you have already tried other channels (eg. teacher, year-level Strategic Leader	• Positive/constructive feedback • Complex student welfare matters • Playground bullying issues already addressed	• Email • If necessary, arrange a meeting • Phone call/voicemail left • Parents are encouraged to	Acknowledged within 2 working days (depending on the urgency of the issue) with the proposed course of action

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	and/or learning specialist)	with class teacher or leading teacher • Major curriculum matters • Complex student learning or achievement issues • Referrals to student support service officers; psychologist, OT, speech therapy • issues involving school staff • Reporting matters of serious or critical concern	request a meeting to discuss more serious matters	
Principal	• School-wide matters • Your child's progress or well-being and you have already unsuccessfully tried the above staff/processes	• Positive/constructive feedback • School safety matters • School policy • Very complex student welfare and learning issues • School staff • School management matters • Reporting matters of serious or critical concern	• Email • Phone call/voicemail left • If necessary, arrange a meeting	Acknowledged within 2 working days (depending on the urgency of the issue) with the proposed course of action

Talk with	About	For example	How	Response time
School Council	School-wide governance matters The School Council is not responsible for any teacher-specific or employment issues and does not discuss any individual issues between teachers and students or parents; these are the responsibility of the Principal.	• General governance • Grounds & safety • Major broad curriculum • Parent communication • Policies or strategy • Finance or budgets • Environment or buildings • Health and safety • Outsourced programs such as OSHC and after school providers	• Phone call/letter to School Council • President or other member of School Council • Email to School Council email address	Acknowledged with the proposed course of action Generally timing in-line with next school council meeting
School Office	School administration matters: • The School Office is often the first point of contact for parents/ carers and they will capably filter and channel requests, feedback	• Safety & repair needing immediate attention • School fees & payments • Scheduling meetings for the Principal and AP • Urgent messages for teachers and /or other staff re: matters that have	• Phone call • Email	• Immediately or ASAP but within 2 working days

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	and concerns to the right people for you.	arisen during the school day pertaining to urgent medical / health issues • General questions such as school dates, location of students/buildings etc.		

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 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:

This will occur via email, telephone or in a scheduled meeting with the Principal or Assistant Principal to outline the complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are. The complaint will be dealt with in a way that is preferred by the complainant (eg. In writing, in person or over the phone). For any verbal complaints received, the complaint will be documented and then sent to the complainant to ensure it has been understood.

If English is not a first language and the complainant has difficulty communicating their complaint, the school will offer the VITS translation service to assist.

2. Timelines

Hampton Primary School will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within 2 business days during school terms) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Hampton Primary School may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. The school 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, Hampton Primary School will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

3. 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 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. 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.

In some circumstances, Hampton 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.

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

Resolution
Where appropriate, Hampton 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, Hampton Primary School may also ask a complainant 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, such as a Community Liaison Officer.

Escalation
If a parent or carer is not satisfied that the 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, via the Enquiries form or by email at enquiries@education.vic.gov.au.

Hampton Primary School may also refer a complaint to the South Eastern Victoria Region if the school believes that it has done all it 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
Hampton 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.

RELATED POLICIES & 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

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- Report sexual abuse if you're a current or former student

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on school website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Available for staff on the staff shared drive
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

POLICY REVIEW & APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	March 2026
Approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date	Review every 3 to 4 years

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