



PARENT COMPLAINTS POLICY

Brunswick South Primary School

Policy Implementation Date December 2015	Review Date December 2018	Responsible for Review Policy Subcommittee
--	-------------------------------------	--

Purpose

To outline Brunswick South Primary School's approach to addressing communication from parents, including complaints, compliments, comments and questions.

The aims of this policy are:

- To provide a clear process to follow so parent communications are raised and dealt with promptly and fairly
- To assist staff to confidently address communication from parents
- To ensure a balance between the rights of all parties involved.

Compliance Requirements

This Parent Communication Policy is based on the "Addressing parents' concerns and complaints effectively: policy and guides" booklet from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), April 2009.

Policy Points

This policy covers parent communication about:

- General issues of student behaviour that are contrary to Brunswick South Primary School's Student Engagement Policy
- Incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard
- Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- School fees and payments
- General administrative issues
- Any other school-related matters (except as detailed below).

Matters not covered by this policy, for which there are existing rights of review or appeal include:

- Student discipline matters involving expulsions
- Complaints about employee conduct, performance or other matters that should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action

- Complaints by employees related to their employment
- Student critical incident matters
- Other criminal matters.

The Principal or DEECD Regional Office can advise about specific procedures for complaints of these types

Process for parents communicating with the school

A parent or guardian can make a comment or raise a complaint about any aspect of Brunswick South Primary School's operations.

In the first instance, parents should communicate with the school by telephoning, visiting and/or writing to:

1. The student's teacher, in relation to learning issues and incidents that happened in their class or group
2. The Assistant Principal, if students from several classes are involved
3. The Principal, about issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex student issues
4. If you are not sure who to contact, contact the school on 9380 1231 or

brunswick.south.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au

5. Concerns or complaints should not be raised through Brunswick South Primary School social media platforms.

Brunswick South Primary School expects a person making a comment, raising a concern or complaint to:

- Do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs
- Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint, preferably in writing
- 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.

Process for responding to parent communications

1. Brunswick South 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 of Education and Early Childhood Development's regulatory framework
2. All complaints will be noted and acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint.

3. If the issue raised can be easily resolved or responded to in person, or by a telephone call or email, a brief note in the School's/Principal's/teacher's diary recording the issue and the resolution may be all that is required.
4. With more complex/serious issues the following details will be recorded by the employee receiving and/or responding to the communication:
 - Name and contact details of the person raising the issue
 - The date the issue was raised 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
 - Any recommendations for future improvement in the school's policy or procedures
 - Upon thorough investigation, further discussion and clarification with all parties involved, the Principal, Assistant Principal, teacher or delegate will provide a response to the complainant.
5. If a parent communication involves many students and a range of issues, the school will need more time to investigate and respond. In such cases, Brunswick South Primary School may need to take advice from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Regional Office, which can take more time. The school will inform the parent of the expected timeline for addressing the issue and the reasons for any delays.
6. In all cases, the school will try to resolve a concern or complaint within twenty days.
7. If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, Brunswick South Primary School will offer an appropriate remedy, to be implemented as soon as practicable. For example, at its discretion and depending on the circumstances, the 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.

Brunswick South Primary School will make every effort to resolve issues raised, however the School may determine whether a comment or complaint should be addressed through the school's comments and complaints process or through other DEECD complaints processes.

Referral of concerns or complaints

If a parent is not satisfied with the outcome determined by Brunswick South Primary School, they should contact the DEECD's North Western Victoria regional office.

The regional office will ask for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and the parent's opinion about why the school did not resolve it to their satisfaction.

If the parent, school and regional office working together cannot resolve the issue, the regional office may refer the matter to DEECD's Group Coordination Division. The division will ask the parent for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and parent'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 issue. Where the parent is unable to provide a written account the division will act on the information provided.

Help with raising concerns or complaints

Personal support is most appropriate in situations where a parent and/or others involved have emotional issues related to the communication.

Parents are able to seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are unable to express their issue or concern clearly. An advocate can be a friend or someone available through an appropriate support organisation who does not receive a fee for service.

All parties involved in addressing a parent's communication may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty coming to an agreement.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of these supports. A parent who wishes to use these support services should ensure the person responding to the communication is aware of their intention and is in agreement.

Monitoring and review

Brunswick South Primary School will monitor parent communications received and regularly review its policy and procedures to effectively address parent concerns and complaints as part of the School's cyclic policy and procedures review schedule.

Communication

Information about this policy will be published:

- on Brunswick South Primary School's website
- in the Parent Information Book
- in the school newsletter.

Training

Brunswick South Primary School will:

- Brief all members of staff (including volunteers) about its procedures to address concerns and complaints
- Provide staff with (or provide access to) training and support appropriate to their responsibilities under the procedures.

Related school policies

Student Engagement Policy

Social Media Policy

School values

Brunswick South Primary School's approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on our values of: constant learning, mutual responsibility, compassion and sense of possibility.