

PARENT COMPLAINTS

POLICY

Ripponlea Primary School (RPS) has developed procedures to address parent complaints.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at RPS so that parents and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at RPS
- ensure that all complaints regarding RPS are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

SCOPE

This policy relates to complaints brought by parents, carers, students or members of the RPS school community and applies to all matters relating to RPS. In some limited instances, RPS may need to refer the complainant to another Department of Education and Training (DET) process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions, for example, expulsion appeals.

POLICY

RPS welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. RPS values open communication with RPS families and is committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. RPS recognises that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

RPS values and encourages open and positive relationships with the RPS school community. RPS understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and RPS.

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.

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

RPS encourages parents, carers or members of the RPS community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- carefully consider the issues to be discussed
- 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 DET and RPS (see “Further Information and Resources” section below).

Complaints process

RPS 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:

- the child’s teacher, in relation to learning issues and incidents in the class room;
- the Assistant Principal in relation to issues relating to staff members, school policy, school management and complex student issues.

Where possible, school staff will work with parents/carers and community members to ensure that concerns are appropriately addressed.

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, RPS 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:** The complainant should either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the RPS school office with the Principal or Assistant Principal to outline the complaint so that RPS can fully understand what the issues are. RPS can discuss the complaint in a way that is convenient for the complainant, 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 Principal or Assistant 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 the complainant to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event that the complainant 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:** RPS will acknowledge receipt of a 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, RPS may need some time to gather enough information to fully

understand the circumstances of the complaint. RPS 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, RPS will consult with the complainant and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Resolution

Where appropriate, RPS 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, RPS 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 a parent/carer or community member is not satisfied that their complaint has been resolved by RPS, or if their complaint is about the Principal, then the complaint should be referred to the South Eastern Victoria Regional Office by phoning 03 8765 5600 or emailing sevr@edumail.vic.gov.au.

RPS may also refer a complaint to the South Eastern Victoria Region if it believes that it has done all it can to address the complaint.

For more information about the Department's *Parent Complaints* policy, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Parent Complaints policy](#).

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- Statement of Values
- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Privacy Policy
- Mandatory Reporting

Ratified by School Council: September 2020

Next review date: September 2024