



COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES RESOLUTION POLICY

Rationale:

The Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy has been developed to provide a timely and professional response to parent/carer complaints and is an effective means of encouraging communication, building trust and resolving issues for the betterment of all concerned.

Aims:

To develop, implement and provide an outline of the complaints process at Morang South Primary School so that parents and members of the community can confidently raise concerns in the knowledge that they will be listened to and their concerns will be professionally managed in a timely, confidential and appropriate manner. This policy aims to;

- ensure that all complaints regarding Morang South Primary School are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner
- provide a safe and supportive learning environment
- build positive and genuine relationships between students, parents and staff
- provide a safe working environment for all staff
- resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with DET guidelines

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 Department of Education and Training (DET) process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions, for example, expulsion appeals.

Policy:

Morang South 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.

Implementation

- Relationships with parents are important to us. We take complaints raised by parents, carers, students or members of our school community seriously.
- Parents or other persons making complaints should ascertain the facts as best they can, and contact the school at their earliest convenience.

- The procedure for making a complaint is detailed on our school website.
- Parents or other persons with complaints should contact the school by telephone, in person or in writing.
- Parents or other persons visiting the school to make a complaint are advised that it is unlikely that staff will be immediately available to investigate the complaint. Office staff will make an appointment to meet with an appropriate person to discuss their concerns.
- Parents or other persons making complaints or attending meetings regarding a complaint are to be well-behaved, confidential and courteous. Anyone found to be being unreasonable, threatening or discourteous can expect their discussions with staff to be concluded until such time as an alternative discussion time is arranged by the school.
- The school will record the details of all complaints including the name and contact details of the persons making the complaints. The school will then refer the complaint to the most appropriate person to investigate. There will be many occasions that this will be someone other than the principal.
- The principal will determine whether or not an anonymous complaint will be investigated.
- The investigating staff member may conduct a preliminary investigation or communicate with the parent to discuss the matter further.
- If the scope of the investigation is beyond the capacity or jurisdiction of the school, the matter will be referred to the appropriate authority and the parent will be informed of the referral.
- Parents discussing complaints with staff may be accompanied by an advocate if they wish.
- Any investigation conducted by the school will be done so in a timely, efficient and confidential manner, in accordance with our Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy which includes our School Values and the School Rights. Parents will be provided with an anticipated time-frame for a resolution.
- The investigating staff member will record the details of the investigation.
- Following the investigation, the investigating staff member will communicate with the parent to provide their findings and an appropriate course of action, if any.
- If in the view of the parent the matter remains unresolved, the parent will be provided with details as to how they can refer the matter to the Department of Education's regional office.
- Similarly, the school, the parent or other involved parties may seek to involve a mediator to try to resolve any unresolved complaint.
- Our school will develop a variety of policies relating to areas where complaints often arise, so that all parties are sure of the school's position.
- All records of parent complaints, subsequent investigations and outcomes will be stored by the principal's office.
- All staff will be made aware of our school's complaints handling procedures and will be supported in the management of how to minimise, respond to, and address parent complaints.
- Where there are reoccurring areas of concern School Council members may consider aggregated complaints data to determine areas that could be better managed.

Inclusivity

Our schools strive to be inclusive. This means schools are respectful, supportive and equitable environments.

Due diligence

Our schools have a duty of care to all students and staff. Therefore prudent action must be taken in all cases.

Restorative Practices

The overriding principle of all our interactions is that we strive to restore relationships; holding parties accountable with the aim to repair any harm that may have been done.

When addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- raise and discuss issues in a courteous and respectful manner
- acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome that is in the affected student's best interests and acceptable to all parties
- act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- recognise that all parties, including the broader school community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced
- 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

Morang South 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
- be aware that schools are subject to legal constraints which may restrict the details they can disclose and action they can undertake
- think about how the matter could be resolved
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the Department and Morang South Primary School

Complaints process

Morang South Primary School is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. General concerns from members of the community should be directed to the office staff for follow up or response from the Assistant Principal or Principal. Concerns regarding students in the first instance should be directed to your child's teacher or the year level Team Leaders. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to further discuss the issues or 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:** Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the Principal or Assistant 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. **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 suitable, 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 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.
4. **Timelines:** Morang South Primary School will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within 48 hours) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Morang South Primary School may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. 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, Morang South Primary School will consult with the parties involved and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Resolution

Where appropriate, Morang South 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, Morang South Primary School may also ask those involved 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 or community member is not satisfied that their complaint has been resolved by the school, then the complaint should be referred to DET through the North Western Regional Office by contacting 1300 338 691.

Morang South Primary School may also refer a complaint to the DET's North Western Regional Office if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Statement of Values and School Philosophy

Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy

Duty of Care Policy

REVIEW PERIOD

Evaluation:

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

Date Implemented	2013
Author	(DET Template)
Approval Required: 'Consultation Recommended'	Ratified By - School Council (2016) Consultation by School Council (2019)
Dates Reviewed	28/11/12 25/03/2019
Responsible for Review	Assistant Principal
Next Review Dates	11/16 25/03/2023
References	Victorian Government Schools Policy Advisory Guide