



# Lysterfield Primary School

## RAISING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Department of Education and Training is committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect and encourages good communication between parents and schools. It is important to remember that everyone in the school community should work together in a spirit of cooperation and understanding and should conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous and calm manner.

### GUIDELINES FOR ACTION

Remember:

- the school should always be your first point of contact
- concerns are best resolved at the school
- you can withdraw your complaint at any time
- it may not always be possible to resolve an issue to your complete satisfaction
- DET expects that most complaints will be resolved by the school - that is at Step 2 (or Step 3), of the following process.

### How do I raise an issue or make a complaint?

Step 1: Clarify the issue (what is your concern?)

Step 2: Contact the relevant teacher; or

Step 3: Contact the Assistant Principal or Principal

### Step 1: Clarify the issue (what is your concern?)

Before you approach the school or your child's teacher:

- be clear about the topic or issue you want to discuss
- focus on the things that genuinely affect your child
- always remain calm and curious, remember you may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue you wish to discuss
- think about what an acceptable outcome would be for you and your child
- be informed; check DET policies or guidelines, where relevant
- ask the school for a copy of their complaints policy

## **Step 2: Contact the relevant teacher; or**

There are a number of ways you can raise any concerns you have about your child. You can:

- write a note to your child's teacher outlining your concerns
- make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with the class teacher or the Instructional Leader; ensuring that you inform the school about the issue you wish to discuss
- arrange any meeting times or phone calls through the school office (this is more convenient for both you and your child's teacher and does not interrupt teachers during the time they need to be with their students)
- plan what you will say so you can clearly explain what the problem is (you might want to make some notes to help you)
- have some ideas about how the problem could be realistically resolved
- if you still have a concern after talking to your child's teacher/s you may want to speak to the Assistant Principal or Principal.

*Remember that the class teacher / year level coordinator, together with others who may be involved, should be given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address your concerns.*

## **Step 3: Contact the Assistant Principal or Principal**

Most concerns are resolved by following the first two steps above. However, if the issue remains unresolved after you have approached your child's teacher or other school staff you can then ask to see the Assistant Principal or Principal.

To do this, you will need to request an appointment through the school office. Be aware that:

- the Principal may ask another senior staff member to speak with you on their behalf
- if the issue relates to your child and their classroom and you have not spoken to the teacher, the Principal may refer you to do so
- if a teacher is going to be present at the meeting it is more likely to occur outside of classroom hours
- if your concern is related to issues of school policy, these should be raised more formally (in writing) with the principal or the school council

**If you still feel that your complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily after speaking to the Classroom Teacher the Assistant Principal or Principal, you can then contact the community liaison officer at the Northern Eastern Victorian Region.**

It is the regional office's responsibility to:

- ensure that complaints, wherever possible, are resolved at the school
- ensure that procedures at the school are in accordance with DET regulatory framework

### Lodging a complaint in writing:

You can use the Department's complaint form to help you put together all the information you need to submit a complaint in writing, see: **Parent Complaint Form (Appendix B)**

- if you are having difficulties filling out the form you can contact your regional office for assistance
- you can send your complaint by mail, email or fax, details on the **Parent Complaint Form (Appendix B)**
- the Department's central office will try to respond within 20 school days. However, the more complex and sensitive the issues you raise, the more time will be needed to investigate or follow up with the relevant parties.
- the Regional Office may refer your complaint to other areas or branches within DET
- the Department will let you know if there may be major delays
- all concerns and complaints lodged with the Department about a Government school are addressed in line with relevant professional and administrative standards and in accordance with obligations and rights afforded under Victorian legislative and regulatory frameworks. These include the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010

### When to contact the central office

If the matter remains unresolved after discussions with your regional office you can send your complaint, in writing, to:

Deputy Secretary, Schools and Regional Services  
c/o Manager, Complaints and Improvement Unit  
GPO Box 4367 Melbourne VIC 3001

Or via <https://fs27.formsite.com/CHgztD/grrdkmmbg1/index.html>

The Department's Complaints and Improvement Unit can help resolve and support the management of complaints that have escalated from the regional level.

### Complaints and Improvement Unit

The Complaints and Improvement Unit:

- receives and responds to complaints that are not able to be resolved at a school or regional level
- ensures complaints received by the Minister's Office, the Secretary of the Department, or the Deputy Secretary, Schools and Regional Services, are referred to the appropriate area for review and response in accordance with the Department's policies and processes
- provides advice and support to all parties regarding complaint management
- provides complaint management capability building functions to support continuous improvement
- considers the suitability of complaints to be referred to the [Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution](#)
- liaises with, and makes referrals of suitable matters to, the [Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution](#).

The Complaints and Improvement Unit can also respond to general school queries about this policy.

## Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution

The [Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution](#) is independent of the Department. It helps to resolve escalated and complex disputes that have not been settled at the school or regional level or by the Complaints and Improvement Unit. The Independent Office can also help schools resolve other disputes and conflicts early, when a parent contacts the Independent Office directly.

Once involved, the Independent Office supports all parties (including parents, students and principals) to work towards resolving the dispute.

An eligible dispute may be referred to the Independent Office by the Department's Complaints and Improvement Unit as part of the Department's complaint escalation process. Disputes may also be referred directly by a student, parent or carer to the Independent Office.

Further information about the Independent Office can be found on the [Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution](#).

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you would like further information about school policies you can visit the School Policy and Advisory Guide on the Department's website at [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

### **LINKS and APPENDICIES**

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the DET policy found at:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/complaints>

**Appendix A** : Parent Complaint Flowchart

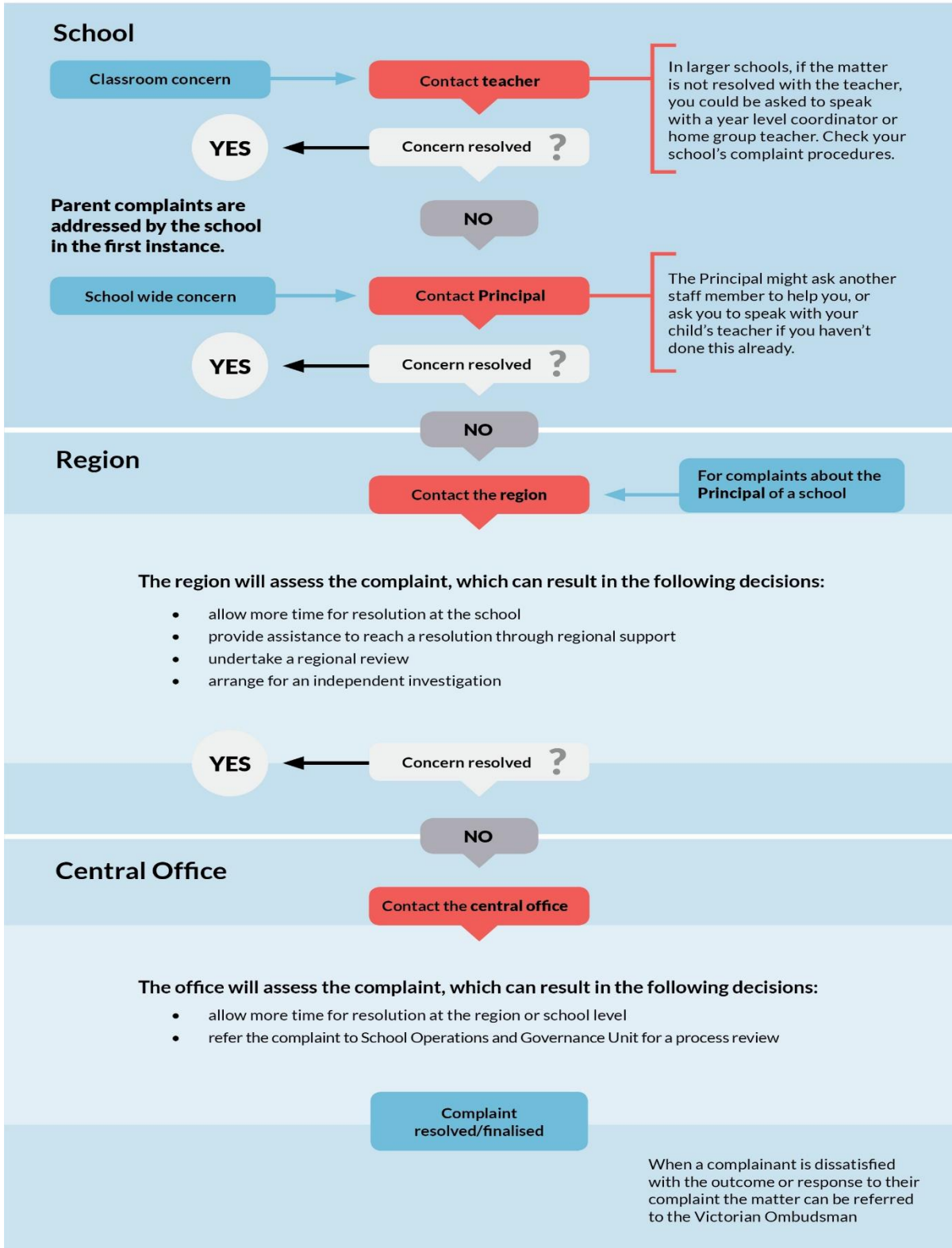
**Appendix B** : DET Parent Complaint Form

### **REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION**

This policy was last updated on March 202 and is scheduled for review in March 2022.

# Appendix A

## PARENT COMPLAINT FLOWCHART



## Appendix B

# Parent Complaint Form



Education  
and Training

This form should be used only when all avenues to have your complaint resolved at your child's Government school have been exhausted and you feel the issue/s are of such significance that you wish to register your complaint in writing with the school's Regional Office or the Regional Services Group.

### PERSONAL DETAILS:

Title:	First name:	Family name:
Street Address:		
Suburb:	Postcode:	

Telephone: B/H	Mobile:
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Email:
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### STUDENT DETAILS:

First name:	Family name:
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Year level:	Gender (please tick)	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
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SCHOOL NAME:
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Who have you contacted previously about your complaint? (please indicate below)

Class teacher:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Year Level Co-ord:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assistant Principal:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Principal:	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Region:	<input type="checkbox"/>	(please provide name/s and date/s)
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**COMPLAINT DETAILS:**

Please provide an outline of your complaint. Include relevant dates / detail of phone conversations or meetings / any explanations that you think are important. Attach extra pages as required (including copies of other documents relevant to your complaint).

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**How do you think this issue can be resolved?**

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Send the form to the regional office – details below.

Glen Waverley office

Phone: 1300333231

Fax: 03 8392 9333

Location: Level 2, 295 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley 3150

Area: Inner East

You may also send your complaint to the Department's central office, however the complaint will be referred back to the relevant regional office where it appears that the matter has not yet been raised in writing at the regional level.

Deputy Secretary, Regional Services Group  
C/- Manager, Complaints

Performance Division  
GPO Box 4367, Melbourne 3001

[school.complaints@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:school.complaints@edumail.vic.gov.au)

**Or fax:** (03) 9637 2180

The Department will endeavour to provide a full response to your complaint within 20 school days from receipt of this form.

#### **Privacy Statement**

The Department has an information privacy policy and handles personal information in accordance with the Victorian Privacy laws: the Information *Privacy Act 2000* and *Health Records Act 2001*.

See <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/privacy.aspx>.