

Caulfield Junior College



Parent Concern and Complaints

August 2015

Rationale:

Caulfield Junior College has both a desire and a responsibility to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained by staff and students at all times, and that parents concerns and complaints are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.

Aims:

- To provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment.
- To provide a safe and supportive learning environment for both staff and students
- To build and maintain constructive relationships between students, parents and staff.
- To resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.

Concerns and Complaints Covered By This Policy

The procedures detailed in this policy cover the following types of complaints:

- General issues relating to student behaviour, including incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or school grounds (Note: The school also has a separate Bullying Policy in place that is available for reference). Currently under review by staff
- Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning issues.
- Communication breakdowns with parents
- School fees and payments.
- General administrative issues.
- Any other school related matters except as detailed below.

The procedures detailed in this policy do not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the *DEECD School Policy and Advisory Guide* (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/spag.aspx>)

Those matters include:

- Student discipline matters involving expulsions.
- Complaints about employee conduct or performance and complaints that should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action.
- Complaints by the Department's employees related to their employment.
- Student critical incident matters.
- Other criminal matters.

Expectations

To assist with the resolution of a concern or complaint, the school expects a person raising a concern or complaint to:

- Raise the concern or complaint promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs.
- Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint.
- Maintain and respect the point of view, privacy and confidentiality of all parties involved.
- Acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome that is acceptable to all parties.
- Act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner across all communication mediums utilised in resolving the concern or complaint (Including e-mail communication).
- Show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value the different perspectives being presented, rather than applying judgement and blame.
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities, which need to be balanced during the resolution process.

The school will address any concerns and complaints received from parents:

- Courteously
- Efficiently
- Fairly
- Promptly, or within the timeline agreed with the person raising the concern or complaint.
- In accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Victorian Education Department's regulatory framework.

Raising Concerns or Complaints

In the first instance, a concern or complaint should be made to the school.

The person who is raising the concern or complaint should telephone, visit or write to:

- The student's teacher about learning and incidents that have occurred in their class environment.
- The Principal or Assistant Principal about issues relating to staff members or complex student issues or where students from several classes are involved.
- The Principal or Assistant Principal about issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex student issues.
- Electronic communication to a staff member can be made through the school email address: caulfield.jr.co@edumail.vic.gov.au

Help with Raising Concerns or Complaints

- The person raising the concern or complaint can seek the services of an advocate when they feel that they are unable to express their concern or complaint clearly. An advocate can be a friend or someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation who does not receive a fee for service.
- All parties involved in addressing a concern or complaint may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty in reaching agreement.
- The school will ensure that the person raising the concern of complaint is aware of these support options. A person who wishes to use these support services should ensure that the school representative addressing the concern or complaint is aware of their intention and is in agreement.

Managing Parent Concerns and Complaints Information

As the school takes all parent concerns and complaints seriously, the following details relating to each issue raised will be recorded, even if it appears minor:

- The name and contact details (with permission) of the person raising the concern or complaint.
- The date that the concern was expressed or complaint made.
- The form in which the concern or complaint was received (Such as face to face, by telephone, in writing, by e-mail).
- A brief description of the concern or complaint.
- The outcome of action taken to address the concern or complaint.
- Any recommendations for future improvement in the schools policy or procedures.

However, in the first instance, when the complaint is easily resolved in a telephone call, a brief note in the schools, principals or teacher's diary recording the issue and resolution may be all that is required.

In the second instance when further attention and investigation is required, the concern or complaint will be recorded in the schools Complaints Register as outlined in DET guidelines.

The ability for Caulfield Junior College to investigate and address a concern or complaint is reliant upon the school receiving the information listed above.

Addressing Concerns or Complaints

- The school will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints involving other levels of the Department.
- The school will provide the person with the complaint or concern a copy of the Parent Concerns and Complaints Policy & Procedures.
- The school will determine whether a concern or complaint should be addressed through the schools concerns and complaints process, or through the complaints processes of the Department.
- All concerns and complaints will be noted and acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the concern or complaint.
- The school will acknowledge all concerns raised and complaints made in writing. It will also provide the person raising the concern or complaint with a timeline for completing the investigation.
- The Principal or Assistant Principal will co-ordinate the investigation and resolution of all formally lodged complaints.
- Concerns and complaints about general school matters (Such as timing of events, school policies and facilities) will be addressed by the Principal, Assistant Principal or a relevant staff member.
- The school will make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible. If the concern or complaint involves many students and a range of issues, the school will require more time to investigate and resolve it.
- Should the complaint not involve complex issues, the school might need to take advice from the Departments Regional Office, which may take additional time. The school will notify the person raising the concern or complaint of the new timeline for addressing the concern or complaint and the reason for any delays. In all cases the school will try to resolve a concern or complaint within 20 school days.
- If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, they should contact the Departments Regional Office.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of Caulfield Junior College's three year review process.