

Policy Documentation

Complaints and Grievances Policy

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References

- Macquarie Dictionary. 'Complaint'. Available at www.macquariedictionary.com.au/features/word/search/?word=complaint&search_word_type=Dictionary [Accessed 29 May 2018].
- Macquarie Dictionary. 'Grievance'. Available at www.macquariedictionary.com.au/features/word/search/?word=grievance&search_word_type=Dictionary [Accessed 29 May 2018].

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1 Overview

1.1 About this policy

At Erasmus Primary School, the relationship between home and the school is held to be of vital importance in ensuring that children are happy, secure and open to learning. Open-hearted and discerning communication is seen as the essential link for this relationship. Parents and teachers are supported in working closely together to provide the best educational opportunities for their children.

Parents and teachers are encouraged to discuss their children's progress, and to address any questions, concerns, or problems together, as soon as they become apparent.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- Erasmus Primary School meets its obligations to respond to parent complaints in a fair, effective and efficient manner
- parents are informed on how they can make a complaint to the school.

1.2 Related policies

- Erasmus Policy: Student Welfare
- Erasmus Policy: Privacy
- Erasmus Policy: Supervision
- Erasmus Policy: Child Protection (Mandatory Reporting)
- Erasmus Policy: Student Behaviour Management

1.3 Definitions

- 'Complaint' – An expression of grief, regret, pain, censure, resentment, or discontent.
- 'Grievance' – A wrong, real or fancied, considered as grounds for complaint.

2 General guidelines

The following questions and guidelines are intended to promote open and clear communication between all parties.

- What is the issue? (This helps to focus the discussion.)
- What type of issue is it? (Is it a question, concern, or problem?)
- Discuss the issue calmly and respectfully; this reflects unity and care, enabling resolution.
- Seek each party's understanding and experience of the issue.
- What possible solutions are there? Consider a wide variety.

- Which is the best solution? Which will work best within the classroom and the ethos of the school?
- Is a follow-up meeting needed? If so, when?

3 Guidelines for parents/guardians

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- following the Parent Enquiry Communication Pathway and Complaints Process (refer to Appendix A) when communicating with the school
- raising any unresolved issues or serious concerns directly with the Principal or member of senior management
- maintaining confidentiality. Teachers are duty bound to discuss this issue only with the people directly involved, and parents are encouraged to follow the same ethic. This assists the process of resolution, and is respectful to all concerned
- cooperating with requests to meet with teachers and/or senior management and providing relevant information when requested in relation to complaints and grievances.

4 Guidelines for teachers and senior management

In following up concerns or issues, the school will:

- be committed to resolving any problems in ways that respect individuals and attempt to meet the needs of all concerned as fairly as possible
- respond to all formal complaints in a timely manner. Erasmus Primary School will acknowledge the complaint promptly and parents will be kept informed of the progress of their complaint, particularly when the complaint is complex and may take time to resolve
- investigate any relevant issues carefully
- attempt to communicate clearly, sensitively and objectively
- maintain confidentiality
- ensure that the person against whom a complaint is made has the right to respond
- ensure that the complainant is not victimised in any way

- document findings and any points raised in discussions or meetings. Where applicable, the staff member should clearly state who will follow up with the complainant and by when (refer to Appendix B – Record of Serious Concern).

5 Grievance escalation protocol

If for some reason the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, the following steps may be taken:

- A parent or teacher may seek to have the issue considered by the senior management members. This comprises the Principal, Head of Learning and Head of Administration.
- Parents or teachers may write a letter outlining their concerns, or approach any of the senior management members to request a meeting. A senior management member will record the grievance and will be responsible for any follow-up action requested.
- Where a grievance involves either the Head of Learning or Head of Administration, the Principal shall be included to have the issue considered.
- Where a grievance involves the Principal, the Chair of the Board shall be included to have the issue considered (refer to Appendix C – Formal complaint form).

6 External Advice and Support

Where additional advice or support may be required, the following external organisations are available to assist:

6.1 Providers of additional support and advice only

- Independent Schools Victoria (ISV)
24–40 Rosslyn Street, West Melbourne 3003
9825 7200
- MYND Psychological Consulting
Clinical and counseling services for children; psychological assessments
Suite 114, University of Melbourne Campus, Auburn Road, Hawthorn 3122
9810 3140

6.2 Where not satisfied with the outcome from the school

- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)
2 Lonsdale St, Melbourne VIC 3000
9637 2806

7 Review

This Policy will be amended or updated to take account of any changes or introductions of new policies or new standards.

Date policy ratified by Erasmus School Board: 12/4/13

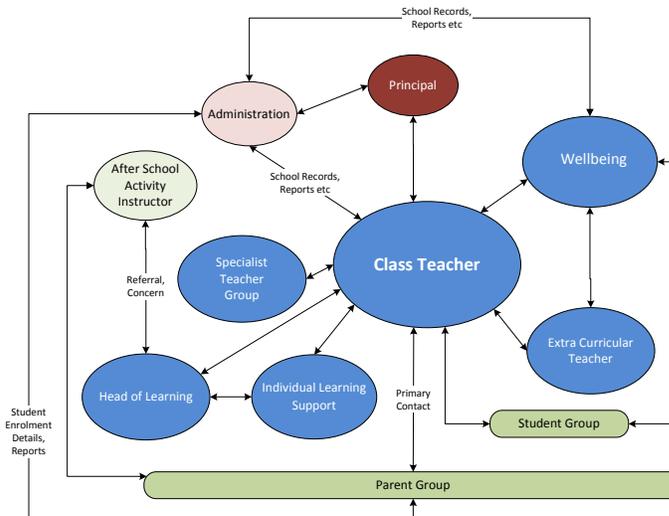
8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Parent Enquiry Communication Pathways and Complaints Process

Parent Enquiry Communication Pathways

Communication Pathways for
Erasmus School Parent Enquiries & Concerns
Regarding Students.

Represented in this diagram are the main (key) communication pathways. It is not intended to depict all inclusive communication.



Complaints process

Step 1

- 1.1 Identify the first, relevant person to contact, and request an appointment. Teachers are very willing to meet with parents at a negotiated appointed time.
- 1.2 If you can't speak directly to the staff member, phone the school office. The office staff will arrange for the staff member to contact you as soon as possible.
- 1.3 Meet with the staff member and discuss your concern respectfully.

Step 2

- 2.1 If you consider the issue you have raised is not resolved, contact the school office to make an appointment with a member of the senior management team. The senior management team consists of the Principal, the Head of Learning and the Head of Administration.

Step 3

- 3.1 If you still consider the issue to be unresolved, or if the complaint is in relation to the Principal, the complaint should be made in writing using the 'Formal complaint form' (Appendix C) and should be addressed to the Chair of the Board. Hand this form into Reception.

- 3.2 The Chair will constitute a complaints sub-committee to deal with the issue. The composition of the committee will be decided by the Chair and approved by the full board.
- 3.3 The complaints committee, acting on behalf of the board as a whole, will decide how to proceed and will make recommendations for any action to resolve the matter to the whole board.
- 3.4 When a complaint is made to the governing board, the board's decision will be final.
- 3.5 Where required, an external provider may be contacted for further support or advice (see section 6 External Advice and Support).

<p>Resolution How could this matter be resolved?</p> <hr/>	
<p>Next steps Please hand this form into Reception. You will receive an acknowledgement within 48 hours that your complaint has been lodged. The acknowledgement will set out the next steps in responding to your complaint.</p>	
<p>Administration Parent signature: _____</p>	<p>Date: _____</p>
<p>School use <i>Date form received:</i> _____</p>	<p><i>Received by:</i> _____</p>
<p><i>Date form acknowledged:</i> _____</p>	<p><i>Acknowledged and signed by one of:</i> Principal: _____ Head of Learning: _____ Head of Administration: _____</p>

mb://eras-srv-01/Data/Wellbeing/Wellbeing documents/Current/Erasmus Form Formal complaint MASTER.docx

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