LATROBE SPECIAL DEVELOPMENTAL SCHOOL

PARENT / CARERS COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION

Rationale:
Latrobe Special Developmental School acknowledges concerns from parents/carers. We welcome feedback and encourage parents/carers to raise issues so they can be dealt with speedily and resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Our approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on our values:
- To provide a safe and supportive learning environment
- To build relationships between students, parents and staff
- To provide a safe working environment for staff.
- To provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment
- To resolve complaints fairly, efficiently and promptly

Implementation:
These procedures cover concerns and complaints about:
- General issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school’s code of conduct
- Incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard
- Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- Communication with parents
- School fees and payments
- General administrative issues
- Injuries to students
- Areas of hygiene
- Any other school related matters except as detailed below

These procedures do not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide. 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.

The school will develop procedures to address concerns and complaints in collaboration with parents and the school community.

The school expects a person raising a concern
- do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs
- provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner
- show respect and understanding of each other’s point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame
- recognize that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.

The school will address any concerns and complaints received from parents; courteously, efficiently, fairly, promptly or within the timeline agreed with the person with the concern or complaint, in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Department’s regulatory framework.

The following procedures should assist parents/carers in handling concerns.

1. Raise the matter with the Classroom Teacher at the school via telephone, diary entry or written communication, email or by arranging an appointment to visit the school.

2. Arrange to speak to the Classroom Teacher from matters relating to learning issues and incidents that occurred in the class, the Assistant Principal for issues relating to staff members, transport of complex student issues or Principal about issues relating to school policy, management, staff members or complex student issues. If you are not sure who to contact, the school can assist you to decide on who is best to speak to first. You can always follow up your concerns with other people in the school later.

3. If the issue is not resolved, make an appointment to see the Principal. Inform the Principal of the nature of the issue.

4. Complainants can seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are unable to express their concern 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 complaint may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty coming to an agreement.

5. Staff at the school will record the following details of all complaints received, even if the complaint appears to be minor: name and contact details (with permission) of the person with a concern or complaint, the date 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 email), a brief description of the concern or complaint, details of the school officer responding to the concern or complaint, action taken on the concern or complaint, the outcome of action taken on the concern or complaint, any recommendations for future improvement in the school’s policy or procedures.
6. When the complaint is easily resolved in a telephone call, a brief note in the school’s/principal’s/teacher’s phone diary recording the issue and the resolution may be all that is required.

7. After the meeting you may need to:
   - be prepared to monitor the situation with follow up phone calls or meetings
   - be available for further discussions with appropriate people at school
   - consider involving the support of outside agencies such as Network Guidance Officers or Social Workers. This can also be arranged through the school.

8. If the matter is still unresolved you may seek advice from the Regional Network Leader at the Gippsland Regional Office (Phone 51270400). The role of the Region is to provide additional advice, support and feedback to the school in seeking a positive solution.

All issues and complaints must ultimately be resolved at the school level and the Principal is the key person in seeking a satisfactory outcome. We are committed to seek a resolution to all concerns sensitively and with a commitment to listening and responding positively to all your concerns.

This policy was developed by the school community utilising the DEECD “Addressing parents’ concerns and complaints effectively: policy and guides.” A copy of the publication and further information can be accessed at http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/pcschools.htm

This policy was updated in November 2009