



Guidelines for raising concerns or complaints

The Department of Education and Training (DET) recognises that it is in the best interest of students for there to be a trusting and cooperative relationship between parent and school. Complaints are an important way for the school community to provide information and feedback to a school. DET considers that every complaint provides a valuable opportunity for reflection and learning.

DET recognises a parent's right to make a complaint and its responsibility to provide a framework within which efforts can be made to resolve complaints.

It is the Department's belief that parent complaints are best handled at the school level in an environment where parents feel able to speak up about issues concerning the education of their children.

An effective complaint-handling system has a clear process for resolving complaints, treats people fairly, is timely and provides those people involved in a complaint with a fair opportunity to respond to issues and to present their views.

DET Parent Complaints Policy

This policy can be accessed at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/parentcomplaints.aspx>

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- the Department (schools, regions, central office) meets its obligation to respond to parent complaints in a fair, effective and efficient manner
- parents are informed of how they can make a complaint at their child's school.

This policy covers all students attending Victorian government schools.

Mount Clear College Parent Complaints Procedures

1. Clarify the issue (what is the problem?)

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 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 the school or department policies or guidelines, where relevant –

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/complaints/Pages/default.aspx>

2. Contact the school

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

- write a note or email your child's teacher outlining your concerns
- make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with the class teacher, Year Level Co-ordinator or Mentor teacher; ensuring that you inform the school about the issue you wish to discuss

- consider speaking with the school's Student Wellbeing Coordinator (Fionna Wooller) if you feel that is appropriate
- arrange any meeting times by ringing the school to request an appointment (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).

The class teacher or 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. Remember, it may not always be possible to resolve an issue to your complete satisfaction.

3. Contact the Principal or Assistant 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 on telephone number **(03) 5330 1500**. Be aware that:

- the Principal may ask another senior staff member to speak with you on their behalf
- 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.

The school may follow up on complaints by;

- speaking with relevant staff and students in order to better understand the situation
- discuss the school's findings with the parent to reach an agreed resolution
- putting plans in place to ensure all students and staff feel safe
- utilising a restorative approach to established problems in order to resolve the issue and support all parties to move forward
- consulting with, where appropriate, relevant sections of DET and/or external agencies for advice.

The school will ensure that complaints received are recorded and actions taken to resolve the complaint are well documented.

4. Contact the regional office

If you still feel that your complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily after speaking to the teacher and the principal, you can then contact the Grampians Regional Office.

The DET Referral Policy

If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, they should contact DET's appropriate regional office.

The contact for the Grampians Regional Office is:

109 Armstrong Street North

Ballarat 3350

Phone: 53 378 444

Fax: 53 332 135

Email: swvr@edumail.vic.gov.au

The Contact Officer is: **The Manager Community Relations**

Referral Actions

- The officer from the region will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and the complainant’s opinion about why the school did not resolve it to their satisfaction.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved by the complainant, school and regional office working together, the regional office may refer it to DET’s Group Coordination Division.
- The Division will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and the complainant’s opinion about why the school and regional office did not resolve it to their satisfaction and will ask the complainant to outline their view on the course of action required to resolve the complaint.
- Where the complainant is unable to provide a written account the officer from Group Coordination Division should act on the information provided.

Evaluation

Date implemented	September 2017
Approved By	School Council – Dec 2017
Responsible for Review	Assistant Principal
Next Review Date	September 2019
References	Department of Education Parent Complaints Policy