

Sandy Creek Primary School

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PARENT CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

At Sandy Creek Primary School the education and wellbeing of our students is our first priority. All members of our school community, including students, parents, staff and volunteers have the right to be treated with courtesy and respect. Parents have the right to raise concerns and complaints about school, and this policy is designed to support parents through this process.

DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- 'Parent' includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for a student at Sandy Creek Primary School.
- A 'concern' is an issue of interest (because of its importance and effect) which is raised informally in order to improve or change a situation
- A 'complaint' is an expression of grievance or resentment where the parent is seeking redress or justice
- DECD – is the Department for Education and Child Development

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Parents can raise a concern or complaint about any aspect of the school's operations. This policy does not apply to matters where there are legislated requirements or existing policies and processes of appeal such as:

- Complaints or appeals about student suspension and exclusion
- Mandatory reporting responsibilities

While all reasonable efforts will be made to address concerns and complaints some issues may never be resolved to a parent's satisfaction.

CONCERN/COMPLAINT RESOLUTION STAGES FOR PARENTS

At any stage of this process parents can call the DECD Parent Complaint Unit hotline on 1800 677 435 for information, advice and support. Parents may also bring a support person to any meetings held. The role of the support person is to provide advice and support, not to answer questions or speak on behalf of any of the parties or interfere with the discussion. If, at any point, the parent engages legal

representation the process will be referred to the DECD Legislation and Legal Services Unit.

STAGE ONE – RAISE THE CONCERN

Parents may raise concerns or complaints verbally or in writing. Issues should be raised with the school in the first instance. Parents need to make an appropriate time to talk to the class teacher to discuss their concern or complaint. This can be arranged through a diary note, a phone call or face to face.

It is expected that teachers will:

- Make a time available as soon as reasonably possible to discuss the issue (within 5 working days)
- Listen to the parent
- Consider relevant legislation, policies and guidelines, seeking support as necessary
- Identify and discuss with the parent possible courses of actions that could be taken and the timeframe within which this will occur
- Follow up with the parent after a reasonable period of time has elapsed to ensure parent is satisfied
- If appropriate, refer issue to leadership staff

If the concern is about a teacher, or if the issue is not addressed to the satisfaction of the parent by the teacher, the parent should raise the issue with the school principal. Appointments to see the principal can be made through the front office via phone call or in person.

The Principal will consider the most effective way of resolving the concern or complaint, based on:

- Information provided by all relevant parties
- The school's parent concern and complaints procedure
- DECD Parent Concerns and complaints policy and procedure
- Consideration of any legislative and policy implications
- Advice from the regional office or DECD Central Office

The school will aim to resolve the concern or complaint within 15 working days.

STAGE TWO – CONTACT THE REGIONAL OFFICE

If the concern or complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the parent by the school or if the Principal is the subject of the complaint – parents may choose to contact the DECD Barossa Regional Office.

The regional office will review the complaint – this may involve meeting with those involved and reviewing the documentation. The parent may also be offered

mediation. The regional office will aim to resolve the complaint within 20 working days.

STAGE THREE – PARENT COMPLAINT UNIT

The Parent Complaint Unit has a dual function:

- To provide advice and support to parents about their concern or complaint
- To objectively review complaints that have not been resolved at the school or regional level

A parent may contact the unit hotline at any time to discuss their concern or complaint or to seek advice.

If a complaint has not been resolved by the school or regional office, the unit will be asked to assess the complaint and decide what action is needed. Complaints submitted to the Parent Complaint Unit must be in writing and state the reasons why the complaint remains unresolved and an outline of what reasonable action could be taken to resolve the complaint. Staff from the unit will contact the parent about what has been done, explain the process and provide information about when they can expect to hear about the outcome. This should occur within 35 working days. Any complaint that is referred to the Parent Complaint Unit that has not been raised with the school and the regional office will be directed back to the school or regional office for resolution, except in circumstances where it is not appropriate or possible for the school or regional office to manage the complaint.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

When raising a concern or complaint with staff, parents can expect to:

- Be treated with respect, courtesy and consideration
- Have the complaint dealt with in a confidential and timely manner
- Have access to appropriate and easily understandable information regarding the complaint resolution process
- Have the complaint considered impartially and in accordance with due process and principles of natural justice
- Be kept informed of the progress and outcome of their complaint

We request that, when making a complaint parents will:

- Raise concerns and complaints at an appropriate time and place
- Treat other parties with respect, courtesy and maintain confidentiality
- Refrain from using social media (such as Facebook) to raise concerns and complaints
- Raise the concern or complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen

- Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
- Ask for assistance or further information as needed
- Act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- Have realistic and reasonable expectations about what course of action is required to resolve the concern or complaint

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy has been developed in accordance with the DECD Parent Concerns and Complaint Procedure March 2012. It is still a draft document until ratified at Governing Council.

5/04/2012