



COMPLAINTS POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Yarram Primary School at 5182 5688.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Yarram Primary School so that parents and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school
- ensure that all complaints regarding Yarram Primary School are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

SCOPE

This policy relates to complaints brought by parents, carers, students or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school.

In some limited instances, we may need to refer a complainant to another policy or area if there are different processes in place to manage the issue including:

- Complaints and concerns relating to fraud and corruption will be managed in accordance with the department's [Fraud and Corruption Policy](#)
- Criminal matters will be referred to Victorian Police
- Legal claims will be referred to the Department's Legal Division
- Complaints and concerns relating to child abuse will be managed in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures [\[insert hyperlink\]](#)

POLICY

Yarram Primary School welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. The school values open communication with families and is committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. Yarram Primary School recognises that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

Yarram Primary School values and encourages open and positive relationships with the school community. The school understands that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

When addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- be considerate of each other's views and respect each other's role
- be focused on resolution of the complaint, with the interests of the student involved at the centre

- act in good faith and cooperation
- behave with respect and courtesy
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- operate within and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with any applicable legislation and Department policy.
- recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

Complaints and concerns process for students

Yarram Primary School acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. Yarram Primary School encourages students to raise issues or concerns as they arise so that issues can be resolved collaboratively.

Students with a concern or complaint can raise them with a trusted adult at school, for example, with a classroom teacher, Education Support Staff member, principal, assistant principal or office staff. This person will take the concern or complaint seriously and will explain what steps can be taken to try to resolve the issue supportively.

Students can also ask their parent, carer or another trusted adult outside of the school, to talk to Yarram Primary School about the issue instead. Information about the parent/carer complaints and concerns process is outlined further below.

Other ways students can raise a concern or complaint with the school include:

- participating in the Yarram Primary School Attitudes to School Survey
- participating in student focus groups

Further information and resources to support students to raise issues or concerns are available at:

- [Report Racism Hotline](#) (call 1800 722 476) – this hotline enables students to report concerns relating to racism or religious discrimination
- [Reach Out](#)
- [Headspace](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#) (call 1800 55 1800)
- [Victorian Aboriginal Education Association](#) (VAEAI)

Complaints and concerns process for parents, carers and community members

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

Yarram Primary School encourages parents, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- carefully consider the issues to be discussed
- remember parties may not have all the facts relating to the issues
- think about how the matter could be resolved
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the Department and Yarram Primary School.

Support person

Complainants are welcome to have a support person to assist in raising a complaint or concern with Yarram Primary School. Complainants are asked to inform Yarram Primary School if they wish to have a support person to assist them, and provide the support person's name, contact details, and their relationship to the complainant.

Raising a concern

Yarram Primary School is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to the classroom teacher, assistant principal or principal. Where possible, school staff will work to ensure that concerns are appropriately addressed.

Making a complaint

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the principal or assistant principal, noting that formal complaints should be directed to a member of the school's leadership team.

When a formal complaint is made, in most cases the following process will apply:

- 1. Complaint received:** The complainant can either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the office with the assistant principal or principal, to outline their complaint so that the school can fully understand what the issues are. The complaint can be discussed in a mutually convenient format, including in writing, in person or over the phone.
- 2. Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the principal, assistant principal or nominee may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
- 3. Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the assistant principal/principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. If after the resolution meeting a resolution has not been achieved, the parties will work to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event further action is desired. In some circumstances, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
- 4. Timelines:** Yarram Primary School will acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as possible (usually within two school days) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Yarram Primary School may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of the complaint. Yarram Primary School will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting where appropriate within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, Yarram Primary School will consult and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Please note that unreasonable conduct (e.g. vexatious complaints) may need to be managed differently to the procedures in this policy.

Resolution

Where appropriate, Yarram Primary School may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- an apology or expression of regret
- a change of decision
- a change of policy, procedure or practice
- supporting the family to seek student counselling or other support
- other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, Yarram Primary School may also ask the complainant to attend a meeting with an independent third party, or participate in a mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute.

Escalation

If the complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved or if the complaint is about the Principal and cannot be raised directly with them, then the complaint should be referred to the Sale Regional Office by contacting 1300 338 738.

Yarram Primary School may also refer a complaint to the Sale Regional Office if they believe that they have done all they can to address the complaint.

For more information about the Department's parent complaints process, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Raise a complaint or concern about your school.](#)

Record keeping and other requirements

To meet Department and legal requirements, the school must keep written records of:

- Serious, substantial or unusual complaints
- Complaints relating to the Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, to meet regulatory requirements - refer to Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes for further information

Yarram Primary School also follows Department policy to ensure that record-keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints or concerns.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to the school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on school website
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

- [Complaints - Parents](#)

The Department's parents' website:

- [Raise a complaint or concern about your school](#)
- [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2022
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	July 2024