



RATIONALE

Solway Primary School welcomes all forms of feedback, and is committed to continuous improvement. It is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school. This means having clear, concise and enforced process and protocols for the school community to follow.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the process at Solway 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 Solway 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 the school. In some limited instances, a complainant may need to be referred to another Department of Education and Training (DET) process, where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions. For example, expulsion appeals.

POLICY

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

- raise and discuss issues in a courteous and respectful manner
- acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome that is in the student's best interests and acceptable to all parties
- act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved
- recognise that all parties, including the broader school community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced
- recognise that schools and DET may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

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

- carefully consider the issues
- understand that all the facts relating to the issues may not be at your disposal
- think about how the matter could be resolved
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by Solway Primary School and DET

Complaints process

Solway Primary School is always open to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to the class teacher. School staff will work to ensure that all concerns are appropriately addressed.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents/carers or community members should meet with the Principal or Assistant Principal to seek further clarification.

If a complaint is to be made, in most cases, the school will first seek to understand the issues and will then convene a resolution meeting.

The following process will apply:

1. **Complaint received:** email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the Office with the Principal, to outline your complaint so that the issues can be fully understood. The complaint can be discussed in a way that is convenient for both parties, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.
2. **Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Principal 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:** The Principal will provide a response to the complaint with the objective of reaching a satisfactory resolution. If after the resolution meeting we are unable to resolve the complaint together, we will work with you to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event you would like to take further action about it. 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:** Solway Primary School will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within 48 hours) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, time will be required to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances. A response will be provided within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, there will be consultation to discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Resolution

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

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

In some circumstances, Solway Primary School may also ask you to attend a meeting with a DET representative, as a third party.

Escalation

If a parent or community member is not satisfied that their complaint has been resolved by the school, or if their complaint is about the Principal, then the complaint should be referred to the North Eastern Melbourne Region (NEVR) by contacting 1300 333 231.

Solway Primary School may also refer a complaint to NEVR if it is believed that everything has been done to address the complaint.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

For more information about the Department's *Parent Complaints* policy, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Parent Complaints Policy](#)

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was last updated on June 2018 and is scheduled for review on 2021.