Policy: Parent Complaints and Grievances

Rationale:
Our school is committed to fostering positive relationships with parents and families and developing strong school community partnerships. The school also recognises that in all partnerships there may be times when there are issues of concern that will need to be resolved.

Purpose:
- To address complaints raised by parents
- To ensure the school has systems and processes in place to address concerns and complaints
- To recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced

Guidelines:
Chirnside Park Primary School will implement a range of procedures to manage parent complaints. We will endeavour to ensure that the process provides a prompt, open and consistent approach that is courteous, efficient and fair, and best addresses parent concerns.

We will:
- Maintain the confidentiality of all parties, in line with DEECD and legislative requirements.
- Acknowledge that the 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.
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.
- Ensure that parents are aware of their right to advocacy when communicating the issues involved in their complaint and in negotiating an outcome.
- Make every effort to resolve a concern or complaint before involving other DEECD levels.

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
- Any other school-related matters except matters where there are existing legislated rights of review or appeal

Implementation:
A parent can raise a complaint about any aspect of the school’s operations. It is the school’s expectation that a person making a complaint do so respectfully and that all matters be raised at the school level in the first instance. The school recommends that:
- Teachers are usually best placed to resolve concerns and complaints relating to student learning and a specific student incident in the teacher’s class.
Year Level Coordinators can provide support when students from other classes are involved.

Assistant Principal is usually best placed to resolve concerns and complaints relating to staff members or complex student issues.

The Principal is usually best placed to resolve concerns and complaints relating to school policy, school management, staff members or complex student issues. The Principal however may become involved at any stage and relating to any parent concern.

Parents/carers may:
- Make a telephone call or write a brief note if the expectation is that the concern may be easily resolved.
- Speak to the class teacher by telephone or by making an appointment for a meeting.
- Make an appointment to speak to the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- Raise a complaint in writing.
- Contact the appropriate Regional Office if the matter has not been resolved at the school level.

The School will:
- Investigate parent/carers concerns and complaints.
- Ensure that parent concerns are addressed promptly and within agreed timelines where possible.
- Communicate to parents/carers their right to advocacy in relation to making a complaint.
- Communicate to the complainant any reasons for a delay in addressing their complaint.
- Ensure all reasonable steps have been undertaken to resolve parent concerns and complaints.
- Communicate the outcomes of concerns and complaints, where possible to all relevant parties.
- Establish and maintain a system to record and monitor complaints and their resolution.
- Administer the Department’s annual Parent Opinion Survey that includes the statement “I know how to make a complaint”.
- Brief all staff members annually about the school’s concerns and complaints procedures.
- Provide staff with access to training and support materials appropriate to their responsibilities under the procedures.
- Monitor parent concerns and complaints and consider issues raised when undertaking a review of the school’s policies, procedures and operations.

This policy is underpinned by all of the school’s other policies.

Date approved by School Council: