Community Satisfaction Policy
Mornington Park Primary School 5040

POLICY DATE:  March 2014
STATUS:  Approved by School Council May 2014

Rationale:

A positive, clear and effective process for resolving grievances between the school and community members assists in the building of strong relationships, dispels anxiety, and ultimately provides students with an enhanced learning environment.

Aims:

To provide clear, positive and fair processes that allow grievances to be aired and resolved in a timely and effective manner.

School Values:

The school’s approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on our values of:

- providing a safe and supportive learning environment for everyone
- building positive relationships between students, parents and staff
- providing a safe working environment for staff.
- welcoming feedback

The following process/procedure is for dealing with:

- 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 as detailed below

These procedures do not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal. Those matters include:

- student discipline matters involving expulsions
- complaints about employee conduct or performance and complaints that should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action
- complaints by the Department’s employees related to their employment
- student critical incident matters
- other criminal matters.
Raising concerns

Our school prides itself on clear, consultative and open communication. While we accept our responsibility to consult, and to communicate both clearly and effectively with the community, community members also have an obligation to read notices and newsletters, to attend briefings, and to seek clarification when required. There may, however, still be times when members of the community disagree or are confused about the things that we are doing.

The school expects any person raising a concern or complaint to:

- do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs
- contact the School Office on 59 754011 and the business Manager will direct your call to the best person to deal with your concern.
- establish the facts as clearly as possible, be wary of third hand information or gossip.
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- acknowledge that a 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.
- make an appointment to see their classroom teacher, detailing the reasons for the appointment if the matter involves your child or an issue of everyday class operation,

Community members may be accompanied by another person, in a support role, at appointments to resolve grievances.

All formal discussions and processes involving grievances will be documented

Role Of School Council

While ‘in principle’ support may be sought from the School Council, members are in agreement that their purpose is not to act as a conduit for community complaints and therefore will not become involved in confidential or personal issues. School Council members will generally refer specific grievances about individuals to the Principal or the School Council President.

The Principal and School Council president will exercise their judgement as to whether or not they will act upon anonymous complaints.

Addressing Concerns: The school will

- make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)
- give the complainant a copy of its complaints procedures
- determine whether a concern or complaint should be managed through the school’s concerns and complaints process or through other complaints processes of the DEECD
- acknowledge all complaints made in writing: and will provide the complainant with a timeline for investigating the complaint
- investigate all complaints and provide a response to the complainant in a timely manner
- address concerns and complaints about general school matters (such as the timing of events, school policies and facilities) through the Principal or a relevant staff member.
make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible.
address parents’ concerns and complaints to achieve an effective outcome

Should the complaint involve complex issues, the school might need to take advice from the Department’s Regional Office which may take more time. The school will

inform the complainant the new timeline for addressing the complaint and the reasons for any delays
in all cases, try to resolve a concern or complaint within 20 school days of receiving the complaint

**Remedies**

If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the school will offer an appropriate remedy. For example, at its discretion and depending on the circumstances, the school might offer:

- an explanation or further information about the issue
- mediation, counselling or other support
- an apology, expression of regret or admission of fault
- to change its decision
- to change its policies, procedures or practices
- to cancel a debt (such as for school payments)
- a fee refund.

The school will implement the remedy as soon as practicable.

**Referral of concerns or complaints**

If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, they should contact the Department’s South Eastern Regional Office.

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 the Department’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:**

- This policy will be reviewed by School Council as part of the school’s three-year review cycle, in consultation with the wider school community 2017
- This policy was last ratified by School Council in May 2014