



# COMPLAINTS POLICY

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## Help for Non-English Speakers.

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Whittlesea Primary School on 97162140 and [whittlesea.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:whittlesea.ps@education.vic.gov.au)

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Whittlesea Primary School so that students, parents, carers 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 and concerns regarding Whittlesea Primary School are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

## SCOPE

This policy relates to complaints brought by students, parents, carers, 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 per our [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#)

## POLICY

Whittlesea Primary School welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our families and are committed to addressing complaints promptly and effectively. We recognise that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

We value and encourage open and positive relationships with our school community. We understand 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:

- actively listen to each other and be considerate of each other's views
- be student-focused
- be resolution-focused and attempt to preserve working relationships
- act co-operatively and in good faith
- behave with respect and courtesy
- be inclusive, considerate, and respect the cultural safety of all people, including Aboriginal people, and the human rights of all parties including but not limited to disability, age, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, and marital status
- consider communication needs and preferences
- ensure that complainants and students related to complainants are not victimised for making a complaint or asserting their rights
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved unless permitted or required to share information by law
- operate within and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with all applicable legislation and department policies.

### Complaints and concerns process for students

Whittlesea Primary School acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. Whittlesea Primary School encourages our students to raise issues or concerns as they arise so that we can work together to resolve them.

Students with a concern or complaint can raise it with a trusted adult at school, for example, with their Classroom Teacher, PLC leader, Wellbeing team, or Principal. This person will take your concern or complaint seriously and explain to you the steps we can take to resolve the issue and support you.

You can also ask your parent, carer or another trusted adult outside of the school, to talk to us about the issue instead. Information about our parent/carer complaints and concerns process is outlined further below. The parent/carer process also applies to students who are mature minors, refer to: [Mature Minors and Decision Making](#).

Other ways you can raise a concern or complaint with us include:

- talking to a member of the Student Voice Team about your concern and any suggestions you have for resolving it
- participating in our Attitudes to School Survey (for Years 4-6)
- participating in our student forums held throughout the year
- see any staff member whom you see as a trusted adult

Further information and resources to support students in raising 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

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

- carefully consider the issues you would like to discuss
- remember you may not have all the facts relating to the issues that you want to raise
- think about how the matter could be resolved
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the department and Whittlesea Primary School (see “Further Information and Resources” section below).

### Support person

You are welcome to have a support person to assist you in raising a complaint or concern with our school. Please advise us if you wish to have a support person to assist you and provide their name and their relationship to you.

### Raising a concern

Whittlesea Primary School is always happy to discuss any concerns with parents/carers and community members. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to your child’s teacher, who then may direct you to one of the Assistant Principals or the Principal. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are addressed in a timely and effective manner.

### Making a complaint

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents, carers or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the Principal team (Principal and Assistant Principals).

If you would like to make a formal complaint, in most cases, our school will first seek to understand the issues and then arrange a resolution meeting to resolve the complaint together. The following process will apply:

- 1. Complaint received:** Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with one of the Assistant Principals or Principal, to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are. We can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.
- 2. Timelines:** Whittlesea Primary School will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 3 school days and will seek to resolve complaints within 15 school days. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, some may take more than 15 school days to resolve. We 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, Whittlesea Primary School will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be implemented.
- 3. Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Principal, an Assistant Principal or leadership nominee may need to gather further information to understand the situation properly. This process may also involve speaking to school and regional staff to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised. In some instances, the leadership team may reach out to subject matter experts for expert advice. The school may also contact the complainant for additional information or to clarify any concerns.

- 4. Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with an Assistant Principal/Principal or leadership nominee to discuss the complaint to reach a resolution satisfactory to all parties. 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 case you wish to take further action regarding it. In certain circumstances, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting is not appropriate. In this situation, a written response to the complaint will be provided. In some instances, the school, in consultation with the region, may suggest mediation, conciliation, or other alternative methods of resolving the complaint, based on the complexity and urgency of the issues raised.

Please note that unreasonable conduct (e.g., vexatious complaints) may require different management approaches from those outlined in this policy.

## Resolution

Where appropriate, Whittlesea 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
- offering the opportunity for 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, Whittlesea Primary School may also ask you 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.

In some instances, the resolution may require actions to be taken by both the school and the complainant.

## Escalation

If you are not satisfied that the school has resolved your complaint, or if your complaint is about the Principal and you do not want to raise it directly with them, you may contact the department by phone on [1800 338 663](tel:1800338663), via the [Enquiries form](#) or by email at [enquiries@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@education.vic.gov.au).

For more information, visit [Make a complaint about your school](#). Whittlesea Primary School may also refer a complaint to the North-West Victorian Region if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

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

## Review of complaints

Whittlesea Primary School will consider whether complaints relating to child safety identify any causes or systemic child safety risks and take steps to address those risks and continuously improve our child safety practices.

## Record keeping and other requirements

To meet department and legal requirements, our 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.

Our 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 our school community in the following ways: [

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

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): [Complaint resolution](#)

The department's parents' website: [Make a complaint about your school](#)

[Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)

[Report sexual abuse if you're a current or former student](#)

Links to related local polices can be located at: <https://www.whittleseaps.vic.edu.au/page/8/School-Documentation>

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2025
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2027