# Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

* provide an outline of the complaints process at Hampton 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 and/or concerning students from Hampton Primary School
* ensure that all complaints regarding Hampton 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 the complainant to another Department of Education and Training process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions, for example, expulsion appeals.

# Implementation/ Process

Hampton 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 understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. 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:

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

**Preparation for raising a concern or complaint**

Hampton 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 Hampton Primary School (see “Further Information and Resources” section below).

**Complaints process**  
Hampton Primary School is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Parent/carer concerns in the first instance should be directed to your child’s teacher. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

**Directing your concerns**

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| **Please note:** In the event of an emergency or urgent situation that involves the physical or mental wellbeing of a student, please contact the Principal or Assistant Principal immediately | | | | |
| **Talk with** | **About** | **For Example** | **How** | **Response time** |
| Class teacher | Your child's progress and/or wellbeing or the curriculum | * Home reading * Not wanting to go to school * Any positive feedback for the teacher * Child unhappy in class or in playground * Educational event info e.g. NAPLAN * Excursion * Absence note * Assisting in the classroom | Generally it is not appropriate to raise an issue face to face during school hours as this doesn’t allow the teacher involved to give you their full attention whilst they are teaching the class.   * Email * Note to teacher ( could be requesting a phone call in response) * If necessary arrange a meeting * Voicemail left at office | Generally acknowledged within 2 working days with proposed course of action |
| Year Level Strategic Leaders and/or Learning Specialists | Your child's progress and/or happiness or the curriculum because:   * you see the issue as a team wide concern or query * Students from several classes in the same year level are involved | * Inconsistent messages / expectations from teachers within the team * Bullying matters across classes within the level * Positive feedback to the teachers in the team or teacher performance * Clarification about a learning unit * Organisational matters and whole level communication | * Email * Note to teacher ( could be requesting a phone call in response) * If necessary arrange a meeting * Voicemail left at office | Generally acknowledged within 2 working days with proposed course of action |
| Assistant Principal | * School wide matters * Your child’s progress or wellbeing and you have already tried other channels (eg. teacher, year level strategic leader and/or learning specialist) | * Complex student welfare matters * Playground bullying issues already addressed with class teacher or leading teacher * Major curriculum matters * Complex student learning or achievement issues * Referrals to student support service officers; psychologist, OT, speech therapy etc. * issues involving school staff * Reporting matters of serious or critical concern | * Email * If necessary arrange a meeting * Voicemail left on AP’s message bank * Parents are encouraged to request a meeting to discuss more serious matters | Acknowledged within 2 working days (depending on urgency of issue) with  proposed course of action |
| Principal | * School wide matters * Your child’s progress or wellbeing and you have already tried other channels   (eg. teacher, level coordinator and/or leading teacher)   * Parents are encouraged to request a meeting to discuss more serious matters | * School safety matters * School policy * Very complex student welfare and learning issues * School staff * School management matters * Reporting matters of serious or critical concern | * Email * If necessary arrange a meeting * Voicemail left on Principal’s message bank | Acknowledged within 2 working days (depending on urgency of issue) with  proposed course of action |

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| **Talk with** | **About** | **For example** | **How** | **Response time** |
| School Council | School wide matters  Please note that the School Council is not responsible for any teacher specific or employment issues and does not discuss any individual issues between teachers and students or parents; these are the responsibility of the  Principal. | * Grounds & safety * Major broad curriculum * Parent communication * Policies or strategy * Finance or budgets * Environment or * buildings * Health and safety * Outsourced programs such as Red Notes music, OSHS | * Phone call/letter to School Council * President or other member of School Council * Email (to specific * School Council email address ) | Acknowledged with proposed course of action  (timing in-line  with next school  council meeting) |
| Parents’ Association  (PA) | Questions or comments regarding a myriad of issues around school or PA functioning as well as issues impacting on school community spirit.  The PA actively engages with the parent body to filter and channel requests, feedback and concerns down the appropriate pathways.  A PA representative (e.g.: PA President) meets with the Principal and Assistant Principal on a regular basis to feed-back such issues. | Communication   * Fundraising * Social events | Discussion with  class rep or PA  Presidents.   * Email class rep or PA leaders * Phone call to class rep or PA executive | Acknowledged by class rep or PA presidents within 1-5 working days  and such matters are  normally discussed  monthly at the PA and Principal executive  Meetings.  Urgent issues will be addressed on a weekly basis |
| School Office | School administration matters:   * The School Office is often the first point of contact for * Parents/ carers and they will capably filter and channel requests, feedback and concerns to the right people for you. | * Safety & repair needing immediate attention * School fees & payments * Timetabling appointments for the Principal and AP * Urgent messages for teachers and /or other Staff re: matters that have arisen during the school day pertaining to urgent medical / health issues * General questions such as school dates, location of students/buildings etc. | * Phone call * Email | * Immediately or ASAP but within 2 working days |

**Formal Complaints**  
  
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.  
  
If you would like to make a formal complaint, in most cases, depending on the nature of the complaint raised, our school will first seek to understand the issues and will then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint together. The following process will apply:

1. Complaint received:   
Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the Principal or Assistant 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. For any verbal complaints received, the complaint will be documented and then sent to the complainant to ensure it is has been understood.

If English is not a first language and the complainant has difficulty communicating their complaint, the school will offer the VITS translation service to assist.   
  
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 Principal or Assistant Principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching 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 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. The school will respond to the complainant with the findings of the complaint, a summary of what the school has done and a pathway forward with recommended next steps.  
  
  
4. Timelines:   
Hampton Primary School will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within 2 business days during school terms) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Hampton Primary School may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. 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, Hampton Primary School will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

**Resolution**   
  
Where appropriate, Hampton 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, Hampton 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.

**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 DET South Eastern Victoria Region by contacting 9637 2000.

Hampton Primary School may also refer a complaint to South Eastern Victoria Region if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.   
  
**Further Information and Resources**

* Hampton Primary School Communication Protocol Policy

# Evaluation and Review

School Council (via the relevant Committee) will conduct a review of the Policy every 3 years as determined by School Council and DET guidelines.

All policies will be available to the community via the Compass portal in the ‘School Resources’ section.

# Revision and approval history

The section records the history and review of each policy.

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| **Date** | **Reviewed by** | **Description of outcome** | **Council Approval Date** |
| **7/06/2021** | **Education Subcommittee** | **Recommended for School Council ratification** | **15/06/2021** |
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