

COMPLAINTS POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Lara Lake Primary School so that people are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at the school,
- ensure that all complaints regarding Lara Lake 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 the school community and applies to all matters relating to the school. In some limited instances, the school 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.

POLICY

Lara Lake Primary School welcomes feedback and is committed to continuous improvement. The school values open communication with families and is committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately.

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, acceptable to all parties
- act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- recognise that all parties 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

Lara Lake 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
- acknowledge 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 Lara Lake Primary School

Complaints process

Lara Lake Primary School will discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. 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.

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, the 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:** Email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the Principal to outline your complaint.
2. **Information gathering:** The Principal will gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may involve seeking information from others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
3. **Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a satisfactory outcome for all. If after the resolution meeting, the parties are unable to resolve the complaint together, the school will produce a written summary of the complaint in the event further action is considered. 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:** Lara Lake 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, Lara Lake Primary School may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. The school 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, Lara Lake Primary School will consult and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Resolution

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

- an apology
- 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 relationships between the student, staff member, parent or community member.
- finding insufficient evidence to uphold the complaint.

In some circumstances, Lara Lake 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 Department Of Education and Training South Western Victoria Geelong Regional Office by contacting 5225 1000.

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

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

[Insert links to related local policies, including your school's *Statement of Values* and *Communication with School Staff policies*].

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was last updated on 2017 and is scheduled for review in 2019