



## Concerns and Complaints

### Rationale

Bellbrae Primary School supports the Victorian Government's Blueprint for D.E.T's recognition that involving parents in their child's education is critical to children's development and learning. It emphasises fostering positive relationships with parents and families and developing strong school community partnerships.

D.E.T also recognises that in all partnerships there will be times when there are disagreements and issues of concern that will need to be resolved.

The *Addressing parents' concerns and complaints effectively: policy and guides* supports the Blueprint by articulating the Department's approach to dealing with parent complaints and forms the basis for Bellbrae Primary School when dealing with associated matters.

### Purpose

At Bellbrae Primary School, together with student learning and student welfare, we hold the concerns of parents as a central factor in the provision of a safe, stimulating and caring learning environment.

As such we endeavour:

- To maintain the confidentiality of all parties, in line with Departmental policy and legislative requirements.
- To acknowledge that their common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties.
- To act in good faith and in a calm and courteous manner.
- To show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame.
- To recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities, and this must be balanced in their perusal of any complaint.

### Guidelines

Bellbrae Primary School recognises that parental concerns are a valuable part of student learning and well-being. In some instances when matters are not resolved, the following guidelines for parents' complaints can be used.

Bellbrae Primary School has information about both the Department's policy and procedures for addressing concerns and complaints and its own local procedures readily available to the school community. All information is accessible to the wider school community, disadvantages no one party or individual, and includes:

- expectations of a person making a complaint
- how a person can make a complaint
- information to be provided by the person
- who the person should contact and their contact details

- the process and timeframe for addressing complaints.

Bellbrae Primary School will record the following details of all complaints received, even if the complaint appears to be minor:

- name and contact details (with permission) of the person with a concern or complaint
- the date the concern was expressed or complaint made
- the form in which the concern or complaint was received (such as face-to-face, by telephone, in writing, by email)
- a brief description of the concern or complaint
- details of the school officer responding to the concern or complaint
- action taken on the concern or complaint
- the outcome of action taken on the concern or complaint
- any recommendations for future improvement in the school's policy or procedures
- maintaining a copy of an email will be recognised as an adequate record.

In addition to the expectations of all parties above, the school and or Department, will address complaints:

- courteously
- efficiently
- fairly
- promptly, within timelines agreed with the person with the concern or complaint (where possible concerns or complaints will be addressed within 20 school days)
- in accordance with due process and where appropriate, the principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework.

### Bellbrae Primary School

50 School Road  
Bellbrae, 3228  
Victoria

(03) 5261 2660

bellbrae.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au

# Program

Program ratified by  
School Council

August 2015

## Purpose

Bellbrae Primary School will adopt policies and procedures as outlined by the D.E.T. to address parent's concerns and complaints in order:

- To endeavour to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.
- To endeavour to build positive relationships between students, parents and staff.
- To endeavour to provide a safe working environment for staff.
- To endeavour to promote positive interactions between the home and school.
- To endeavour to ensure that issues arising are suitably and appropriately attended to in a timely and respectful manner.

## Implementation

As outlined in the guidelines above, Bellbrae Primary School will endeavour to follow the procedures listed below to adequately address and resolve concerns or complaints by parents:

1. Develop, publicise and implement the policy and procedures as outlined by the D.E.T. to effectively address parent concerns and complaints.
2. Ensure all reasonable steps have been undertaken in resolving parent concern and complaints.
3. Maintain the confidentiality of all parties and observes the principles of natural justice.
4. Contact the regional office for support with any complex complaints.
5. Communicate the outcomes of concerns and complaints, where possible, to all relevant parties.
6. Communicate the school's policy and procedures clearly and regularly to parents and the school community.
7. Ensure all new staff members are aware of the school and Department's policies and procedures in relation to addressing parent concerns and complaints.
8. Brief all staff members on the policy and procedures annually.
9. Provides staff with (or provides access to) training and support appropriate to their responsibilities under the procedures.
10. Establish and maintain administrative processes to manage concerns and complaints raised at the school.
11. Ensure that its policy and procedures are consistent with the Department's policy.
12. Regularly review the record of complaints to identify common or recurring issues that may need to be addressed.

**Bellbrae Primary School**

50 School Road  
Bellbrae, 3228  
Victoria

(03) 5261 2660

bellbrae.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au

# Program

Program ratified by  
School Council

August 2015

**Bellbrae Primary School**

50 School Road  
Bellbrae, 3228  
Victoria

(03) 5261 2660

bellbrae.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au

Program

13. Modify other school policies and procedures as required as a result of addressing concerns and complaints.
14. Ensure that all parties in a disputed complaint are aware of their entitlement to support through an advocate. An advocate can be a friend or colleague or an unpaid support person provided through an appropriate agency.
15. Reflect on the personal attributes necessary for staff selected to manage concerns and complaints (see *Good Practice Guide: Ombudsman Victoria's guide to complaint handling for Victorian public sector agencies*)

## Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of Bellbrae Primary School three-year review cycle.

Program ratified by  
School Council

August 2015