



Little Yarra
STEINER SCHOOL

Complaints Handling Policy

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with an action taken, decision made, or service provided, or with the failure to provide a service, take action or make a decision at the School. A complaint can be made by anyone, including a student, former student, parent/carer, other family member, staff member or member of the wider community. The Principal is responsible for ensuring the efficient and effective organisation, management and administration of the School's complaints handling processes.

The School is required to have and implement child focused processes for managing complaints and concerns. To meet this requirement, the School:

- has developed this complaints handling policy to clearly outline the process for making a complaint about the School, or the behaviour of any person within the School, the roles and responsibilities of leadership, school staff and volunteers in relation to complaints handling, and the process for dealing with different types of complaints.
- has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and cooperating with law enforcement
- ensures that record keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints and concerns
- has a clear procedure or set of procedures for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse (Please refer to the Child Protection Complaints Management Policy)
- ensures that complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly.

A child-focused complaints handling process is important for helping students and others at the School make complaints, whether about child safety, wellbeing or otherwise. This Policy supports the creation of a culture for students and their families to have their complaints heard, considered and responded to, and a culture of transparency in our complaints management processes.

The School's system for handling complaints that involve students (whether as complainant, victim, witness or person being complained about) is child-

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focused and culturally safe. We consult with relevant communities, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and other communities that make up our Staff and student cohort as required about how to enable, support and respond to complaints in a culturally sensitive way.

A positive relationship between students, parents and school staff is critical in maintaining the best possible outcomes for our students. Complaints can be resolved efficiently when a concern is first raised with the person responsible for the situation.

Process for Handling Complaints

- Complaints relating to Child Protection matters will be dealt with according to the Child Protection Complaints Management Policy
- Any complaints relating to the Principal will be forwarded to the Board for their consideration and response.
- Whenever feasible, complaints relating to a classroom or educational concern should be taken, in the first instance, to the Class Teacher or Guardians.
- If this is not feasible for any reason, the School's Management group should be contacted in writing. Support can be made available to people with specific needs, including translations, access to interpreters and enabling a complainant to seek the services of an advocate or support person. The complaint is then tabled at a Management meeting. Management will in the first instance seek to clarify the nature of the complaint in order to decide how best to handle it.
- Management will delegate an appropriate person to handle the complaint. This may be the Principal, depending on the nature of the complaint. Each complaint is treated in an impartial, equitable, objective and unbiased manner.
- The person handling the complaint is to inform the parties involved of the details of the complaint and the ensuing steps to be taken in seeking resolution. All parties are to be given indicative timelines for the process and the school's Management will be kept informed throughout.
- In dealing with complaints, it is important to treat fairly and equally all parties involved and gain clarity of the facts needing to be substantiated by providing an opportunity for both sides to be heard and to provide adequate notice to relevant parties of the ensuing process.

- Documentation relating to the complaint will be retained by the School and in the relevant staff, parent, or student file. Any applicable record keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations will be met in responding to the complaint.
- In responding to the complaint, it will be established whether or not the law requires reporting to relevant authorities. The School will in all instances co-operate with law enforcement and any other relevant authorities.
- The outcome of a complaint may include actions consistent with School values, policies and relevant legislation that are intended to support student, family and school relationships, engagement, and participation in the school community. Any action or decision taken in resolution of the complaint will be promptly communicated in the form of a written response to the relevant parties.
- The nature of the complaint and any resulting outcomes will be strictly confidential and the party or parties will neither be victimised nor discriminated against as a result of the process or outcome.