Concerns and Complaints Procedure

This information is to assist parents who want to raise a concern or make a complaint that is related to their child’s education or about any aspect of the school’s operation. This may include:

- general issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school’s Code of Conduct;
- incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard;
- learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning;
- communication with parents;
- school fees and payments;
- general administrative issues; and
- any other school-related matters.

How do I raise a concern or make a complaint?

The school should always be your first point of contact.

It is very important for a school to know if any families or individuals have any concerns about the school their child is attending so that the issue can be addressed, misconceptions corrected or issues followed up.

Cardinia Primary School is no different and it’s important that such concerns are taken to the school directly. We need to know if you have any concerns about your child’s education or well-being. Teaching and learning works best when parents and teachers talk to each other and work together to solve any problems.

What is your concern?

Before you approach the school or your child’s teacher:

- Be clear about the topic or issue you want to discuss;
- Plan what you want to say, so you can clearly explain what the problem is (you might want to take notes with you);
- Focus on the things that are genuinely affecting your child;
- Always remain calm and remember you may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue you wish to discuss;
- Have some ideas as to how the problem could be solved;
- Think about what would be an acceptable outcome for you and your child; and
- Be informed – check the Department’s or School’s policies or guidelines, where relevant.

October 2013
Concerns and Complaints Procedure

How do I contact the school?
There are a number of ways you can raise any concerns you have about your child and their education. You can:

- Write a note or e-mail to your child’s teacher outlining your concerns; or
- Make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with your child’s class teacher, ensuring that you inform the school about the issue you wish to discuss.

If you have a concern or complaint about any aspect of the operation of the school, again you may raise this with your child’s teacher or make an appointment to speak with the Principal. Alternatively, if you feel uncomfortable raising the issue verbally, a form is available at the school Office or on the school website where you may put your concern/complaint in writing.

What happens after this?
The teacher, Principal or School Council should be given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address your concerns. Remember, it may not always be possible to resolve an issue to your complete satisfaction.

If you have raised the issue with your child’s teacher and you still have a concern or the issue remains unresolved you need to make an appointment to speak to the Principal. An appointment can be made with the Principal through the school Office.

Please note that the Principal may want your child’s teacher to be present at this meeting therefore the meeting may occur outside of classroom hours.

What if I am still not satisfied?
If you feel that your complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily after speaking to the teacher and the Principal, you can then contact Regional Office.

Cardinia Primary School is located in the South-Eastern Victoria Region of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Contact details for the South-Eastern Victoria Region are:
Postal Address: PO Box 5, Dandenong 3175
Location: 165-169 Thomas Street, Dandenong
Phone: (03) 8765 5600

A regional Community Liaison Officer will be able to provide you with advice and assistance and, if required, direct your complaint to other regional staff to respond.
Concerns and Complaints Procedure

It is the Regional Office’s responsibility to:

- Ensure that complaints, wherever possible, are resolved at the school; and
- Ensure that procedures at the school are in accordance with the Department’s regulatory framework.

The Regional Office may refer your complaint to other areas or branches within the Department. You will be notified of this and of any major delays in addressing your complaint.

Who else can I contact?

There are several other organisations you could contact who may be able to provide assistance. These include:

- Victorian Ombudsman (www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au)
- Victorian Institute of Teaching (www.vit.vic.edu.au)

October 2013