

## THE PATCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Community Grievance

#### Rationale:

- Positive, clear and effective processes for resolving grievances between the school and community members assists in the building of strong relationships, dispels anxiety, and ultimately provides students with an enhanced learning environment.

#### Aims:

- To provide clear, positive and fair processes that allow grievances to be aired and resolved in a timely and effectively manner.

#### Implementation:

- Our school prides itself on clear, consultative and open communication.
- While we accept our responsibility to consult, and to communicate both clearly and effectively with the community, community members also have an obligation to read notices and newsletters, to attend briefings, and to seek clarification when required.
- There may, however, still be times when members of the community disagree or are confused about the things that we are doing.
- It is essential that the established process as outlined below is followed to resolve grievances:
  - Try to establish the facts as clearly possible, be wary of third hand information or gossip.
  - If the matter involves your child or an issue of everyday class operation, make an appointment to see their classroom teacher, detailing the reasons for the appointment.
  - An appointment should be made with the principal to discuss issues involving school policy, operations beyond your child's classroom, concerns about staff, or grievances that are probably not easily resolved.
  - The principal will provide the concerned community member with a copy of this '*Community Grievances Policy*' unless the matter is easily and satisfactorily resolved.
  - While 'in principle' support may be sought from the School Council, they are in agreement that they will not simply become a conduit for community complaints, will not become involved in confidential or personal issues, and will generally refer specific grievances about individuals to the principal.
  - All grievances are to be kept confidential.
  - Community members may be accompanied by another person, in a support role, at appointments to resolve grievances.
- All formal discussions and processes involving grievances will be documented.
- The principal and School Council president will exercise his/her judgement as to whether or not they will act upon anonymous complaints.
- The principal may provide community members with appropriate departmental contact names and numbers if grievances are not resolved.

#### Evaluation:

This policy was originally formed, in consultation with all members of the wider community (all staff, parents, students, and interested members of the community) as part of the school's five - year review cycle.

**Principal**



**School Council President**



## **Information for Parent about Complaint Process**

This information will assist parents who are raising concerns or making a complaint that is related to the school or their child's education.

### **Remember:**

- ◇ your child's schools should always be your first point of contact
- ◇ concerns are best resolved at the school
- ◇ the Department expects that most complaints will be resolved by the school

### **How do I raise an issue or make a complaint?**

- ◇ Clarify the issue (what is the problem?)
- ◇ Contact the school
- ◇ Contact the Principal or Assistant Principal
- ◇ Contact the Regional Office
- ◇ Contact the Department's central office

### **Clarify the issue (what is the problem?)**

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

- ◇ be clear about the topic or issue you want to discuss
- ◇ focus on the things that genuinely affect 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
- ◇ think about what an acceptable outcome would be for you and your child
- ◇ be informed; check the departments policies or guidelines, where relevant
- ◇ ask the school for a copy of their complaints policy, if they have one

### **Contact the school**

There are a number of ways you can raise any concerns you have about your child. You can:

- ◇ write a note to your child's teacher outlining your concerns
- ◇ make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with the class teacher, year level coordinator or home-group teacher; ensuring that you inform the school about the issue you wish to discuss
- ◇ consider speaking with the school's student welfare coordinator if you feel that is appropriate
- ◇ arrange any meeting times or phone calls through the school office (this is more convenient for both you and your child's teacher and does not interrupt teachers during the time they need to be with their students).

The class teacher or year level coordinator, together with others who may be involved, 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

### **Contact the Principal or Assistant Principal**

Most concerns are resolved by following the first two steps above. However, if the issue remains unresolved after you have approached your child's teacher or other school staff you can then ask to see the Principal or Assistant Principal. To do this, you will need to request an appointment through the school office. Be aware that:

- ◇ the Principal may ask another senior staff member to speak with you on their behalf
- ◇ if a teacher is going to be present at the meeting it is more likely to occur outside of classroom hours.

If your concern is related to issues of school policy, these should be raised more formally (in writing) with the Principal or the School Council.

### **Contact the Regional Office**

If you still feel that your complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily after speaking to the teacher and the Principal, you can then contact the relevant Regional Office. If you are unsure about what region your child's school is in, please ask the school.

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.

### **Contact the Department's central office**

Contact with the Department's central office should only take place if all other steps have not led to a satisfactory resolution. Where possible, all contact should be in writing.

If it is clear that you have not followed the above steps your letter (and your complaint) will be sent to the relevant regional office. We will let you know if this happens.