



**VALKSTONE STREET, EAST BENTLEIGH 3165**  
**Telephone: 9570 3986**                      **Facsimile: 9579 4423**  
**Homepage: [www.valkstoneps.vic.edu.au](http://www.valkstoneps.vic.edu.au)**  
**Email: [valkstone.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:valkstone.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au)**  
**ABN: 19 780 603 196**

**Address correspondence to P.O.Box 101, East Bentleigh 3165**

## **COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION**

### **BASIC BELIEF**

- Our school has both a desire and a responsibility to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained by staff, students, parents and community members at all times, and that complaints are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.

### **PURPOSE**

- To provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment.
- To resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

- Our school seeks to provide a positive, harmonious and productive environment.
- It is the Principal's responsibility to provide a healthy and positive school environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. In doing so, Principal's must ensure that all stakeholders are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- The Principal is required to use local complaints resolution procedures, where appropriate, for resolving complaints in relation to issues that fall within the school's area of responsibility. All cases of serious misconduct – sexual offences, criminal charges, or other serious incidents – must instead be referred to the Department of Education Conduct and Ethics Branch.
- It is incumbent upon the principal to act where unacceptable conduct is observed or brought to his or her attention.
- The concerns and complaints procedures will cover areas such as issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's code of conduct, incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or school yard, learning programs, communication with parents, school costs and payments or other school related matters.
- These procedures do not cover student disciplinary matters involving expulsions, complaints about employee conduct or performance, complaints by the Departments' employees related to their employment, student critical incident matters and criminal matters.
- It is expected that a person raising a concern or complaint will do so promptly, and:
  - provide complete and factual information,
  - maintain and respect the privacy of all parties,
  - acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties,
  - act in good faith and in a calm and courteous manner,
  - show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference without judging or blaming, and
  - recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.

- The school will address any concerns and complaints received from parents courteously, efficiently, fairly, promptly or within an agreed timeline and in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework.
- Complainants may seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are unable to express their concerns clearly.
- A complainant may at any stage choose to take their complaint directly to an external agency such as the Merit Protection Boards, Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, a union of which they are a member, or the Ombudsman.
- It is important that all complaints, ensuing procedures and outcomes are fully documented.
- The Principal may choose to respond to a complaint through an informal process in cases where the complaint is minor, the complainant wishes the matter to be dealt with informally or the complaint has arisen from lack of or unclear communication.
- Formal processes will be used when informal processes haven't been successful, a complainant seeks a formal process, or the principal believes the complaint warrants formal investigation.
- Full details regarding formal complaint resolution procedures are contained within the Department of Education 'Local Complaints Resolution Procedures' handbook, and contain the following steps.
- The formal process involves: -
  1. Investigating the complaint including formal interviews, written statements, conveying the details of the complaint to the respondent in writing providing the opportunity for a written response.
  2. Dismissing or accepting the complaint. Acceptance may involve the Conduct & Ethics Branch, verbal or written warnings, conciliation, counselling or consequences etc.
  3. Preparation of a detailed confidential report.
  4. Monitoring of the situation.
- Parties dissatisfied with the process can appeal to the previously mentioned external agencies.
- If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, they should contact the Department's regional office.
  - If the complaint cannot be resolved by the complainant, school and regional office working together, the regional office may refer it to the Department's Group Coordination Division.
- All matters must be treated with utmost confidentiality, and professional respect at all times.

### **EVALUATION**

- The school will monitor parent concerns and complaints and consider issues raised through the parent complaints process, and any other relevant information (eg parent opinion survey).

Reviewed and ratified: 2016

To be reviewed: 2019