

ST. MARGARET'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, EAST GEELONG POLICY FOR ADDRESSING GRIEVANCE ISSUES, OR MATTERS OF CONCERN

Rationale

St. Margaret's School aims to promote a community, family environment that supports the learning and development of students. It is important that every member of the community, including staff, parents and students, are contributors to the building of the school community. Whilst the positive achievements in the school are strongly appreciated, there are times when misunderstandings or disagreements can hinder the wellbeing of individuals or groups within the school community.

Positive, clear and effective processes for resolving grievances between the school and community members can assist in building strong relationships, dispel anxiety, and ultimately provide students with a settled and happy learning environment. The following procedures relate to any concerns that parents may have – whether these are serious grievance issues, or relatively minor concerns.

Aims

At St. Margaret's, we aim to:

- Listen to and respect the views of each person.
- Provide clear, positive and fair processes that allow grievances to be aired and resolved in a timely and effective manner.
- Give opportunity for parents to clarify any concerns regarding their child, or the school.
- Achieve satisfactory resolution for all parties concerned.

Implementation

In accordance with our Vision and Mission Policies, the school accepts that each person has a right to be heard and respected. All submissions are accepted in good faith, and all parties are expected to be open and reasonable, with regard to all dimensions of the issues in question.

At St. Margaret's we attempt to communicate and consult with parents in all matters. This happens through notes, meetings, Newsletters, P&F Committee and School Board and the school Website.

School community members 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 need clarification about the things that are happening in the school, or with their child.

In these cases, the following processes should be used in order to resolve grievances:

1. Try to establish the facts as clearly as you can, be wary of third hand information or gossip. Be wary of simple acceptance of the interpretations of a one sided point of view.
2. If the matter involves your child or an issue of everyday class operation, make an appointment to see the classroom teacher, detailing the reasons for the appointment. The teacher will attempt to resolve the issue, and will notify the principal of the matter.
3. If you still feel that the matter is unresolved, you are welcome to make an appointment with the principal to discuss the matter further. Follow up will include discussions between the principal, teacher and parents, and a strategy for further action will be planned.
4. If the grievance or concern is about broader school issues, school staff or issues that are difficult to discuss with classroom teachers, parents are invited to make an appointment to speak with the principal.
5. If issues cannot be resolved in the above ways, parents can speak with the Parish Priest, or with the Western Region Principal Consultant from the Catholic Education Office at Werribee.

Some important points to note:

- Parents with concerns or grievances may seek support from other school community members, including members of the School Board or Parents & Friends. However, it is not the role of school community members, School Board members, or P&F members to relay messages. Neither are grievances or concerns dealt with at School Board or P&F meetings. The best way to seek appropriate information or resolution is to speak with the class teachers or the principal.
- In all cases, confidentiality is respected. Only the people that need to know about the issue, will be involved. The people that need to be informed will be discussed at the meeting.
- 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 will exercise his/her judgement as to whether or not they will act upon anonymous complaints.

Evaluation: This policy will be evaluated within the four year School Improvement Cycle.

Drafted: 2015

Review: 2019