Parent Concerns and Complaints

Parents and school staff work as partners in the education of children. Regular two-way communication between parents and staff is essential in helping children achieve their potential. Parents and staff need to know if there are concerns that affect the learning of children.

Allenby Gardens Primary School and the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) are committed to ensuring the delivery of high quality education and care to the children at Allenby Gardens Primary School and Site-based Pre-school.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear and transparent information to parents, the community and staff on how concerns and complaints will be managed and resolutions found. It is also the intent of this policy to ensure parents have access to support and advice when attempting to resolve a concern or complaint.

Allenby Gardens Primary School and Pre-school is a Restorative Practice site. This means that we will actively work together to repair or restore situations and relationships after harm has been done. Parents can expect that their concern or complaint will be responded to in a courteous, respectful and timely manner and that staff will work in partnership with them to resolve their concern or complaint. In return, we ask that parents are respectful, cooperative and courteous to staff and that they are realistic and reasonable about what course of action is required to resolve their concern or complaint.

The process has three stages, with the child’s school being first point of contact for parents to raise concerns, followed by Regional Office and then the Parent Complaint Unit in DECD.

Complaint stages for parents

Stage 1 – Raise the concern
If you have a concern or complaint you should talk to the teacher as soon as possible. Contact the teacher to organise a mutually convenient time to meet. At any stage the Aboriginal Community Education Officer, Bronwyn Buckskin, the Serbian First Language Maintenance Teacher, Branka Bertok, Greek Language Teacher John Ligias or class-based Parent Representatives or an interpreter can be included in meetings to support parents.

Following this meeting if the matter is not resolved, you are encouraged to raise the issue with the Principal, Sue LePoidevin, Deputy Principal Travis Bartlett or School Counsellor.
Wendy Pugsley. They will consider the most effective way of resolving the concern or complaint based upon:-

- Information provided
- The school's parent complaint procedure
- The DECD Parent Concerns and Complaints Policy and procedure
- Consideration of any legislative and policy implications
- Advice from the Regional Office or DECD central office

The school or preschool will aim to resolve the concern or complaint ideally within 15 working days.

**Step 2: Contact your local DECD Regional Office**

If you don’t feel the issue has been addressed by the school, contact the Regional Director at your local DECD regional office on 84167333. The regional office will review the complaint – this may involve meeting with those involved and reviewing the documentation. The parent may also be offered mediation. The regional office will aim to resolve the complaint within 20 working days.

**Step 3: Contact the Parent Complaint Unit**

If your complaint remains unresolved after working together with the school and Regional Director, you will be advised to contact the Parent Complaint Unit.

The Parent Complaint Unit has a dual function:

- To provide advice and support to parents about their concern and complaint
- To objectively review complaints that have not been resolved at school or regional level.

A parent may contact the unit’s hotline (1800677435) anytime to discuss their concern or complaint or to seek advice.

If a complaint has not been resolved by the school or regional office, the unit will be asked to assess the complaint and decide what action is needed. Staff from the unit will contact the parent about what has been done, explain the process and provide information about when they can expect to hear about the outcome.

The department’s Head of Schools or Head of Early Childhood Development and the Chief Executive’s office will be advised by the Parent Complaint Unit of the outcome of the review. One of these senior leaders will make a final decision about the complaint and communicate the decision within 35 working days in most cases.

**Rights and Responsibilities**

When raising a concern or complaint with staff, parents can expect to:

- Be treated with respect, courtesy and consideration
- Have the complaint dealt with in a confidential and timely manner
- Have access to appropriate and easily understandable information about the complaint resolution process
• Have the complaint considered impartially and in accordance with due process and principles of natural justice
• Be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the complaint.

We request that when making a complaint parents will:
• Treat other parties with respect, courtesy and maintain confidentiality
• Raise the concern or complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen
• Provide complete factual information about the concern or the complaint
• Ask for assistance or further information as needed
• Act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
• Have realistic and reasonable expectations about what course of action is required to resolve the concern or complaint.

The safety and educational wellbeing of children is our first priority. Our aim is for everyone involved to act in good faith to find mutually acceptable outcomes to concerns or complaints.

Sue LePoidevin               Jackie Stringer
Principal                   Governing Council Chairperson

The policy and associated procedure will be reviewed March 2013