



**PRAHRAN  
HIGH  
SCHOOL**

# COMPLAINT POLICY

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaint process at Prahran High School so that parents and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school
- ensure that all complaints regarding Prahran High School are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner
- ensure that there is a clear link between any complaint/grievance process and our commitment to being a Child Safe school.

## SCOPE

This policy relates to complaints brought by parents, carers, students or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school. In some limited instances, we may need to refer the complainant to another Department of Education and Training process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions (e.g. expulsion appeals).

## POLICY

Prahran High School welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our families and are committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. We recognise that the complaint process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

We value and encourage open and positive relationships with our school community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

When addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- raise and discuss issues in a courteous and respectful manner
- acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome that is in the affected student's best interests and acceptable to all parties
- act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- recognise that all parties, including the broader school community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced
- recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances
- recognise that Prahran High School is a Child Safe school and will, at all times, fulfil our obligations to keep children safe in accordance with our *Child Safe Policy* and *Code of Conduct*.

## Preparation for Raising a Concern or Complaint

Prahran High School encourages parents, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- carefully consider the issues you would like to discuss
- remember that you may not have all the facts relating to the issues that you want to raise
- think about how the matter could be resolved
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the Department and Prahran High School.

## Complaint Process

Prahran High School is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to the relevant staff member, team leader or Assistant Principal. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the Principal.

If you would like to make a formal complaint, in most cases, depending on the nature of the complaint raised, our school will first seek to understand the issues and will then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint together. We will work from the belief that face-to-face conversations, rather than email/phone calls, are invariably more productive and restorative. The following process will apply:

1. **Complaint received:** Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the Assistant Principal or Principal to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand the issues. We can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.
2. **Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Principal, Assistant Principal or nominee may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
3. **Response:** Where possible, a meeting will be arranged with the Assistant Principal or Principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. In some circumstances, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
4. **Timelines:** Prahran High School will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within 48 hours) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Prahran High School may need time to gather information to understand the circumstances of your complaint. We will endeavour to complete information gathering and hold a resolution meeting (where appropriate) usually 5 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, Prahran High School will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

## Resolution

Where appropriate, Prahran High School may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- an apology or expression of regret
- a change of decision
- a change of policy, procedure or practice
- offering the opportunity for student counselling or other support
- other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, Prahran High School may also ask you to attend a meeting with an independent third party or to participate in a mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in resolution of the dispute.

## Escalation

If a parent or community member is not satisfied that their complaint has been resolved by the school, or if their complaint is about the Principal, then the complaint should be referred to the South Eastern Victoria Region of the Victorian Department of Education and Training. The first contact telephone number is 8765 5600.

Prahran High School may also refer a complaint to the South Eastern Victoria Region of the Victorian Department of Education and Training if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

For more information about the Department's *Parent Complaint Policy*, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Parent Complaint Policy](#).

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Prahran High School [Child Safe Policy](#) and [Code of Conduct](#); [Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy](#), [Duty of Care Policy](#); [Statement of School Values and Philosophy](#).

## REVIEW PERIOD

This policy will be shared with the Council and foundation staff in February 2019 and annually thereafter. It does not need to be ratified by Council but it will be discussed and uploaded into the school policy areas of Compass and our website.