

Rowville Primary School Complaints Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Rowville Primary School on 9764 1955

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Advise the school community on the process of making a formal complaint about significant issues of child safety, professional misconduct, fraud or other serious issues with legal implications.
- Ensure that any complaints and concerns regarding significant issues of child safety Rowville Primary School are managed in a timely, effective, fair, and respectful manner.

SCOPE

The majority of concerns that may be held by members of the school community are dealt with through our [Issues resolution policy](#). This policy relates to complaints that relate to child safety, the professional conduct of staff or have legal and/or human rights implications

In some limited instances, we may need to refer a complainant to another policy or area if there are different processes in place to the manage the issue including:

- Complaints and concerns relating to fraud and corruption will be managed in accordance with the department's [Fraud and Corruption Policy](#)
- Criminal matters will be referred to Victorian Police
- Legal claims will be referred to the Department's Legal Division
- Complaints and concerns relating to child abuse will be managed in accordance with our [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy](#) Procedures.

POLICY

The Department of Education values of responsiveness, integrity, impartiality, accountability, respect, leadership, and human rights are embedded in our day-to-day practice and guide our response to formal complaints. We are committed to ensuring the culture is inclusive and prioritises child safety, professional conduct, and the human rights of all individuals. We take formal complaints seriously and acknowledge difficulty in people coming forward so are committed to understanding the complaint and addressing it appropriately and in a timely manner.

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

- recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.
- operate within and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with any applicable legislation and Department policy.
- ensure the interests of the student involved are at the centre.

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- act in good faith and cooperation
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- behave with respect and courtesy
- be considerate of each other's views and respect each other's role

Complaints and concerns process for students

Students with a complaint about the professional conduct of staff or a child safety concern can raise their complaint with any trusted adult at school, for example: the classroom teacher, learning mentor, office staff, assistant principal or principal. This person will take the concern or complaint seriously and will explain to the students what steps will be taken to try to investigate the complaint and support the student.

Students can also ask a parent, carer or other trusted adult, to raise the issue with the school. Information about our parent/carer complaints and concerns process is outlined further below. The parent/carer process also applies to students who are mature minors, refer to: [Mature Minors and Decision Making](#).

Further information and resources to support students to raise issues or concerns are available at:

- [Report Racism Hotline](#) (call 1800 722 476) – this hotline enables students to report concerns relating to racism or religious discrimination
- [Reach Out](#)
- [Headspace](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#) (call 1800 55 1800)
- [Victorian Aboriginal Education Association](#) (VAEAI)

Complaints and concerns process for parents, carers, and community members

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

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

- carefully consider the seriousness of the issue they wish to discuss.
- remember they may not have all the facts relating to the issues that they want to raise
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the Department and Rowville Primary school. (see "Further Information and Resources" section below).

Support person

Parents or carers are welcome to have a support person to assist them in raising a serious complaint with our school. Parents/carers are asked to advise us if they wish to have a support person to assist them, and provide their name, contact details, and their relationship to them.

Making a complaint

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Most issues at the school can be resolved in the context of [Issues Resolution Policy](#) however where there are concerns about child safety, professional misconduct, fraud or corruption or violation of human rights parents may wish to formalise a complaint to the Assistant Principal or Principal.

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. The following process will apply:

- **Complaint received:** Please outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are.
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- **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 also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
- **Response:** Where required the Assistant Principal/Principal will seek relevant support and guidance from:
 - i. The Regional Office
 - ii. The Department Conduct and Ethics Branch
 - iii. Victoria Police
 - iv. The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection)
 - v. The Department's [Fraud and Corruption Policy](#)
 - vi. [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy](#) Procedures.
- Where possible we will try to advise you of the resolution of your complaint. However, we acknowledge that in some circumstances this might not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
- **Timelines:**

Rowville Primary School will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Rowville Primary School may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. We will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and seek an outcome where appropriate within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, Rowville Primary School will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Please note that unreasonable conduct (e.g. vexatious complaints) may need to be managed differently to the procedures in this policy.

Resolution

Where appropriate, Rowville Primary School may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- an apology or expression of regret
- a change of decision

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- 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, Rowville Primary School may also ask you to attend a meeting with an independent third party or participate in a mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute.

Escalation

If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved by the school, or if your complaint is about the Principal and you do not want to raise it directly with them, then the complaint should be referred to the North Eastern Regional Office] by contacting [1800 338 663](tel:1800338663) or email enquiries@education.vic.gov.au

Rowville Primary School may also refer a complaint to North Eastern Regional office if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

For more information about the Department's parent complaints process, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Raise a complaint or concern about your school.](#)

Record keeping and other requirements

To meet Department and legal requirements, our school must keep written records of:

- Serious, substantial or unusual complaints
- Complaints relating to the Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, to meet regulatory requirements - refer to Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes for further information

Our school also follows Department policy to ensure that record-keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints or concerns.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

Available publicly on school website

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- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

- [Complaints - Parents](#)

The Department's parents' website:

- [Raise a complaint or concern about your school](#)
- [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	New Policy
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	July 2024