



COMPLAINTS POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Malvern Valley Primary 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 Malvern Valley Primary School are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

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, the school may need to refer the complainant to another DET (Department of Education and Training) process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions, for example, expulsion appeals.

POLICY

Malvern Valley Primary School welcomes feedback, and is committed to continuous improvement and recognises that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning. We value open communication with our families and are committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. We recognise that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

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

- be considerate of each other's views and respect each other's role
- be focused on resolution of the complaint, with the interests of the student involved at the centre
- act in good faith and cooperation
- behave in accordance with the school's values of respect, resilience, cooperation and confidence
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- operate within and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with any applicable legislation and Department policy
- recognise that schools and the DET may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

Malvern Valley Primary 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 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 Malvern Valley Primary School (see “Further Information and Resources” section below).

Complaints process

Malvern Valley Primary School always welcomes the opportunity to discuss any concerns with parents/carers and community members. Where possible, school staff will work with parents/community members to ensure concerns are appropriately addressed (refer to Appendix A for the Complaints Management Flowchart).

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

When a formal complaint is made, in most cases, depending on the nature of the complaint, 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:

- 1. Complaint received:** Email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the Principal or Assistant Principal, to outline your complaint so that the issue is fully understood. Efforts will be made to discuss the complaint in a way that is convenient for the complainant.
- 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 also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
- 3. Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Principal or Assistant Principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. If after the resolution meeting the issue is not resolved, a written summary of the complaint will be constructed by both parties if the complainant would like to take further action. 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:** Malvern Valley Primary School will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within two school days) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Malvern Valley Primary School may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of the complaint. Any necessary information gathering and a resolution meeting will be completed within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, Malvern Valley Primary School will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Resolution

Where appropriate, Malvern Valley Primary 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, Malvern Valley Primary School and the complainant may engage a third party, such as a Community Liaison Officer, to support the resolution process.

Escalation

If the complainant is not satisfied that the complaint has been resolved by the school, or if the complaint is about the Principal and you do not want to raise it directly with them, then the complaint should be referred to the South East Victoria Regional office by telephone: 1300 338 738 or email: sevr@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Malvern Valley Primary School may also refer a complaint to the South East Victoria Regional Office if all has been done to address the complaint without success.

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

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Statement of Values and School Philosophy

See relevant policies on the School website <https://mvps.vic.edu.au/>

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was ratified at School Council on 19th August 2020 and is scheduled for review in 2023.

Complaints management flowchart

