



COMPLAINTS POLICY

BLACKBURN LAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

12 - 14 Florence Street Blackburn 3130

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Blackburn Lake Primary School (BLPS) so that students, 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 and concerns regarding BLPS are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner

SCOPE

This policy relates to complaints brought by student, parents, carers or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school. In some limited instances, we may need to refer a complainant to another policy or area if there are different processes in place to 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 Victoria 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 and Procedures.

POLICY

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. Therefore, BLPS 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 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(s) involved at the centre
- act in good faith and cooperation
- behave with respect and courtesy
- 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 Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances

Complaints and concerns process for students

Blackburn Lake Primary School (BLPS) acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. BLPS encourages our students to raise issues or concerns as they arise so that we can work together to resolve them.

Students with a concern or complaint can raise them with a trusted adult at school, for example, with your classroom teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal. This person will take your concern or complaint seriously and will explain to you what steps we can take to try to resolve the issue and support you.

You can also ask your parent, carer or another trusted adult outside of the school, to talk to us about the issue instead. Information about our parents/carers complaints and concerns process is outlined further below. The parents/carers process also applies to students who are mature minors, refer to: [Mature Minors and Decision Making](#).

Other ways you can raise a concern or complaint with us include:

- talking to a member of the student representative council about your concern and any suggestions you have for resolving it
- participating in our Attitudes to School Survey (for Grades 4-6)
- participating in our student forums **held every term**

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)

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

BLPS 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 DET and BLPS (see “Further Information and Resources” section below).

Support person

You are welcome to have a support person to assist you in raising a complaint or concern with our school. Please advise us if you wish to have a support person to assist you, and provide their name, contact details, and their relationship to you.

Raising a concern

BLPS is willing to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to the child’s teacher, the level coordinator, or the Assistant Principal/Principal as appropriate. School staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

Making a complaint

Where concerns cannot be resolved informally via discussion, parents/carers or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the Principal or Assistant 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. The following process will apply:

Formal Complaints Procedure for BLPS:

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 what the issues are. We can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.
2. **BLPS 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. BLPS 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, BLPS 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 hold a resolution meeting as soon as practicable. 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.
3. **Meeting:** Where possible, a meeting will be arranged with the Assistant Principal/Principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a **resolution** satisfactory to all parties. If a resolution is not possible, the complaint will be **escalated**.

Resolution

Where appropriate, BLPS 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 counseling or other support
- other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent/carers and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, BLPS may also ask the complainant 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 after the resolution meeting, the matter is unable to be resolved together, BLPS will work with the complainant to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event that further action is taken.

If the complainant is not satisfied that the complaint has been resolved by the school, or if the complaint is about the Principal and the complainant does not want to raise it directly with them, then the complaint should be referred to the North Eastern Regional Office.

BLPS may also refer a complaint to the North Eastern Regional Office if the belief has been formed that all has been done to address the complaint.

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
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Annual reference in school newsletter
- Discussed at student forums/through communication tools
- Hard copy available from school administration (upon request)

Further information and resources

Phone	1300 333 231
Email Address	nevr@education.vic.gov.au
Website	www.vic.gov.au...

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2023
Approved by	Principal David Dowson
Next scheduled review date	November 2025