

### COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION POLICY

#### **1. Rationale:**

1.1 Our school has both a desire and a responsibility to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained by staff and students at all times, and that complaints are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.

#### **2. Aims:**

2.1 To provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment.

2.2 To resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.

#### **3. Implementation:**

3.1 Our school seeks to provide a quality environment that is positive, harmonious and productive.

3.2 It is the principal's responsibility to provide a healthy and positive school environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. In doing so, the Principal must ensure that all staff is aware of their rights and responsibilities.

3.3 The principal is required to use local complaints resolution procedures, where appropriate, for resolving complaints in relation to issues that fall within the school's area of responsibility. All cases of serious misconduct – sexual offences, criminal charges, or other serious incidents – must instead be referred to the DEECD Complaints and Investigations Unit.

3.4 The principal has an obligation to act where unacceptable conduct is observed or brought to his or her attention.

3.5 A complainant may at any stage choose to take their complaint directly to an external agency such as the Merit Protection Board, Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission or the Ombudsman.

3.6 It is important that all complaints, ensuing procedures and outcomes are fully documented.

3.7 The principal may choose to respond to a complaint through an informal process in cases where the complaint is minor, the complainant wishes the matter to be dealt with informally, or the complaint has arisen from lack of or unclear communication.

3.8 Formal processes will be used when informal processes haven't been successful, a complainant seeks a formal process, or the principal believes the complaint warrants formal investigation.

3.9 Full details regarding formal complaint resolution procedures are contained within the DEECD Guidelines for Managing Complaints, Unsatisfactory Performance and Misconduct 2009 and contain the following steps:

- In determining the appropriate action, the principal or manager, subject to satisfying any legal or policy requirements, should use his or her professional judgement to decide

whether the matter should be dealt with under the Guidelines and if so, whether it should proceed under the complaints, unsatisfactory performance or misconduct procedures.

- The Department's Conduct & Ethics Branch will provide advice and assistance to principals and managers on the appropriate course of action to take. The Branch can be contacted on 9637 2595 or by email at [conduct.ethics@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:conduct.ethics@edumail.vic.gov.au).
- An employee who is the subject of a complaint, unsatisfactory performance or misconduct process may contact an officer of the Conduct & Ethics Branch for information on the process. The manager of the Branch will provide the employee with information regarding the process but it is not the role of the Branch to provide support and assistance to employees other than principals and managers.

3.10 Parties dissatisfied with the process can appeal to the previously mentioned external agencies.

3.11 Parties must treat all matters with utmost confidentiality, and professional respect at all times.

3.12 The School Council president will be kept informed of all complaints.

#### **4. Evaluation:**

4.1 This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or earlier as required. Ratified by School Council May 26<sup>th</sup> 2014.