



PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING COMPLAINTS OR GRIEVANCES Wycheproof P12 College

When a complaint or grievance is made, it is expected that the staff of Wycheproof P12 College follow the advice and policy guideless of the Department of Education and Training (DET).

The Department expects that all parties will, when addressing concerns and complaints:

- maintain the confidentiality of all parties, in line with Departmental policy and legislative requirements
- acknowledge that their common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- act in good faith and in a calm and courteous manner
- show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.

The principal at Wycheproof P12 College should ensure that parents are aware of their right to advocacy when communicating the issues involved in their complaint and in negotiating an outcome.

Refer to the parent complaints website for a full comprehensive list of possible complaint/grievance actions:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx>

In addition to the expectations of all parties above, the Department will address complaints:

- courteously
- efficiently
- fairly
- promptly, within timelines agreed with the person with the concern or complaint (where possible concerns or complaints should be addressed within 20 school days)
- in accordance with due process and where appropriate, the principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework.

For example, actions may include:

Contacting the school

There are a number of ways parents can raise any concerns they may have about their child and their education. Parents can:

- write a note to your child's teacher outlining your concerns
- make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with the class teacher, the year level coordinator or home-group teacher; ensuring that parents inform the school about the issue they wish to discuss
- consider speaking with the school's student welfare coordinator if it is felt this would be appropriate
- arrange any meeting times or phone calls through the school office (this is more convenient and does not interrupt teachers during the time they need to be with their students).

The class teacher or year level coordinator, together with any others who may be involved, should be given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address concerns. Remember, it may not always be possible to resolve an issue to a parent's complete satisfaction.

Contacting the principal or assistant principal

Most concerns are resolved by following the first two steps above. However, if the issue remains unresolved after you have approached your child's teacher or other school staff you can then ask to see the assistant principal or principal. To do this, you will need to request an appointment through the school office. Please note that:

- the principal may ask another senior staff member to speak with you on their behalf
- if a teacher is going to be present at the meeting it is more likely to occur outside of classroom hours.

If your concern is related to issues of school policy, these should be raised more formally (in writing) with the principal or the school council.

Contact the regional office

If you still feel that your complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily after speaking to the teacher and the principal, you can then contact your relevant regional office. If you are unsure about what region your child's school is in, please ask the school.

A regional community liaison officer will be able to provide you with advice and assistance and, if required, direct your complaint to other regional staff to respond.

The Regional Director will ensure any formal written complaint is reviewed.

It is the regional office's responsibility to:

- ensure that complaints, wherever possible, are resolved at the school
- ensure that procedures at the school are in accordance with the Department's regulatory framework.

The regional office may refer your complaint to other areas or branches within the Department. You will be notified of this and of any major delays in addressing your complaint.

Contacting the Department's central office

Contact with the Department's central office should only take place if all other steps have not led to a satisfactory resolution. Where possible, all contact should be in writing.

If it is clear that you have not followed the above steps your letter (and your complaint) will be sent to the relevant regional office. You will be contacted if this happens.

How to lodge a complaint in writing

You can use the Department's complaint form to help you to put together all the information you need to submit a complaint in writing, see:  Parent Complaint Form (pdf - 111.93kb)

If you are having difficulties filling out the form you can contact your regional office for assistance.

You can send your complaint by mail, email or fax.

The Department's central office will try to respond within 20 school days. However, the more complex and sensitive the issues you raise, the more time will be needed to investigate or follow up with the relevant parties.

We will let you know if there may be major delays.

Please send your complaint to:

Deputy Secretary
Regional Services Group
c/o Manager, School Operations and Governance Unit
Performance Division

GPO Box 4367
Melbourne VIC 3001

Or email: community.stakeholders@edumail.vic.gov.au

Or fax: (03) 9637 2180