



# Conflict Resolution POLICY

## Rationale:

- 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.

## Guidelines:

- To provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment.
- To resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.

## Implementation:

- Our school seeks to provide a positive, harmonious and productive environment.
- It is the Principal's responsibility to provide a healthy and positive school environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. In doing so, Principal's must ensure that all staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- The Principal is required to use local complaints resolution procedures, where appropriate, for resolving complaints from in relation to issues that fall within the school's area of responsibility. In cases of serious misconduct – sexual offences, criminal charges, other serious incidents – must instead be referred to the DEECD Complaints and Investigations Unit.
- It is incumbent upon the Principal to act where unacceptable conduct is observed or brought to his or her attention.
- A complainant may at any stage choose to take their complaint directly to an external agency such as the Merit Protection Boards, Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission or the Ombudsman.
- It is important that all complaints, ensuing procedures and outcomes are fully documented.
- 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.
- 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.
- Full details regarding formal complaint resolution procedures are contained within the DEECD 'Local Complaints Resolution Procedures' handbook, and contain the following steps.
- The formal process involves:
  1. Investigating the complaint including formal interviews, written statements, conveying the details of the complaint to the respondent in writing providing the opportunity for a written response.
  2. Dismissing or Accepting the complaint. Acceptance may involve the Complaints & Investigations Unit, verbal or written warnings, conciliation, or counselling etc.
  3. Preparation of a detailed confidential report.
  4. Monitoring of the situation.
- Parties dissatisfied with the process can appeal to the previously mentioned external agencies.
- All matters must be treated with utmost confidentiality, and professional respect at all times.

## Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed by the School Council in line with DEECD recommendations as part of the three year review cycle or when deemed necessary

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

**August 2007**