



# KINGSTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL

## PARENT COMPLAINTS POLICY

Parents can document complaints at three levels, locally at the site, regionally through DECD District Office, or centrally, through the Parent Complaint Unit. Whenever possible the school should always be the first contact for dealing with concerns or complaints.

Parent Complaints at Kingston Community School will be dealt with confidentially, professionally, and in a timely manner.

**CONCERNS** are issues which are raised informally to bring changes or an improvement in a situation.

**COMPLAINTS** are expressions of grievance or resentment where a parent is seeking redress or justice.

Some complaints or concerns may not be able to be considered at site level. Where serious staff misconduct, breach of departmental policy, legislation, or current DECD policies and appeal processes exist, complaints will be referred to the District Office, Central Office, or relevant authorities. Examples include

- Appeals to student suspension and expulsion
- Misconduct of staff, volunteers and service providers
- Employee disputes
- Mandatory reporting
- Governing Council functions and policies, e.g. Uniform and Canteen Operations
- Gall Park operations, functions management and policies
- Public Library operations, functions, management and policies

### How to Raise a Concern or Complaint

Parents can raise concerns verbally or in writing with any staff member at Kingston Community School, who will work collaboratively to resolve them as soon as possible.

Parents can raise complaints with any staff member verbally, but in most cases will be asked to provide written information about the complaint (directed to the Principal) unless the matter can be easily resolved.

### Kingston Community School will:

- Treat parents who raise concerns with respect and courtesy
- Deal with complaints in an efficient, impartial, fair and timely manner
- Provide parents with factual information about managing complaints and information relevant to the complaint

- Contact parents within five working days after the complaint is received to discuss the matter.
- Listen to parents with empathy.
- Raise the concern or complaint with relevant parties as soon as possible
- Resolve complaints and concerns with acceptable outcomes for everyone.
- Inform parents if complaints have been referred elsewhere
- Provide parents with verbal or written information on action taken to resolve the concern or complaint

**DECD requests all parents raising complaints and concerns to**

- Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint.
- Treat people with respect and courtesy
- Maintain confidentiality
- Have realistic and reasonable expectations about what course of action is required

**When a complaint is not able to be resolved promptly it should be referred to a site leader who will**

- Keep notes of meetings, and phone calls
- Provide written correspondence of agreed actions and meeting outcomes to all concerned
- Maintain copies of written correspondence related to the complaint in the student file or Principals office

**Kingston Community School will consider the following things when a complaint is received including**

- Factual information that exists about the complaint, including who is involved
- Actions taken so far?
- The outcome the parent requires?
- A possible plan of action and protocols required to move the matter forward

**The following strategies will be used to resolve complaints at a site level**

- Identifying areas that require investigation or a response
- Allowing opportunities for all parties involved to express their concerns, present a point of view and clarify misunderstandings
- Apologies, if warranted, to assist aggrieved parties
- Changes to decisions, policies, procedures or practices
- Ensuring the event complained about does not occur again
- Referring the complaint on to relevant people for a decision to be made

**Taking a Concern or Complaint further**

When a parent is not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint management procedure or discusses their complaint directly with a site leader it is expected that KCS leaders, in consultation with the Principal, will

- Provide parents with relevant information to resolve the issue at site level
- Acknowledge receipt of a written parent complaint in writing within five working days
- Determine a course of action for the complaint between the parties involved
- Document the complaint process and outcome
- Provide parents with a site summary letter of the complaint, agreements, and actions taken to resolve the complaint
- Advise parents of their rights to refer the matter to the regional office if they are dissatisfied with the outcome, or if the complaint cannot be resolved at site level efficiently within fifteen days.

In cases where complaints are unsubstantiated, vexatious, or one of the parties involved are resistant to, or not committed to working towards a negotiated solution the site will involve the Regional Office who will make a decision in relation to the complaint, based on the evidence provided.

Parents can refer complaints to the Regional Office at any stage, however must be aware that initial complaints will be referred back to the site for resolution.

Parents will be supported with relevant information including Policies and Procedures, to assist with resolving complaints at Kingston Community School.

All parties involved in a complaint management process can bring a support person to any of the meetings held in relation to the complaint. This should be arranged beforehand and communicated to all concerned. Nominated people can only provide advice and support about the complaint process. They are not able to answer questions or speak on behalf of any of the parties or interfere with discussions.

If at any point a legal representative is engaged during a complaint management process our site will refer the matter to DECD Legislation and Legal Services Unit.

Parents can contact The Parent Complaint Unit hotline to seek advice and assistance about a school concern or complaints.

When complaints have not been resolved at our site or at a Regional level the Parent Complaint Unit will objectively review complaints, make decisions, and advise of outcomes within thirty five days in most cases.

## Timeline

### COMPLAINT/CONCERN TO SITE MEMBER

5 days



Parent contacted to discuss the matter



15 days

Issue or concern resolved, parent contacted, outcomes communicated

#### **TAKING A COMPLAINT FURTHER- TO THE PRINCIPAL OR A SITE LEADER**

2 days



**Parent asked to put complaint in writing**



5 days

Parent contacted to discuss the matter and Principal/Leaders respond with a written outline of a possible course of action



15 days

Issue or concern resolved, parent contacted, outcomes communicated

#### **COMPLAINT REFERRED TO DISTRICT OFFICE BY PARENT/SITE**

5 days



Parent contacted to discuss the matter, and written response received from DEO



20 days

Issue or concern resolved, parent contacted, outcomes communicated.

The timeframes referred to in these procedures are indicative (i.e. as soon as reasonably possible to guide timely action. If there is a delay and a longer timeframe is required the staff member managing the complaint must notify all involved and a likely time for the matter to be concluded.