**COMPLAINTS POLICY**

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

* provide an outline of the complaints process at Glenroy Specialist School so that 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 regarding Glenroy SS are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

## **Scope**

This policy relates to complaints brought by parents, carers, students or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school. In some limited instances, we may need to refer the complainant to another Department of Education and Training process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions.

## **Policy**

Glenroy SS welcomes feedback 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.

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.

When addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

* raise and discuss issues in a courteous and respectful manner
* acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome that is in the affected student’s best interests and acceptable to all parties
* act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
* recognise that all parties, including the broader school community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced
* recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

**Preparation for raising a concern or complaint**

Glenroy SS 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 Department and Glenroy SS.

**Complaints process**

Glenroy SS is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to:

* the Class Teacher regarding learning issues and incidents which happened within the class
* the Sub-school Leader if students from more than one group involved
* the Assistant Principal for issues relating to staff members or complex student issues
* the Principal for issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or other complex student issues.

Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the North West Regional Office.

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:

* **Complaint received:** Please either email or telephone to arrange a meeting or discuss concerns with the relevant contact listed above. We can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.
* **Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Principal, Assistant Principal or nominee listed above 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.
* **Response:** Where possible, a resolution 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 after the resolution meeting we are unable to resolve the complaint together, we will work with you to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event you would like to take further action about it. In some circumstances, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
* **Timelines:** Glenroy SS 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, Glenroy SS 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 where appropriate within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, Glenroy SS will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

**Resolution**

Where appropriate, Glenroy SS may seek to resolve a complaint:

* through an informal process in cases where the complainant wishes the matter to be dealt with informally, or the complaint has arisen from lack of or unclear communication, or where the complaint is assessed as minor.
* through 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.
* using 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 DET Complaints and Investigations Unit.

Full details regarding formal complaint resolution procedures are detailed in the DET policies for *managing complaints, misconduct and unsatisfactory performance* and *parent complaints*. These contain the following steps:

* **Investigating the complaint**.This includes formal interviews, written statements, conveying the details of the complaint to the respondent in writing providing the opportunity for a written response.
* **Dismissing or accepting the complaint.** Acceptance may involve the Complaints & Investigations Unit, verbal or written warnings, conciliation, or counselling etc.
* **Preparation of a detailed report.** The recipients of this report will be determined by the nature of the report and any resulting actions to be taken.
* **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.

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

In some instances, Glenroy SS may also ask you 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 a parent or community member is not satisfied that their complaint has been resolved by the school, or if their complaint is about the Principal, then the complaint should be referred to the North West Regional Office by contacting

Glenroy SS may also refer a complaint to the North West Regional Office if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

**FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

[Managing complaints, misconduct and unsatisfactory performance](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/Pages/conduct.aspx)

[Parent complaints policy](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/community/policyparentsconcerns.pdf)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

Glenroy SS Equal Opportunity and Harassment Policy

[Glenroy SS Bullying Prevention Policy](../GSS%20Policies/Updated%20to%20DET%20template%202018%20or%20req%20for%20school%20review/Bullying%20Prevention%20Policy%20-%20students%20%28completed%20August%202018%29.docx)

**Review period**

This policy was last updated on 08.08.2018 and is scheduled for review on 08.2021

Ratified by School Council 15 October 2018