



Complaints Policy

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide an outline of the complaints process at John Henry Primary School so that students, parents and members of the community are informed of how a complaint or concern about issues arising at our school can be raised.
- Ensure that all complaints and concerns regarding John Henry Primary School are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

Scope:

This policy relates to complaints brought by students, parents, carers, or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school.

In some limited instances, we may need to refer a complainant to another policy or area if there are different processes in place to manage the issue including:

- Complaints and concerns relating to fraud and corruption will be managed in accordance with the Department's [Fraud and Corruption Policy](#)
- Criminal matters will be referred to Victorian Police
- Legal claims will be referred to the Department's Legal Division
- Complaints and concerns relating to child abuse will be managed in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures

Policy:

John Henry Primary School welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, 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 within 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:

- be considerate of each other's views and respect each other's role
- be focused on resolution of the complaint, with the interests of the student involved at the centre
- act in good faith and cooperation
- behave with respect and courtesy
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- operate within and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with any applicable legislation and Department policy

- recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

Complaints and concerns process for students

John Henry Primary School acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. John Henry Primary School encourages our students to raise issues or concerns as they arise so that staff and students can work together to resolve them.

Students with a concern or complaint can raise them with a trusted adult at school, for example, with their classroom teacher, Learning Specialist, Wellbeing staff, Education Support Staff. This person will take their concern or complaint seriously and will explain what steps can be taken to try to resolve the issue and support them.

Students can also ask a parent, carer or another trusted adult outside of the school, to inform staff about the issue instead. Information about our parent/carer complaints and concerns process is outlined further below. The parent/carer process also applies to students who are mature minors, refer to: [Mature Minors and Decision Making](#).

Further information and resources to support students to raise issues or concerns are available at:

- [Report Racism Hotline](#) (call 1800 722 476) – this hotline enables students to report concerns relating to racism or religious discrimination
- [Reach Out](#)
- [Headspace](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#) (call 1800 55 1800)
- [Victorian Aboriginal Education Association](#) (VAEAI)

Complaints and concerns process for parents, carers and community members

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

John Henry Primary School encourages parents, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- Carefully consider the issues to be discussed
- Remember that all parties may not have all the facts relating to the issue
- Think about how the matter could be resolved
- Be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the Department and John Henry Primary School

Support person

A support person is welcome to assist complainants when raising a complaint or concern with the school. Please advise staff if a support person will be assisting, and provide their name, contact details, and their relationship to you.

Raising a concern

John Henry Primary School is always open to discussing any concerns with parents/carers and community members. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to your child's teacher. Where possible, school staff will work with students and families to ensure that concerns are appropriately addressed.

Making a complaint

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

When a formal complaint is made, 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:

1. **Complaint received:** Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the principal, to outline the complaint so that concerns can be fully understood. The complaint can be discussed in a manner that is most convenient for the complainant, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.
2. **Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, it is expected that the Principal 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.
3. **Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. If the complaint remains unresolved after the resolution meeting, a summary of the complaint can be written in the event that further action is requested by the complainant. In some circumstances, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
4. **Timeline:** John Henry Primary School will acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as possible and will seek to resolve them in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, John Henry Primary School may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of the situation. If required, a resolution meeting will be held within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, John Henry Primary School will consult with the parties involved and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Please note that unreasonable conduct (eg. vexatious complaints) may need to be managed differently to the procedures in this policy.

Resolution

Where appropriate, John Henry Primary School may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- an apology or expression of regret
- a change of decision
- a change of policy, procedure or practice
- offering the opportunity for student counselling or other support
- other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community

In some circumstances, John Henry Primary School may also ask complainants 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

Any complaints that have not been resolved satisfactorily by the school, or are about the Principal and preferred not to be discussed with the school directly, can be referred to the South Eastern Victoria Region.

John Henry Primary School may also refer a complaint to South Eastern Victoria Region if it is believed that all avenues have been exhausted by the school, to address the complaint.

For more information about the Department's parent complaints process, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Raise a complaint or concern about your school.](#)

Record keeping and other requirements

To meet Department and legal requirements, John Henry Primary School must keep written records of:

- serious, substantial or unusual complaints

- complaints relating to the Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, to meet regulatory requirements – refer to Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes for further information

Our school also follows Department Policy to ensure that record-keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints or concerns.

Communication:

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school’s website
- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

Policy Review and Approval:

Policy last reviewed -	21 st February, 2022
Approved by -	Principal
Next scheduled review date -	21 st February, 2026