



Communications & Complaints Policy

(Review 2022)

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Rationale

At Lake Gwelup Primary we are committed to creating a culture that welcomes, encourages and initiates regular, two-way communication.

Our Commitment

Our school is committed to providing a positive environment for students to learn and for staff to work. Student learning is strengthened when staff and parents/carers are actively involved in their education. By working together and forging positive relationships we support the health and wellbeing as well as the academic development of our students.

Our Expectations

We expect to achieve this by school staff, parent/carers and students:

- Valuing and supporting every member of the school community and appreciating their contributions
- Celebrating diversity and individuality; cooperation and acceptance are welcomed and encouraged
- Forming positive connections
- Creating a friendly, supportive and cohesive community

Communication Protocols

- ✓ Communication between parents/carers and school staff will be by brief discussions, letters, phone calls or emails
- ✓ Communication will generally occur during the school day
- ✓ If a longer, face to face meeting is required, please arrange a mutually suitable time by emailing or phoning the school
- ✓ School staff will not communicate using their private phone numbers, email addresses or social media accounts
- ✓ Teachers and school staff may not be available to respond to phone calls or emails immediately, however they will make every effort to respond, during school hours 8:00am-4:00pm, within 24-48 hours
- ✓ Teaching staff, including the Principal and Deputies are not required to respond to communications outside of their normal working hours or during leave periods
- ✓ There is an expectation that communication and all interaction between school staff and parents/carers is mutually respectful
 - ✓ Verbal and/or physical aggression or threats, offensive language and derogatory comments, whether face to face, over the phone, via email or on social media is unacceptable and will not be tolerated
- ✓ Harassment in any form, including habitual or numerous communications which unreasonably divert the school staff away from our core business or unfairly allocates attention away from other students and parents/carers, will not be tolerated

Complaints Process- What Can You Do If You Have a Problem?

Assume Good Intentions

At Lake Gwelup Primary while we always aim for excellence, as with any school, there may be times when a problem occurs. We would ask that before making a complaint, you remember that all staff are here because they care about children and will be acting with the best interests of all the children they are working with. Complaints will be regularly analysed for the identification and addressing of systemic and recurring problems. We will report on our complaints handling processes as a part of our school review and evaluation procedure.

Stage 1: Discussion with a staff member

Seeking information as early as possible can solve many problems. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's progress, the homework set, the assessment procedures or your child's wellbeing at school, contact the class teacher. Teachers can be contacted via email or by contacting the school office to arrange a mutually convenient time for a telephone conversation or meeting. If your complaint or concern is of a serious nature it should be brought to the immediate attention of the Principal.

Stage 2: Contact the school administration team

If a problem is unable to be resolved by talking with your child's teacher, you can contact our Deputy Principals or Principal who will work with you to resolve the problem. The Deputy Principals or Principal will consider the issue and identify what action is to be taken, and will clarify the process if a formal complaint is to proceed. If you wish to formalise your complaint, please follow the procedures below to make a written complaint. Members of the school administration team will record and monitor all formal complaints using Appendix One.

Making a formal complaint

- by email
- by letter

Minimum information when making a complaint

You should provide the following information when making a complaint:

- your name and contact details. Anonymous complaints will not be addressed;
- copies of any relevant correspondence or documents relating directly to the complaint;
- details of any actions taken to solve the situation thus far;
- the nature of the complaint; and
- what you consider is needed to resolve the complaint.

You should be aware that when a complaint is made about the performance of an individual staff member, that staff member will receive documentation about the substance of the complaint.

A written complaint which contains personal abuse, inflammatory statements or material that is clearly intended to intimidate will not be addressed and the complainant will be informed accordingly.

Similarly, a verbal complaint that contains personal abuse, inflammatory statements or comments of a threatening nature may be terminated at the discretion of the staff member after firstly warning complainants of that intention.

Responsiveness

We will acknowledge written complaints within five school days during the school term. We seek to resolve all complaints within 14 days. If, because of the serious nature of the complaint, it is deemed necessary to forward it on to another section of the Department of Education, we will do this without delay. The Principal may seek the support of the Coordinator, Regional Operations or other relevant regional, or central office staff. In all cases you will be kept informed of the progress of your complaint and your complaint will always be taken seriously.

Enquiring about a complaints progress

You may enquire as to the progress of your complaint at any time by directly contacting the appropriate person. At the time of lodging a formal complaint, this person will be identified for you.

Outcome of a complaint

We will advise you verbally or in writing of the outcome of a formal complaint. The outcome of all written complaints will be provided to you in writing.

Rejecting a Complaint:

Complaints judged to be vexatious, trivial or without substance, or where it is judged to not warrant further action, will not be progressed. You will be advised of this decision in writing.

Stage 3: If a resolution is not reached at the school level or, if the Principal is the subject of the complaint:

You can contact the Coordinator, Regional Operations at your Regional Education Office for assistance in resolving the issue. This will involve an independent review of the situation and may include mediation. The Coordinator, Regional Operations can be contacted through your Regional Education Office. Numbers are listed in the telephone directory under the Department of Education.

Co-ordinator, Regional Operations
North Metro Education Regional Office
PO Box 1126
INNALOO CITY WA 6918

Stage 4: In those exceptional circumstances where a complaint relates to the alleged improper conduct of a department employee, the complaint should be forwarded to:

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Executive Director
Professional Standards and Conduct
Department of Education
151 Royal Street
EAST PERTH WA 6004

References

Department of Education WA, 'School Communities Working Together 2020'
Department of education WA, 'Disputes and Complaints Policy V1.2' documents.
Ombudsmen Western Australia, 'Complaint Handling Guidelines' September, 2020.

APPENDIX 1

Name	Complaint Manager	Date	Summary of Complaint	Actions	Resolution