



# PARKHURST STATE SCHOOL

## *Complaints Management*

### ***'Putting Things Right'***

## Our Commitment to Positive Complaints Management

Effective partnerships between parents, students and our school are important to educational success. One part of that partnership is trust and **openness**. We need to be able to talk to each other when we have concerns, so that those issues can be worked out.

From time to time you may have concerns or complaints relating to our school.

It is important that you share these with us. Perhaps we haven't explained something very well. We need to know so that we can put things right. Perhaps you don't agree with a decision. We need to talk the issues through sensibly and logically – not emotionally and aggressively.

As a result, you could gain a better understanding of why we made that decision. Or we may need to reconsider our decision. Your contribution can help us improve our educational services within the legislation and policies of this school and Education Queensland.

### **How to make a Complaint**

We want to hear your concerns. We aim to provide a service that can be improved through your feedback, not through laying blame. We need to find options that will resolve the issue.

You can raise an issue with any member of our staff. **First step is to contact the school to make an appointment to meet with the person.** If the time is not suitable, that person will contact you to negotiate an appropriate time to meet.

Issues you think are serious (e.g., allegations of assault, harassment) should be raised with management **through the appointment procedure.**

Our staff is encouraged to deal positively and sincerely with your concerns. They will listen. They will ask questions to make sure they understand. They may take notes to help in following up your concern. They will help you to take your complaint to the right place.

If you wish to bring a friend or if you want help or support, such as an interpreter, we will be happy to help.

Threatening or aggressive behaviour will not resolve the issue nor be tolerated and may cause further legal consequences.

### **What can you Expect**

There are usually four phases in handling a complaint. In most cases these can all be worked through quickly in one process.

### **Firstly - Reception**

You need to make an appointment for a suitable time with the appropriate personnel, e.g., the teacher. We have the right to not respond to concerns if you haven't followed the process. At the meeting, try to state your concern calmly, clearly and courteously. Laying the blame, being threatening or aggressive will not help resolve the issue.

### **Our Aim is to Resolve the Issue**

The person will listen to your concern and make sure he or she understands it.

The teacher/administrator will summarise the main points. He or she will usually explain the school policy or procedure on the issue.

The person will work out an action plan with you: what he or she will do, what you should do, what your child should do and when you will talk again.

The person may deal with the complaint or refer it to another person.

In many cases he or she should be able to resolve your concern straight away.

### **Secondly – Deciding How To Handle the Matter**

Some matters must not be handled in our school, because they are so serious, allegations of assault or harassment. They must be referred to the Principal, Education Queensland's Central Office, Gladstone District Office or perhaps the Police.

These matters will need further investigation through official processes in place for this purpose. In this phase a decision will be made about how a complaint will be handled based on your concerns. You may be asked how you wish the complaint to be dealt with in these circumstances.

### **Thirdly - Finding out about the Matter**

In this phase the person handling the complaint will try to find out all about your concern. He or she will try to understand the context and causes. You should help by providing all the information you can. The person may need to talk to people to get a complete picture. As he or she does this he or she may begin to **explore options to resolve the matter**.

**You can help them by focusing on a positive resolution of the matter.** Your information will be treated confidentially (but where the matter must be investigated by an external agency it will need to be passed on to that agency). You need to be aware that the person who is being complained about usually has the right to be made aware of the complaint.

### **Fourthly – Resolution**

The person who is handling your complaint will use the facts that have been gathered to make a decision that is fair to all within the legislation, associated Acts and policies of the school and Education Queensland. They will work towards putting things right for you and would appreciate your co-operation in doing this. He or she wants to make sure that the resolution is acceptable to all parties.

### **Our Commitment**

We are committed to dealing positively with your concern. It helps us to learn how we can do things better for you. We will try to make sure that your complaint is resolved quickly. Sometimes a complex matter will take time. But we will always make sure you understand what we are doing and why.