Approaching the School

Including complaints and concerns

## Rationale

From time to time parents or other members of the school community may need to approach the school in order to:

* Discuss the progress or welfare of your own child.
* Express concern about actions of other students.
* Enquire about school policy or practice.
* Express concern about actions of staff.

It is therefore necessary to have procedures that will help solve problems as soon as possible so that a safe and harmonious school environment is maintained. The best results usually flow from working together.

## Aims

* Provide a guide in order that concerns are dealt with in an open and fair manner.
* Ensure that the rights of students, staff and parents are respected and upheld.
* Support sensitivity and confidentiality.
* Help reach an agreed solution.

## Implementation

The following table outlines appropriate actions:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CONCERN | APPROPRIATE ACTION |
| The academic progress of your own child. | • Directly contact the child’s teacher either by note, by phone or at  an appropriate time to discuss any issues.  • Contact the office and request an appointment. |
| The welfare of your own child. | • For minor issues directly contact your child’s teacher to clarify  information.  • For more serious concerns, contact the school office. State  nature of concern and arrange a suitable time to talk with class  teacher or principal.  • To convey information about change of address, telephone  number, emergency contact, custody details, health issues etc.  please contact the office. |
| Actions of other students | • Contact the class teacher for a classroom problem.  • Contact the principal for playground or continuing problems. |
| School policy or practice | • Contact office. State nature of concern and make an  appointment to see the principal. |
| Actions of a staff member | • Contact the teacher directly in the first instance.  • For more serious concerns contact the principal. |

On occasion, concerns may cause frustration and anxiety. At such times it is always important to organise a time to talk with school staff in an unhurried and confidential atmosphere.

**Please Note: No parent should directly approach another person’s child.**

The school will deal with issues between students as part of the school’s Discipline and Welfare policy.

Concerns may be dealt with more formally using the Department of Education’s ‘Complaints Handling Policy’. These procedures can be obtained from the principal.

Any complaints or concerns in writing need to be signed and dated in order for concerns to be addressed and followed up. Anonymous written complaints will not be acted upon. A copy of the DEC ‘Complaints and Compliments’ form is attached – copies are available from the office or on our school website.

In very rare cases, where people wishing to express concerns, do so in an aggressive, threatening or violent manner, the principal (or nominee) has the legal authority under the ‘Inclosed Lands Act’ to:

* Direct the person to immediately leave the grounds.
* Call the police to remove the person should he/she refuse.
* Withdraw future permission (by letter) for the person to enter the grounds without permission of the principal.
* Seek further legal avenues.

## Code of Conduct for Parents / Visitors

A code of conduct for parents and visitors ensures that everyone who visits the school site is able to do so in a safe and harmonious manner and to ensure that students, staff, parents and other visitors are not subjected to aggressive, hostile or violent behaviours.

Parents and visitors are expected to:

* Treat all persons associated with the school with respect and courtesy.
* Ensure their child/children are punctual to class.
* Make appointments in advance of expecting to obtain an interview.
* Allow staff to supervise, investigate and manage students without interference
* Discuss issues or concerns about the school, staff or students through the correct procedures.
* Follow school procedures governing entry and behaviour on school grounds, including any restrictions that may be imposed.

Any person contravening this Code of Conduct is advised that the provisions of the **Inclosed Lands Protection Act (1901) and its Amendments** will be followed if any of the following occur:

* Actual physical assaults or threatened physical assaults on students, staff, parents or community members at the school or during the course of school activities;
* Behaviour in the presence of students, staff, parents or other visitors to the school that causes alarm or concern to the students, staff, parents or other visitors;
* Use of offensive language (ie swearing) in the presence of students, staff or other visitors to the school;
* Any interruption to the learning environment of the school such as entering classrooms without permission.

