



# Complaints Handling Policy

Dandenong Ranges Steiner School welcomes feedback from all members of the School community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously. This Complaints Handling Policy is designed to assist you to understand how to make a complaint.

## **What is a complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to Dandenong Ranges Steiner School, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

## **Dandenong Ranges Steiner School's Commitment**

Dandenong Ranges Steiner School is committed to handling complaints effectively and efficiently.

Our complaints handling procedures include the establishment of an online complaints management system which allows us to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints. Regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of rectification action, where deficiencies are identified, are key to the School's commitment.

## **Informal Complaints Resolution**

The vast majority of issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. In most cases these issues can be resolved through informal discussions with appropriate staff members.

Even if an issue can be resolved informally, staff are requested to log issues through our Complaints Handling Form, so we can identify any systemic issues arising and take appropriate rectification action.

### **How do I make a formal complaint?**

We ask that, where appropriate, you first raise the matter directly with the relevant staff member. If you have been unable to resolve a matter informally, or simply wish to make a formal complaint you can do so by any of the following means:

1. Sending an email to [management@drss.vic.edu.au](mailto:management@drss.vic.edu.au)
2. Writing a letter to the School addressed to "The Management Team"
3. Telephoning the School and asking to speak to the Management Team

All formal complaints will be logged into our online complaints management system and managed in accordance with the following procedure.

### **Our Internal Complaints Handling Process**

**Step 1** - All formal complaints are logged through our online complaints management system where they are screened by the Management Team, or in the case of complaints against the Education Facilitator by the Board of Governors.

**Step 2** – All valid complaints will be acknowledged in writing, as soon as practicable, and allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is our policy, where possible, to resolve all disputes within 14 days.

**Step 3** – The Management Team shall conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.

**Step 4** - Following the determination, if appropriate, the Management Team shall formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

**Step 5** - If the initial response is not acceptable the matter will be reviewed internally by the Education Facilitator or the Education Facilitator's delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Education Facilitator or their delegate seek to resolve all disputes within 14 days

from the date that the review process is initiated. The matter will be closed if the response of the Education Facilitator, or their delegate, is accepted.

**Step 6** - All complaints received will be entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

**Step 7** - If the matter remains unresolved and/or the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome or the way the complaint has been managed, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives. External agencies to which complaints may be made include the Victorian Regulations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) ([vrqa.vic.gov.au](http://vrqa.vic.gov.au)) and the Victorian Ombudsman ([ombudsman.vic.gov.au](http://ombudsman.vic.gov.au)). For general information on mediation, counselling, advocacy and support, refer to the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria ([disputes.vic.gov.au](http://disputes.vic.gov.au)).

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and, if relevant to a person against whom a complaint is made. The School is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process.

Personally identifiable information about a complainant will only be made available for the purpose of addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) will be actively protected from disclosure.