

COMPLAINTS POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact [insert school contact details].

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Timboon P-12 School so that students, parents, carers and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school
- ensure that all complaints and concerns regarding Timboon P-12 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. For example:

- 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 Victoria 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
www.timboonp12.vic.edu.au

POLICY

Timboon P-12 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 with 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:

- actively listen to one another, be considerate of each other's views, and respect each other's role
- be student focused

- be resolution focused and attempt to preserve working relationships
- act co-operatively and in good faith
- behave with respect and courtesy
- be inclusive, considerate, and respect the cultural safety of all people, including Aboriginal people, and the human rights of all parties including but not limited to disability, age, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, and marital status
- consider communication needs and preferences
- ensure that complainants and students related to complainants are not victimised for making a complaint or asserting their rights
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved unless permitted or required to share information by law
- operate within, and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with, all applicable legislation and department policies.

Complaints and concerns process for students

Timboon P-12 School acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. Timboon P-12 School encourages our students to raise issues or concerns as they arise so that we can work together to resolve them.

Students with a concern or complaint can raise them with a trusted adult at school, for example, with your classroom teacher, Education Support staff member, Wellbeing Staff, Wellbeing Engagement Leader (7-12), relevant Assistant Principal or the Principal. This person will take your concern or complaint seriously and will explain to you what steps we can take to try to resolve the issue and support you.

You can also ask your parent, carer or another trusted adult outside of the school, to talk to us 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](#).

Other ways you can raise a concern or complaint with us include:

- talking to a member of the student representative council about your concern and any suggestions you have for resolving it
- participating in our Attitudes to School Survey (for Years 4-6)

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](#) (VAEI)

Complaints and concerns process for parents, carers and community members

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

Timboon P-12 School encourages parents, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- carefully consider the issues the parent, carer or community member would like to discuss
- recognise that the person raising the concern may not initially have access to all relevant information
- consider what outcome or resolution the complainant is seeking
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the department and Timboon P-12 School (see “Further Information and Resources” section below).

Support person

A complainant may have a support person assist them when raising a complaint or concern with the school. The complainant should advise the school if a support person will be involved and provide the support person’s name and relationship to the complainant.

Raising a concern

Timboon P-12 School is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. A parent or carer should initially raise a concern with their child’s teacher, Wellbeing and Engagement Leader, relevant assistant principal or the principal. Where possible, school staff will work with the person raising the concern to ensure that the matter is appropriately considered and addressed.

Our school also offers interpreting and translation services to parents and carers who have limited or no English language skills to assist in communicating their concerns.

Making a complaint

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents, carers or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the principal or assistant principal, noting that formal complaints should be directed to a member of the school’s leadership team.

If a parent, carer or community member wishes to make a formal complaint, 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:** The complainant should email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with an assistant principal or the principal. The complainant should provide sufficient information to help the school understand the issues being raised. The complaint may be made in writing, in person or by telephone.
- 2. Timelines:** Timboon P-12 School will aim to acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 2 school days, and will seek to resolve complaints within 15 school days. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, some complaints may take more than 15 school days. We will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting where appropriate within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, the school will consult with the complainant and discuss any appropriate interim arrangements that may be put in place.

3. **Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the principal, assistant principal or nominee may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to school and regional staff to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised. In some instances, the leadership team may reach out to subject matter experts for advice. The school may also reach out to the complainant for further information or to clarify concerns.
4. **Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the assistant principal/principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. If after the resolution meeting we are unable to resolve the complaint together, the school will work with the complainant to prepare a written summary of the complaint, should the complainant wish to pursue the matter further. 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.

In some instances, the school in consultation with the region may suggest mediation, conciliation or other alternative methods of resolving the complaint based on the complexity and urgency of issues raised in the complaint.

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

Resolution

Where appropriate, Timboon P-12 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/carer and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, the school may ask the complainant and other relevant parties to attend a meeting with an independent third party or participate in mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute.

In some instances, the resolution may include actions that must be taken by both the school and the complainant.

Escalation

If the complainant is not satisfied that the complaint has been resolved by the school, the complainant may contact the Department of Education. Where the complaint relates to the principal and the complainant does not wish to raise it directly with the principal, the complainant may also contact the department directly by phone on [1800 338 663](tel:1800338663), via the [Enquiries form](#) or by email at enquiries@education.vic.gov.au.

Timboon P-12 School may also refer a complaint to South West region if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

For more information about the department's parent/carer complaints process, including the role of the regional office, please see: [Make a complaint about your school](#)

Review of complaints

Timboon P-12 School will consider whether complaints relating to child safety identify any causes or systemic child safety risks and take steps to address those risks and continuously improve our child safety practices.

Record keeping and other requirements

To meet department and legal requirements, our 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 school website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following department policies and resources are relevant to this Complaints Policy:

- [Complaint resolution](#)
- [Make a complaint about your school](#)
- [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)
- [Report sexual abuse if you're a current or former student](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Complaints Policy:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Communication with School Staff policies

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	17 June 2026
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2028