
Complaints Policy



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Fitzroy High School on 03 9488 1900 or Fitzroy.HS@education.vic.gov.au.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote a strong cohesive school community that facilitates clear, equitable, respectful and inclusive communication of ideas, feedback, concerns and complaints between students, parents, staff and teachers in our school community, in keeping with our obligations and our school's vision and philosophy.
- provide an outline of the concerns and complaints process at Fitzroy High School so that students, parents 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 Fitzroy High 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 including:

- 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 Victorian 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

POLICY

Fitzroy High 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:

- be considerate of each other's views and respect each other's role
- be focused on resolution of the complaint, with the interests of the student involved at the centre
- act in good faith and cooperation
- behave with respect and courtesy
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- operate within and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with any applicable legislation and Department policy.
- recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

Complaints and concerns process for students

Fitzroy High School acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. Fitzroy High 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 the issue with a trusted adult at school, for example their classroom teacher, Advisory Teacher, Year Leader, Mentor at Wurun, the Wellbeing and Inclusion Leader, or support staff at the school office. The concern/complaint will be taken seriously and steps will be taken to resolve the issue and support the student. Please see contact details under Communication.

Students can ask their parents, carers or other trusted adults outside school, to talk to the school about the issue on their behalf. 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](#).

Students can also raise concerns/complaints by talking to a member of the FHS Student Representative Team (SRT), or the Student Representative Council(SRC) at Wurun and participating in student forums.

Further information and resources to support students to raise issues or concerns are available at:

- [Report Racism Hotline](#) (call 1800 722 476) – This Victorian Department of Education website & hotline is a 'how to guide' to report concerns and complaints relating to racism and or religious discrimination
- [Reach Out](#) - is an anonymous online forum where young people can get support for issues they face, including forums and peer support.
- [Headspace](#) offers online support and has a numbers of centres around Australia
- [Kids Helpline](#) is a 24/7 helpline is a confidential phone counselling service, connecting young people age 5-25 with qualified counsellors. Information is also available for parents (call 1800 55 1800)
- [Victorian Aboriginal Education Association](#) (VAEAI) The peak body of Aboriginal Education in Victoria, providing resources and support from early education to university with a focus on high quality and respectful educational outcomes for Indigenous students.

Complaints and concerns process for parents, carers and community members

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

Fitzroy High School encourages parents, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- carefully consider the issues you would like to discuss
- remember you may not have all the facts relating to the issues that you want to raise
- think about how the matter could be resolved
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the Department and Fitzroy High School (see "Further Information and Resources" section below).

Raising a concern

Fitzroy High School is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to the following:

- Student's teacher or Advisory Teacher for learning issues/incidents occurring in class;

- Year Leader if students from several classes are involved;
- Assistant Principal for staff or complex student-related issues
- Principal for issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex students issues:

Please see contact details at the end of this document under Communication. If you are not sure who the right person is to approach please email fitzroy.hs@education.vic.gov.au and we will get back to you with the appropriate staff member or approach.

We follow this process when you raise a concern with us:

- we will listen to your concerns respectfully and carefully;
- we will adhere to our child safe policy, student welfare and engagement policy, and other legal obligations
- we will respect your right to confidentially raise concerns with us unless we are required to report or escalate this concern
- we may need to gather more information about the issue
- we will tell you what process we will take and the next step/s
- we will work with you, wherever possible, to ensure your concerns are appropriately addressed. Many concerns can be dealt with quickly and easily; some require more time, a review of the way we are doing things or more steps. We can address this together.

Making a Complaint

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the Assistant Principal or Principal.

If you would like 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:** Please email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the Assistant Principal or Principal to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand the issues. We can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether in writing, in person or over the phone on (03) 9488 1900 or email fitzroy.hs@education.vic.gov.au.
- 2. Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Principal, the Assistant Principal or their nominee may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
- 3. Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the 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, we will work with you to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event you would like to take further action. 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.
- 4. Timelines:** Fitzroy High School will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within two school days) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Fitzroy High School may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. 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, Fitzroy High School will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

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

Support Person

You are welcome to have a support person to assist you in raising a complaint with our school. Please advise us if you wish to have a support person to assist you, and provide their name, contact details, and their relationship to you.

Resolution

Fitzroy High seeks, wherever possible, to resolve complaints. As appropriate, resolution may include:

- 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 and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, Fitzroy High School may also ask you to attend a meeting with an independent third party or participate in a mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute.

Escalation

If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved by the school, or if your complaint is about the Principal and you do not want to raise it directly with them, then the complaint should be referred to the North-Western Victoria Region of the Victorian Department of Education and Training by contacting nwvr@education.vic.gov.au or 1300 338 691.

Fitzroy High School may also refer a complaint to North-Western Victoria Region if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

For more information about the Department's parent complaints process, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Raise a complaint or concern about your school.](#)

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 <https://fitzroyhs.vic.edu.au/>
- Included in staff induction processes, including Wurun
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

Contact Details:

Wellbeing: We have 2 dedicated wellbeing staff employed at FHS. Our wellbeing and Inclusion Leader and our School Psychologist, who is also based at Wurun for 2 days. They can be contacted by emailing fitzroy.hs@education.vic.gov.au or calling the front office on 94881900 or Wurun Senior Campus on 86270000

Year Level Leaders: Every year level at FHS has a year leader. You can get in touch with yours by emailing fitzroy.hs@education.vic.gov.au and include Year Level Leader year level in the subject eg "For the attention of the

Year 7 Level Leader". Or you can call our front office on (03) 9488 1900 or Wurun Senior Campus on 8 627 0000 and ask for the relevant year Level Leader.

Advisory Teachers: Every year at FHS has a number of Advisory Teachers who are their students' key point of contact across all subjects. You can get in touch with yours by emailing fitzroy.hs@education.vic.gov.au and include Advisory Teacher in the subject eg "For the attention of the (child's name) Yr 9Y Advisory Teacher". Or you can call our front office on (03) 9488 1900 and ask for the relevant Advisory Teacher.

Assistant Principal: Please contact via email fitzroy.hs@education.vic.gov.au ATTN Assistant Principal or via school reception (03) 9488 1900

Principal: Please contact via email fitzroy.hs@education.vic.gov.au ATTN Principal or via school reception (03) 9488 1900

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies on the Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

- [Complaints - Parents](#)

The Department's parents' website:

- [Raise a complaint or concern about your school](#)
- [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2023
Consultation	Consulted with School Council on May 15, 2023 Ongoing consultation available via website
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before December 2024