

School Feedback and Complaints Policy - Short Version

Feedback and complaints are important to Berry Street. They help us learn ways we can be better and think about how we could have done something

What are feedback and complaints?

Feedback: can be compliments, comments or ideas.

Complaint: can be an issue with something or someone, like the School or other people there. Most complaints want something to change or happen.

People can send in feedback or make a complaint in many ways. They can:



- Write it down on a paper form and give it to a Berry Street worker



- Fill out the feedback form on our website



- Call or email any of our schools



- Talk to someone in person who can write it



People can make a complaint without giving us any of their details like their name or birthday.



We will help people make a complaint or show them how to make one.



We have information about feedback and complaints in our spaces (posters and brochures).



People can make a complaint without giving us any of their details like their name or birthday.



All feedback and complaints are stored on a private system that only some staff can access.



If a complaint is about someone being hurt or in danger, we might need to send it to authorities like police.

We will always try to respond to complaints in a way that is fair and doesn't pick sides. We will never punish or target people for making a complaint or feedback.



We work hard to support people feel like they can advocate for themselves and have their voice heard.

Everybody is unique and has different needs. We work with each other to always have empathy and compassion.



We teach Berry Street workers about feedback and complaints. They learn how to help people get along better. They also listen for things people say that might be a complaint.

Every 3 months, the leaders of Berry Street get a report of all the feedback and complaints people sent us. We also tell them how we responded and what we changed to make things better.



Other places to make a complaint

About what you're learning or a test like NAPLAN or VCE exam:

[The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority](#)

About anything else:

[The Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority](#)

1 Purpose

The Berry Street School is committed to being a child safe school. We recognise, respect and promote children's rights within Berry Street and the broader community. We require that every person that is part of our school, every board member, staff member and volunteer, treats the rights, interests and safety of children as paramount. There is a zero tolerance for any form of child abuse or maltreatment within the organisation and zero tolerance for not reporting any suspected abuse or maltreatment.

The Berry Street School understands that a trusting and cooperative relationship between families, the School and the community is best for students. Feedback and complaints provide the Berry Street School with a valuable opportunity for reflection and learning.

The Berry Street School is committed to establishing and maintaining a systematic approach to feedback and complaints to ensure the voices of our students, their families/carers/guardians, staff and the broader community are heard and taken seriously, which includes:

- An accessible, supportive, and responsive pathway for all stakeholders to lodge complaints, provide feedback and receive a response, without fear of retribution.
- Ensuring that the feedback and complaint process is culturally safe and accessible for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students and for students from multifaith and multicultural communities.
- Feedback and complaint processes are child focussed and understandable by our students and their families, carers or guardians.
- Understanding the individual needs of vulnerable groups including those with disabilities, cultural and linguistic diversity and LGBTQIA+ peoples.
- A school culture that recognises that feedback and complaints are an important way to support our students and a valuable source of information.
- A school-wide system for actively collecting, tracking, responding to, reporting and evaluating feedback and complaints
- Analysing and making available aggregate feedback and complaints data-Informing continuous quality improvement.

The purpose of this policy is to set out how the Berry Street School will deal with feedback and complaints.

2 Definitions

Word / term / phrase	Definition
Complaint	Expression of dissatisfaction made about the School or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected
Feedback	Opinions, comments and expressions of interest about the School. Feedback includes compliments, comments and suggestions that inform quality improvement within the School. Feedback does not require a formal written response, but if the feedback is not anonymous, a response may be given, verbally or in writing
Staff grievance	A staff grievance is a complaint by a Berry Street School employee against another Berry Street employee (school or other), relating to work practices, the work environment or a working relationship

3 Scope

This policy relates to complaints and feedback provided to the Berry Street School except those governed by other Berry Street policies and procedures. Exceptions include the following types of complaints which once received trigger a separate policy, procedure or approach:

- Privacy breach or concern (see the Berry Street School Privacy Policy)
- Past abuse (see the Berry Street Past Service User Complaints Policy)
- Staff grievances (see the Berry Street *Raising a Concern* Page on Bagung Ngarrgu)
- Suspected or confirmed child maltreatment of a school student or any other child (see the Berry Street Reporting Child Maltreatment Procedure)
- Suspected or confirmed child maltreatment of a student by a staff member or volunteer at the Berry Street School (see the Berry Street Reporting Child Maltreatment Procedure)

This policy applies to all Berry Street School students, families/carers/guardians, staff, volunteers, and members of the public. This policy does not cover actively collected feedback such as surveys or research.

3.1 Review Cycle

The Berry Street School Feedback and Complaints Policy will be reviewed every two years in line with the Plan Do Check Act cycle, and as outlined in the Policy Framework.

4 Policy

The Berry Street School Feedback and Complaints Policy is informed by the broader organisation-wide Berry Street Feedback and Complaints Policy, as well as Ministerial Order no. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards.

4.1 General

- The Berry Street School will have an accessible feedback and complaints system, with multiple mechanisms for feedback such as via the website, email, phone, verbal discussions with staff members, and by paper form.
- The Berry Street School will create a school-wide culture that values feedback and complaints through leadership and training. All complaints and general feedback must be lodged on the Berry Street's Electronic Recording of Incidents and Near-misses (ERIN) system by the staff member who receives it.
- All records about general complaints and feedback will be kept in ERIN.
- Discussions between staff, including external staff working as part of a student Care Team, are not in the scope of this policy except where external staff make formal complaints. For example, if a Department of Families Fairness and Housing (DFFH) staff member raised issues with communication in a care team meeting, that would not be within the scope of this policy unless a formal complaint was made.
- The Berry Street School will have processes that ensure complaints that need to be reported to authorities are done so and when applicable, the Berry Street School will co-operate with law enforcement.
- Complaints will be responded to within a reasonable timeframe, with the initial response within two business days. Further timelines for resolving the complaint should be determined based on each complaint and should be communicated to the complainant.
- Complaints will be handled according to the principles of procedural fairness.
- Complaints will be handled in such a way that conflict of interests are assessed and avoided.
- No one will be subject to victimisation or retribution as the result of making a complaint or providing feedback.
- Management and staff will actively inform all students, their families/carers/guardians including, where appropriate, other members of the general public, of the feedback and complaints processes and how to access them. This process must be child-focused and understandable by our students and their families/carers/guardians.
- Information such as brochures, forms, and posters will be displayed at all Berry Street School campuses.
- The Berry Street School accepts anonymous complaints and will carry out an investigation of the issues raised where there is enough information provided.

An unresolved complaint that has exhausted the Berry Street Feedback and Complaints processes, can be further escalated to:

- The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) – for complaints related to curriculum and assessment
 - For complaints relating to VCE examination content and the School's curriculum:
Executive Director, Curriculum Division
Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

- Level 7, 2 Lonsdale Street MELBOURNE VIC 3000
- For complaints relating to other matters:
 - Executive Director
 - Infrastructure and Business Services Division
 - Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
 - Level 7, 2 Lonsdale Street MELBOURNE VIC 3000
- The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) – for complaints related to any other school-related matters.
 - Postal address: Manager, Complaints Unit, VRQA, GPO Box 2317, Melbourne VIC 3001
 - Phone: 03 9637 2806
 - Online form: <https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/StateRegister/Public.aspx/LodgeComplaint>

4.2 Complaints management

All complaints received regarding the Berry Street School will be entered into ERIN by a staff member who receives them. Complaints will first be managed or reviewed by the direct supervisor of the staff member who made the ERIN entry. Moderate and higher risk complaints will be reviewed by the School Principal. The process for managing complaints consists of:

- Acknowledgement
- Assessment
- Resolution
- Review

This process is further detailed step-by-step in the Berry Street Feedback and Complaints Procedure.

4.3 Advocacy

To help ensure we hear all voices, the Berry Street School is committed to supporting students, their families/carers/guardians, and other stakeholders to give feedback, make complaints, and advocate for themselves.

The Berry Street School acknowledges the diverse circumstances of our students and will support and respond to these by encouraging staff to advocate for them by regularly reminding students of their rights and creating an environment that welcomes all concerns and feedback with empathy and compassion.

4.4 Staff training

Relevant staff and volunteers will be supported to implement the practices outlined in this policy through targeted learning opportunities, resources, and training. This specifically includes conflict resolution, complaints management, and identifying complaints. Specific staff included are:

- School administration officers
- Staff directly engaging with students
- Assistant Principals
- Other school leadership staff including Wellbeing leaders and Lead Teachers

4.5 Privacy and confidentiality

All documentation relating to a student or family/carer/guardian complaint and/or appeal will operate within the requirements specified within the Berry Street Privacy Policy and regular Berry Street documentation practices unless otherwise specified. The Berry Street School is committed to ensuring the privacy of personal information and as such the identity of the complainant will only be shared in order to respond to the feedback or complain. For example, if a complaint was discussed within a team as an example, it should be de-identified. Feedback and complaints will be de-identified for analysis, reporting and when used to inform quality improvement.

4.6 Reporting

Feedback and complaints which have been lodged on the Feedback and Complaints Register will be reported to the Berry Street Board School Committee quarterly. A summary of feedback and complaints received, and the quality improvements planned and delivered will be reported in the Quarterly Quality & Risk Report.

4.7 Quality improvements from complaints

The Principal and Assistant Principals can identify complaints as requiring quality improvement actions in ERIN. These actions will be recorded in the quality improvement register. The Quality Governance Committee, which the Berry Street School Principal is a member of, will review feedback and complaints received during the month and will ensure necessary quality improvements are added to the quality register in response.

4.8 Feedback and complaints system review

As part of regular feedback collection mechanisms at the Berry Street School, questions will be included to measure satisfaction with the feedback and complaints system. Specifically in relation to:

- Access to the feedback and complaints mechanism
- The management of feedback and complaints
- The appeals process for complaints.

The complaints and feedback system will be audited internally annually by Organisational Effectiveness.

5 Supporting Documents and References

5.1 Related Berry Street School documents

- Berry Street School Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Berry Street School Student and Families Code of Conduct
- Berry Street School Child Safety and Wellbeing policy

5.2 Related Berry Street documents

- Berry Street Feedback and Complaints Policy
- Berry Street Feedback and Complaints Procedure

- Berry Street School Records Management Policy
- Berry Street School Privacy Policy
- Berry Street Code of Conduct
- Berry Street Staff Discipline Procedure
- Berry Street Past Service User Complaints Policy
- Berry Street *Raising a Concern* Page on Bagung Ngarrgu)
- Berry Street Equal Opportunity and Anti-bullying Policy
- Berry Street Handling Allegations of Misconduct Policy
- Berry Street Reporting Child Maltreatment Procedure
- Berry Street Responding to Reports of Child Maltreatment
- Berry Street Risk Management Policy
- Berry Street Workplace Investigation Procedure

5.3 Legislative context

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.)
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Minimum Standards
- Equal Opportunity Act (Vic.) 2010
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth.)
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth.)
- Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth.)
- Australian Education Regulation 2013 (Cth.)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Children Youth and Families Act 2005
- Working with Children Act 2005
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
- Victorian Child Safe Standards 2022
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)
- Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic) (including Part XIII –Organisational liability for child abuse).

6 Version control

Version Number	1.3
Approved by:	Berry Street Board
Approved date:	06/12/2022
Review date:	06/12/2024
Process Owner:	Principal
Executive Responsible:	Executive Director Statewide Services
Version notes:	
Version 1.0	Document created
Version 1.1	Minor edits including school specific complaint avenues (VCAA & VRQA) and definitions
Version 1.2	14/11/2023

	<p>Section 3 – Scope: Minor edits that list the Policies or Procedures that apply for the following exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Privacy breach or concern</i> • <i>Past abuse</i> • <i>Staff grievances</i> • <i>Suspected or confirmed child maltreatment of a school student or any other child</i> • <i>Suspected or confirmed child maltreatment of a student by a staff member or volunteer at the Berry Street School</i>
Version 1.3	<p>28/05/2024</p> <p>Short version embedded in document to improve accessibility for students and families</p>

If you have any queries in relation to this policy, please contact the School on 9429 9266