



# The Japanese School of Melbourne

## Complaints Policy

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact school office on 0395281978.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide an outline of the complaints process at The Japanese School of Melbourne (JSM) so that students, parents and members of the community are informed of how they can raise concerns or complaints about issues arising at our school
- Ensure that all concerns and complaints regarding JSM 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:

- Concerns and complaints relating to fraud and corruption will be managed in accordance with the department's [Report Fraud or Corruption: Overview | education.vic.gov.au](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/report-fraud-or-corruption/overview)
- Criminal matters will be referred to Victorian Police
- Legal claims will be referred to the lawyer
- Concerns and complains relating to child abuse will be managed in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures

### Policy

JSM 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
- Recognise that school may be subject to legal constraints on its ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances

### **Concerns and complaints process for students**

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

Students with concern or complaint can raise them with a trusted adult at school, for example teachers, Assistant Principal, 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 concerns and complaints process is outlined further below. The parent/carer process also applies to students who are mature minors, refer to [Mature Minors and Decision Making: Policy | education.vic.gov.au](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/mature-minors-and-decision-making-policy).

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

- [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools | vic.gov.au](https://www.vic.gov.au/report-racism-or-religious-discrimination-in-schools) (Call 1800 722 476) – this hotline enables students to report concerns relating to racism or religious discrimination
- [A Safe Place to Chat Anonymously, Get Support & Feel Better | ReachOut Australia](https://www.reachout.org.au)
- [headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation](https://www.headspace.org.au)
- [Kids Helpline | Phone Counselling Service | 1800 55 1800](https://www.kidshelpline.com.au) (Call 1800 55 1800)
- [VAEAI – Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.](https://www.vaeai.org.au) (VAEAI)

### **Concerns and complaints process for parents, carers and community members**

#### **Preparation for raising a concern or complaint**

JSM 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 with
- 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 set by JSM

#### **Support person**

You are welcome to have a support person to assist you in raising a concern or 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 with you.

#### **Raising a concern**

JSM 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 your child's teacher. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

## Making a complaint

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the Principal or Assistant 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 arrange a meeting through the School Stream with the Principal or Assistant Principal, to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are.
2. **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 others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
3. **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. In some circumstances, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. JSM will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, JSM 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 as soon as possible. In situations where further time is required, JSM 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 procedure in this policy.

## Resolution

Where appropriate, JSM may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- Forming agreements through discussions that are in line with the school values
- 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

In some circumstances, JSM 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 Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Melbourne (Chief Director of the School Board), which is responsible for the operational management of the school, by contacting [membership@jcism.org.au](mailto:membership@jcism.org.au) or 03 8658 5862 .

JSM may also refer a complaint to chief director if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

## Record keeping and other requirements

To meet Department and legal requirements, our school must keep written records of:

- Serious, substantial or unusual complaints

Our school also follows Department policy to ensure that record-keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to concerns or complaints.

## Communication

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on school website
- Included in staff induction processes

## Approval

<b>Created date</b>	November 2024
<b>Consultation</b>	Staff, School board
<b>Endorsed by</b>	School Board
<b>Endorsed on</b>	November 2024
<b>Next review date</b>	November 2026

This policy was drafted in English, and translated into Japanese for reference purposes only. In the case of a difference in interpretation the English version will prevail.