

# Community Language Schools

## Guidelines for Parent/Guardian complaints

As is the case for children attending mainstream schools, parents/guardians of children attending accredited community language schools are encouraged to contact the child's teacher to discuss general issues in relation to their child's languages program including:

- individual student needs
- academic progress
- behaviour and discipline issues
- non-attendance or truancy
- challenging or changing family circumstances.

General issues best raised with the school principal could include:

- school facilities
- excursions
- school fees and charges
- student assessment and reporting
- timing of special events
- homework policy
- student dress codes.

The child's community language school should always be the first point of contact. Issues are best resolved at the school. The Ethnic Schools Association of Victoria (ESAV), which is the umbrella organisation for accredited community language schools, expects most issues to be resolved at the school level.

The following guidelines will support parents/guardians who wish to make a formal complaint in relation to their child's attendance at an accredited community language school.

In making a complaint or seeking to resolve an issue, parents/guardians must follow the next three steps.

### STEP 1

#### Raising an issue with the teacher

Teaching and learning works best when parents/guardians and teachers talk to each other and work together to resolve problems. To address a particular issue, parents/guardians should:

- make an appointment with the class teacher to discuss the issue.
- plan what to say so you can clearly explain the issue.
- listen to the teacher's response.
- make a note of the people you spoke to and the date you spoke with them.
- outline the steps already taken to resolve the issue.
- explain what action you would like to be taken to resolve the issue. Be reasonable and realistic about your expectations.
- If the issue involves another student at the school, do not approach them or their parents/guardians directly.
- understand the school could refer you to a more appropriate person, or agency.

## STEP 2

### Raising an issue with the principal/assistant principal

If you still have a concern after talking to the child's teacher you may choose to meet with the assistant principal or principal of the school.

- Make an appointment with the assistant principal or principal and follow the same procedures as you did with the teacher.
- If the issue is still not resolved after speaking with the assistant principal or principal of the school, you may choose to contact the ESAV who will assist you and the school to resolve the issue.

Should the issue remain unresolved following consultation with the assistant principal/principal, the parents/guardians concerned should refer the matter to the ESAV. The procedure for referring complaints to the ESAV is outlined below.

## STEP 3

### Raising a complaint in writing with ESAV

If the issue cannot be resolved by the parents/guardians and the community language school teacher and/or assistant principal/principal, the parents/guardians may make a formal complaint to the Executive Director, Ethnic Schools Association of Victoria (ESAV) by submitting the attached *Complaint Form*.

When attempting to resolve complaints, the relevant school and the ESAV can engage the services of the Dispute Settlement Centre Victoria, which provides a mediation service free of charge. Further information is available at: <http://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/>

If after all avenues for resolution of the complaint have been explored, or if the parents/guardians are dissatisfied with the manner in which the complaint was handled by the ESAV, the parents/guardians may choose to refer the complaint to the Victorian Ombudsman, or to the Victoria Police. The Office of the Victorian Ombudsman is located on 570 Bourke Street, Melbourne 3000, phone: 03 9613 6222.

Any complaints about possible criminal behaviour and activity relating to a community languages school or the staff should be referred directly to the Victoria Police.

*ESAV will take reasonable steps to destroy or permanently de-identify personal information if it is no longer needed for any purpose. Under the Public Record Act 1973 the ESAV is required to keep full and accurate records and implement a record disposal program. Destruction of personal information must be carried out using ESAV's disposal schedules.*

# COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

## PARENT/GUARDIAN COMPLAINT FORM

This form should only be used when all avenues to have your complaint resolved at your child's community languages school as set out in **Step 1 and Step 2 of the Guidelines** have been exhausted, and you feel the issue/s is/are of such significance that you wish to register your complaint with the Ethnic Schools Association of Victoria.

### 1. PERSONAL DETAILS OF COMPLAINANT (Parent/Guardian)

Title

First Name  Family Name

Address

Telephone/Mobile

Email address: *(optional)*

### 2. STUDENT DETAILS *(who the complaint is about)*

First Name  Family Name

Year Level  Gender: Male  Female

### 3. COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOL DETAILS

CLS School/Organisation Name

Location of classes/ Campus

Principal's name

Teacher/s name *(if applicable)*

**This complaint is related to:** *(tick relevant box/es)*

the administration of the CLS       staff member other than the child's teacher of the CLS

the class teacher       Other

### STEP 1

### 4. Have you taken the correct steps in resolving the issue before lodging this form? *(tick relevant box/es and provide details in spaces provided below at no. 5.)*

Class Teacher Yes  No  Principal Yes  No  Assistant Principal Yes  No

**5. DETAILS OF MEETINGS** *(Attach additional information as required)*

Date/s of meeting/contact with the class teacher

Outcome of meeting/s

Date/s of meeting with Principal or Assistant Principal

Outcome of meeting/s

**6. COMPLAINT DETAILS: Brief outline of the complaint**

**7. How do you believe this issue could be resolved?**

**Applicant's signature**.....

**Date:**.....

**Send completed form to:** Mr Stefan Romaniw  
Executive Director  
Ethnic Schools Association of Victoria/Community Languages  
Australia  
Statewide Resource Centre  
Level 2, 189 Faraday Street, CARLTON, 2053  
Tel 9349 2583  
Email: [sromaniw@bigpond.net.au](mailto:sromaniw@bigpond.net.au)

Website CLA: [www.communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au](http://www.communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au)  
Website ESAV: [www.esav.org.au](http://www.esav.org.au)