



# Complaints Management Policy

## INTRODUCTION

A school culture that welcomes, encourages and initiates regular two-way school-home liaison is one in which healthy problem-solving processes can be established and sustained. Clearly defined and operational resolution processes facilitate parents and school personnel to focus on early resolutions to issues and concerns in order to foster and support children's academic progress, their physical development and social and emotional well-being.

The Department of Education (the Department) is committed to the effective management and resolution of complaints and notifications with a focus on prioritising student wellbeing. Complaints and notifications will be managed equitably with an emphasis on maintaining relationships and restorative approaches.

The Framework is intended to:

- describe the process to manage and resolve complaints and notifications;
- where appropriate, identify any aspect of service delivery which requires review or change to effect improvement; and
- prioritise student support, safety and wellbeing.

## UNDERSTAND THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Contact the school as early as possible if you have concerns. Talking to your child's teacher, year coordinator, school administration or principal is the best place to start.

Raise the matter with the principal if:

- you were not able to achieve a satisfactory outcome with the teacher or staff member
- the matter is about the conduct of a teacher or staff member
- the matter is about another aspect of school life that is impacting your child's education.

Contact the school to request an appointment to discuss your concerns.

Raise the matter with the education regional office if:

- you believe that your concern was not satisfactorily resolved or addressed by the school
- the matter is about the conduct of the principal.

If the matter is not about the conduct of the principal or a previous unsatisfactory resolution, the education regional office may refer it back to the school, unless there is a reason preventing the school from managing it.

## The complaint journey

If you have concerns, talking to your child's teacher or principal is the best place to start.



**1**

### Make a complaint

Submit a complaint in person, by phone, letter, email or online.



**2**

### Assign

The complaint will be reviewed and assigned to the appropriate area.



**3**

### Assess

The complaint, evidence and other supporting material will be assessed.



**4**

### Resolve

An outcome will be provided explaining the reason for any decisions.

#### Internal review (optional)

A review can be requested if a satisfactory outcome was not received or there is a belief it was not handled properly.

#### Independent review

An independent review can be requested at any stage throughout the process.

## EXPECTATIONS

Persons who are the subject of a complaint, who make a complaint or provide information in the course of managing a complaint shall not be subjected to prejudice, intimidation, and harassment or be subject to any detriment because of their involvement.

When you raise a concern or decide to make a complaint, we aim to:

- treat all people equitably, with respect and dignity
- deal with your complaint in a confidential and timely manner
- provide you with access to appropriate and easily understandable information about the complaint handling process
- consider your complaint impartially and in accordance with due process and principals of natural justice
- keep you informed of the progress and outcome of your complaint.





We ask that when making a complaint you will:

- treat all parties with respect and dignity
- be respectful of confidentiality if you choose to share information about your complaint
- raise the concern or complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen
- provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
- ask for support or further information if you need to
- act fairly and honestly, considering the interests of all parties involved, to achieve an acceptable outcome
- act in a way that acknowledges the interests of all parties, see things as they are, and deal with them in a practical way when considering a course to resolve the concern or complaint.

We manage all complaints in line with our Complaints and Notifications Policy.

## PROCESSES FOR MANAGING COMPLAINTS AND NOTIFICATIONS

### You can make a complaint

| <br><b>In person</b> | <br><b>Phone</b> | <br><b>In writing</b> | <br><b>Online</b> |
|---|---|---|--|
| Speak to your school  | Call the complaints advice line on 1800 655 985   | Send an email or letter   | Make a complaint using our <a href="#">online form</a>   |

People making a complaint or notification are encouraged, in the first instance, to contact their School to discuss their complaint. Additionally, complaints and notifications can be received by the Department of Education, at:

- The School; or
- The Education Regional Office or Residential College; or
- The Central Services business area; or
- The Standards and Integrity Directorate.

You can make a complaint in person, by phone, online, or in writing.

In person or by phone – when you make a complaint the staff member will acknowledge the complaint as part of their conversation with you. The staff member may ask you to put your complaint in writing if it can't be resolved straight away. Usually we will ask you to put your concerns in writing if you need to tell us about multiple or complex issues.

Online – you may choose to make a complaint by completing the online [complaint form](#). You will be asked to provide the relevant information to assist us to work with you in resolving your complaint. You will receive an automatic notification to let you know that we have received your complaint.

In writing – when you make a written complaint (by email or letter) where possible an acknowledgement will be sent within two (2) working days.

Complaints made through social media platforms will not be addressed through the complaint handling process.

At all stages of the process, records should be kept in accordance with the Records Management Policy and Procedures.

A written complaint which contains personal abuse, inflammatory statements or material that is clearly intended to intimidate will not be addressed and the complainant will be informed accordingly.

Similarly, a verbal complaint that contains personal abuse, inflammatory statements or comments of a threatening nature may be terminated at the discretion of the staff member after firstly warning complainants of that intention.

## ASSESS

An acknowledgement of your complaint will be made within two business working days.

If you become aware of new information after you submit your complaint and it is not yet resolved, contact the school or business area that is handling your complaint as soon as possible. It's really important that all relevant information is provided when submitting a complaint so a thorough process can be carried out.

You may feel more comfortable if you have a friend, relative or support person to assist you with the process. It is important to communicate clearly with the person handling your complaint about who your support person is, what their role is, and what you are happy to discuss with that person present.

Your complaint will be assessed for risk when received to identify:

- immediate danger to any person
- concerns about child safety
- potential for ongoing financial loss
- a cultural safety risk or concern
- other risks that require mitigation.

Early risk identification will help us determine:

- the priority of the response to the complaint or notification
- who to notify about the complaint or notification
- who to involve to resolve the complaint or notification.

## RESOLVE THE COMPLAINT OR NOTIFICATION

After your complaint has been acknowledged, the school will take action to resolve it locally. We will aim to update you on the progress of your complaint and resolve the complaint within a reasonable timeframe, preferably within 5 days.

However, the complexity of your complaint will have an impact on how it is managed, it and the amount of time it may take to resolve.

At times, we may require further information or clarification from you in resolving the complaint. A meeting can be organised to discuss the complaint further at a time convenient to yourself and the school.

## COMMUNICATION

The outcome of the complaint investigation will be communicated to you in writing by a member of the school leadership team. For more informal complaints a meeting or phone call may be more appropriate.

## WITHDRAWAL OF A COMPLAINT

A person who has made a complaint is able to withdraw the complaint at any time. A written complaint should preferably, be withdrawn in writing. However, a signed and dated notation on the complaint by an employee that it has been withdrawn by the complainant will suffice. A verbal complaint can be withdrawn verbally and a notation made to that effect. The officer who received the complaint must give notice in writing to any parties affected by the complaint that it has been withdrawn. Complaints that warrant investigation must be pursued even though the complaint has been withdrawn.

## REQUEST FOR REVIEW

Let us know if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, or you believe it was not handled properly. We understand that sometimes you will not get the outcome that you wanted. If you think you can show the outcome was not fair, the process was not followed properly, or another reason related to procedural justice; such as not all parties able to tell their story, then the complaint may be reviewed.

You will need to give the reason you want the review, simply being unhappy with an outcome is not a reason to request a review. The complaint review process is about making sure the correct process was followed, it is not about starting the complaint management process from the beginning.

Your complaint will not be reviewed by the person who managed your complaint

Raise the matter with the [education regional office](#) if:

- you believe that your concern was not satisfactorily resolved or addressed by the school
- the matter is about the conduct of the principal.

If the matter is not about the conduct of the principal or a previous unsatisfactory resolution, the education regional office may refer it back to the school, unless there is a reason preventing the school from managing it.

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### Complaints and notifications process flow chart

