

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY

As a parent or caregiver you play a vital role in your child's learning. Building a positive relationship between home and school plays an important part in the education of your child. For information regarding speaking to someone at school about a query or concern refer to the attached 'Talking with my school' document.

The following information is based on the Education Department's Disputes and Complaints Policy.

POLICY STATEMENT

Employees of the Department of Education (the Department) are responsible for managing the resolution of enquiries, concerns, complaints and disputes lodged by students, parents, members of the community, employees of government and non-government agencies and the Department in their private capacity.

Employees of the Department will make every effort to promptly resolve enquiries, concerns and complaints preferably at the local level where appropriate, in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness.

Principals are responsible for establishing and maintaining processes for managing and reviewing enquiries, concerns and complaints that are appropriately managed at the local level.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles apply to the management of all complaints:

- The process is accessible to all aggrieved parties and is underpinned by a commitment to cooperation on the part of the Department of Education staff.
- Resolution at the local level is preferred, wherever it is appropriate to do so.
- Procedural fairness is afforded to all parties.
- The subject of the complaint is informed of the substance of the complaint.
- Vexatious, trivial or previously finalised issues are not pursued.
- Warranted investigation will be pursued with or without the active involvement of the complainant.
- Confidentiality is maintained, to the extent that it is consistent with legislative requirements.
- Complaints are monitored and their management evaluated so as to reduce the occurrence of systematic and recurring problem.
- In all matters, the educational wellbeing of students is the first priority.
- All persons in the school community including students, parents, administrators, teachers and support staff, have a right to be treated with respect and courtesy.
- Complainants are able to make enquiries, raise concerns or lodge complaints about the provision of education or the conduct of Department employees and have these dealt with efficiently, fairly and promptly.
- Processes are to be straightforward and align to the Department's policies.
- Information about the processes for making enquiries, raising concerns or complaints is to be available to parents, students and members of the local community.

Who may complain?

Students, parents, members of the community, and employees of the Department in their private capacity are entitled to have their complaints addressed by a Principal, Director/Line Manager or the Director General, or their respective delegates, as appropriate.

What may be complained about?

A complaint may be made about the:

- Provision of education; or
- Conduct of any Department employee

How the complaint will be handed:

Complaints will be handled promptly, confidentially and in accordance with procedural fairness. Persons who are the subject of a complaint, who make a complaint or provide information in the course of an investigation into a complaint shall not be subject to prejudice, intimidation and harassment or be subject to any detriment because of their involvement.

Lodging a complaint:

A person is able to complain verbally or in writing to a Principal, Director or Line Manager or, on writing to the Director General. A verbal or 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.

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.

Classroom teachers:

Classroom teachers must:

- Maintain confidentiality in dealing with each matter;
- Resolve parent concerns and complaints where possible;
- Communicate outcomes of parent concerns and complaints to a school administrator where appropriate; and
- Refer parent enquiries, concerns and complaints to a school administrator where appropriate.

Principals:

Principals must:

- Maintain confidentiality and impartiality in dealing with each matter;
- Ensure, wherever appropriate, that concerns and complaints are resolved at the school level;
- Develop and implement a process for registering, responding to and managing parent enquiries, concerns and complaints;
- Ensure that the process for managing complaints includes recording and monitoring of complaints and their outcomes to enable improvements to be identified and implemented;
- Ensure that enquiries, concerns and complaint procedures are communicated clearly to parents and community members;
- Ensure that school policies and procedures are modified, where necessary, to address areas of concern;
- Ensure that processes are consistent with all relevant Departmental policies;
- Ensure that complainants and respondents are aware that they can have a friend or adviser present during any discussion; and
- Refer the complaint, where appropriate to the Regional Director Schools for either resolution or, if the complaint has possible disciplinary implications for an employee, to the Standards and Integrity Directorate to manage.

PROCESS

Discuss your enquiry or concern with your child's teacher if it is about your child's academic progress or social or emotional wellbeing.

Discuss your enquiry or concern with a Deputy Principal or Principal if you were not able to achieve a satisfactory arrangement regarding your enquiry/concern with the class teacher, or your concern is about the conduct of a staff member or is in relation to another aspect of school life that is impacting on your child's education.

Contact the Regional Office if your enquiry/concern has not been resolved by your Principal or there is a reason for not raising your concern with the school directly. Written complaints are responded to in writing.