Making a Complaint

A complaint can simply be an expression of dissatisfaction or it can be a problem that you want fixed. Sometimes things do not go the way you expect. Sometimes the decisions made or the actions taken need to be explained better. At other times, we need to look more closely at what we did or how we are doing our work.

This brochure will tell you

• what you can complain about
• how you can make a complaint
• what action you can expect to be taken
• who you can complain to.

Our policy aims to:

• encourage the resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
• ensure that concerns are dealt with quickly, fully and fairly
• maintain good working relationships between all people involved with the school, institute or unit
• provide effective responses and appropriate redress
• be confidential
• be unbiased

What can a complaint be about?
Anything to do with the business of the Department of Education and Training.

• our policies
• our work methods
• a decision that we made
• the conduct of our staff

If we cannot deal with your complaint because we do not have the authority to do so, we will advise you where to submit your concerns.

How to make a complaint?
It is usually best to discuss your concerns with the staff member involved first. Make an appropriate time to meet with them or contact them by phone.

If you are not happy with the outcome of your contact, or you do not feel it is appropriate to talk to that person, phone and make an appointment to discuss your concerns with the Principal or the Manager of the Unit.

You may bring a friend or relative to support you. If you need an interpreter, we can arrange that - just ask.

If a complaint cannot be resolved in an informal way, you may be asked to put your complaint in writing.

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It is important that your written complaint includes specific details of the situation and an indication of what you would like to happen as a result of your complaint.

We can assist you to put your complaint in writing, if you require it.

What can you expect?

Most complaints can be resolved quickly and informally to everybody’s satisfaction simply by talking to the person concerned or their Manager or Principal.

Some complaints are covered under another policy or by special legislation e.g. OH&S or anti-discrimination policies. You will be advised if this is the case with your complaint. You will also be told how and by whom your concerns will be addressed.

Occasionally more serious or complex complaints require investigation. These can take a longer time to resolve. If this happens, you should be informed of the progress and outcome of your complaint by phone or in writing at regular intervals until the matter is resolved.

If you have not heard from the person handling the complaint within a reasonable time, call to ask them what is happening.

What are the possible outcomes?

Your complaint is upheld (in part or in full) and, where appropriate, one or more of the following actions may be offered to you:

- action to remedy or amend the situation
- an apology
- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- an undertaking to review our policies in light of the complaint.

Your complaint is not upheld. The reasons for this should be clearly given. If you are not happy with the outcome, you may request a review of your complaint.