

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS GUIDELINES

Parent Information

This information will assist parents who are raising concerns or making a complaint that is related to the school or their child's education.

Remember:

- The school should always be your first point of contact
- concerns are best resolved at the school
- you can withdraw your complaint at any time
- it may not always be possible to resolve an issue to your complete satisfaction
- the Department expects that most complaints will be resolved by the school - that is at Step 2 (or Step 3) of the following process.

How do I raise an issue or make a complaint?

Step 1: Clarify the issue (what is the problem?)

Before you approach the school or your child's teacher:

- be clear about the topic or issue you want to discuss
- focus on the things that genuinely affect your child
- always remain calm and remember you may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue you wish to discuss
- think about what an acceptable outcome would be for you and your child
- be informed; check the departments policies or guidelines, where relevant
- ask the school for a copy of their complaints policy

Step 2: Contact the school

There are a number of ways you can raise any concerns you have about your child. You can:

- write a note to your child's teacher outlining your concerns
- make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with the class teacher or year level coordinator; ensuring that you inform the school about the issue you wish to discuss
- consider speaking with the school's student welfare coordinator if you feel that is appropriate
- arrange any meeting times or phone calls through the school office (this is more convenient for both you and your child's teacher and does not interrupt teachers during the time they need to be with their students).

Remember that the class teacher / year level coordinator, together with others who may be involved, should be given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address your concerns.

Step 3: Contact the Principal or Assistant Principal

Most concerns are resolved by following the first two steps above. However, if the issue remains unresolved after you have approached your child's teacher or other school staff you can then ask to see the Assistant Principal / Principal.

To do this, you will need to request an appointment through the school office. Be aware that:

- the Principal may ask another senior staff member to speak with you on their behalf
- if a teacher is going to be present at the meeting it is more likely to occur outside of classroom hours.

If your concern is related to issues of school policy, these should be raised more formally (in writing) with the principal or the school council.

Step 4: Contact the regional office

If you still feel that your complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily after speaking to the teacher and the assistant principal/principal, you can then contact the South Eastern Regional Office.

A regional Community Liaison Officer will be able to provide you with advice and assistance and, if required, direct your complaint to other regional staff to respond.

The Regional Director will ensure any formal written complaint is reviewed.

It is the regional office's responsibility to:

- ensure that complaints, wherever possible, are resolved at the school.
- ensure that procedures at the school are in accordance with the Department's regulatory framework.

The regional office may refer your complaint to other areas or branches within the Department. You will be notified of this and of any major delays in addressing your complaint.

Step 5: Contact the Department central office

Contact with the Department's central office should only take place if all other steps have not led to a satisfactory resolution. Where possible, all contact should be in writing.

If it is clear that you have not followed the above steps your letter (and your complaint) will be sent to the relevant regional office. You will be told if this happens.