

Complaints Handling Policy guidelines extract

The complete policy can be located at:

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/general_man/complaints/resp_sugg/April2011_Complaints%20Handling%20Policy%20guidelines.pdfHandlingPolicy

These guidelines provide information for handling complaints including how to make a complaint, how to deal with a complaint and how to support the people involved.

Often it may be necessary to use this document for guidance when making or receiving a complaint, or establishing how to manage a complaint.

All minor complaint and disputes should be resolved promptly and without using formal procedures. Whenever possible, informal resolution should be attempted first in all matters assessed as less serious.

The sections of these guidelines which detail the formal procedures should be used in those situations where it is not appropriate or not possible to resolve a matter informally. This document provides direction in determining whether or not the matter reaches the threshold of seriousness that requires a formal approach. Extract page 3

Making a Complaint extract page 4

Anyone can make a complaint. Ideally, most complaints should be resolved informally with the relevant employee.

What can a complaint be about?

A complaint can be about:

- any aspect of the service provided, or not provided, in any Department of Education and Communities site,
- the behaviour or decisions of staff, or
- practices, policies or procedures.

How can I make a complaint?

Schools – a guide for parents and carers

It is best to discuss your concerns with your child's teacher first. Make an appropriate time to meet with them or phone the school and ask for an appointment with the teacher.

If you are not happy with the result, or if you do not feel it is appropriate to talk to them, phone and make an appointment to discuss your concerns with the principal.

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

If your complaint is about the principal you will need to contact the school education director in your area. Ask the school office staff at your school for their name and number.

If your complaint cannot be resolved in an informal way, we **may** ask you to put it in writing. It is important that you include specific details of the situation and tell us what you would like to happen as a result of your complaint. We can help you to put your complaint in writing, if you require it.

Alternatively a complaint form may also be used. Complete the form and send it to the principal, or the school education director in your area.

How will my complaint be handled? Extract page 7

The person who receives your complaint must consider the nature and seriousness of the issues you raise. The person managing the complaint should always try to resolve those complaints assessed as 'less serious' by informal means first.

Sometimes complaints termed 'special cases' will be referred to certain parts of the department or to outside agencies. If this is the case, you will be advised where the matter was referred and the name and contact number of the person managing it.

If your complaint is considered to be serious or not appropriate to be managed informally, there are three types of formal procedures used, depending on the nature of the complaint – remedy and systems improvement, negotiation, and investigation.