

Doomadgee State School

COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

Complaints Management – Education Queensland

During the course of children's school years, parents and carers may have cause to make a complaint about an issue with your child's education. Education Queensland is committed to ensuring that all complaints are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner. There are processes and support structures in place to enable parents/carers and students to work through any issues they may have with Education Queensland provisions.

When making a complaint, it is in the best interest of complaint resolution to ensure that parents/carers:

- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
- deliver their complaint in a non-threatening and non-abusive manner and
- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints, or include deliberately false or misleading information.

Parents and carers should be aware that if you are making a complaint about a staff member, that in most instances the staff member will be told of the complaint and offered the right of reply. Parents and carers have the right to have a support person participate throughout the process.

If the complaint relates to suspected official misconduct or criminal activity then it should be made directly to the Crime and Misconduct Commission (www.cmc.qld.gov.au/) or the Queensland Police Service (www.police.qld.gov.au/).

The following 5-step procedure is recommended to be followed to assist parents/carers, and school staff to reach an outcome that is in the best interests of the student.

1. Discuss your complaint with the class teacher

If a parent/carer has a complaint with their child's teacher or relates to an issue concerning their child's experience at school, make an appointment with that teacher as soon as possible through the school administration. This provides the teacher with an opportunity to advise parents/carers all they know about the incident or problem. Together, both parents/carers and teachers, should then take steps to resolve the problem at this level.

The teacher will make a record of the complaint (in the form of Attachment A) and report the meeting and any outcomes to their line manager.

2. Discuss your complaint with the principal/line manager or ask the principal/line manager to assist by participating in informal conflict resolution

Where the teacher has been approached as above but the issue remains unresolved, parents/carers are encouraged to an appointment with the school principal/line manager to discuss the issue further. Alternatively, it may be agreed between the parent/carer and the teacher, that the school principal/line manager act as a go-between in informal conflict resolution in an attempt to resolve the problem.

If the complaint is related to the school more generally including issues of school policy or its compliance or non-compliance those complaints should be raised directly

with the principal or his/her delegate. For example, the principal may refer your complaint to a deputy principal or registrar. The staff member will make a record of your complaint and work with you to resolve the issue.

Complaints to the principal may be lodged in person, by telephone, writing or via electronic format through the “*Schools directory*” at

www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/directory - select relevant school, then click on the email link.

3. Contact district office

If the issue has been discussed with the school principal and the parent/carer feels that the complaint has not been addressed, parents/carers have the right to contact the Executive Director (Schools) who is the supervisor of the principal and oversees activities of schools in that particular education district of Queensland.

Complaints may be lodged by telephone or in writing. Complaints should be specific in detail, and outline the steps taken to date to resolve the issue. A complaint should be in writing and signed, with the date, the complainant’s full name and address and full details of the complaint contained in it. The district office will make a record of your complaint.

Anonymous complaints will only be acted upon if enough information is provided to allow for follow up with the principal.

Addresses and telephone numbers of district offices are listed under the heading Education Queensland in the White Pages of your local telephone directory and are also available through the “*Schools directory*” at

www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/directory

When you contact the district office you will be advised that your name and the nature of your issue will be reported back to the principal of your school. Staff at the district office will assist in seeking resolution to the issue.

4. Complaint still not resolved

If, as a parent/carer you feel that your issue has not been resolved through the district office process, you have a further right to make a complaint to the central office of Education Queensland.

Parents/carers may choose to progress their complaint in writing to the Deputy Director-General Education Queensland. The Office of Education Queensland will seek to assist with the resolution of your complaint through referral:

- to the Executive Director (Schools) for further action or
- to another departmental unit for appropriate action.

The Office of Education Queensland can be contacted at: Education Queensland, PO Box 15033, CITY EAST, Qld 4002 Tel (07) 3237 0618 or fax (07) 3221 4953.

5. Independent review

If, as a complainant you feel that your issue has not been resolved through these formal processes the Queensland Ombudsman provides an avenue for an independent review of the Department’s decision. The Ombudsman may be contacted at: Office of the Ombudsman, GPO Box 3314, Brisbane, and Qld 4001 Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au Tel (07) 3005 7000 or Toll Free 1800 068 908 or fax (07) 3005 7067

Complaints Management – In-School Procedure

Doomadgee State School documents all complaints.

Complaints are recorded and reported as soon as practicable after receiving the complaint.

Any member of staff can receive a complaint. When a staff member receives a verbal complaint they:

- Listen carefully to the issues being raised
- Summarise the issues to clarify and check that you understand what the complainant is telling you
- Empathise and acknowledge the complainant's feelings
- Find out what the complainant wants to happen as a result of the complaint
- Tell the complainant that they may use the support of a third party in progressing the complaint, if they feel this is needed
- Resolve the complaint if possible, or assure the complainant that an appropriate staff member will address their complaint
- Tell the complainant of what will happen with their complaint
- Thank them for their complaint

When the complaint is not resolved immediately, the complaint is referred to the Line Manager as soon as practicable. For complaints involving children in Prep, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 7 the line manager is the Principal. For complaints involving children in Years 3, 4, 5 or 6 the line manager is the Deputy Principal.

A member of staff who receives a verbal complaint that is not resolved, informs the complainant of the further options of:

- Putting their complaint in writing; or
- Assisting the member of staff to record, in writing, the particulars of their complaint

If the complainant agrees to put the complaint in writing, the member of staff takes no further action unless or until a written complaint is received. (This does not apply to a report about physical/emotional/sexual harm – these are mandatory reporting. See HS-17 Student Protection Policy).

Once a complainant indicates that they would like to register a formal complaint verbally, the member of staff makes a written outline of the issues concerned.

- Read the record to the complainant
- Give an opportunity for amendments to be made
- Have the complainant sign the complaint
- (The staff member) Sign with signature, date and personal delegation

The In-School Investigation and Complaint Form (Attachment A) needs to be completed.

IN-SCHOOL INVESTIGATION AND COMPLAINT FORM

Date:

Name/s of Investigating Personnel:

Complainant:

Telephone Number:

Persons involved in Complaint/Investigation:

Complaint was received by: Telephone Letter Personal
 Office Other

Nature of Complaint/Concern:

Action requested by Complainant:

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-

Signature of Complainant: _____ Date: _____

Action taken:

Date:

-
-
-
-

Signature:

Follow-up Required:

-
-

By Whom?

Signature of Principal: _____ Date: _____