



At Fulham Gardens Primary School we believe positive relations between the home and school are important as we work together to build strong and positive partnerships for the benefit of each student. From time to time there may be issues which require resolving.

This document outlines the procedure used by our school and complies with DECD procedures

## **INFORMATION ABOUT FEEDBACK, CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS TO THE SCHOOL**

A parent or student can raise a concern or complaint if they think that the school or a staff member has, for example:

- done something wrong.
- failed to do something they should have done.
- acted unfairly or impolitely.

Your concern or complaint may be about:

- the type, level or quality of services
- the behaviour and decisions of staff
- a policy, procedure or practice.

Teachers, principals, and other education department staff will work alongside you to agree on a plan of action and a timeframe for resolving your issues or concerns.

Sometimes a complaint is about something we have to do because of state or federal law. In such cases we are able to talk to you about the matter and help you understand the requirements and why they exist.

## **MAKING A COMPLAINT**

There are some simple points to keep in mind if you have a complaint about public education and care:

- Clearly identify the issue and let us know what you would like us to do about it.
- Write down key points to refer to when you report the problem.
- A friend or representative from a support organisation can attend any meeting with you. This person is not there to speak for you or to answer questions on your behalf. It's important that it's your opinions and feelings that are voiced and heard by all parties.
- If an interpreter is required, please let us know prior to any meeting.
- Written or verbal complaints should focus on the facts or details of what happened - avoid personal insults, inflammatory statements and threatening or intimidating comments.
- It's best to only discuss your complaint with people directly involved in the complaint or resolution process. This will help limit damage that can be caused by rumours
- When a lawyer is engaged by one of the parties, the issue becomes a legal matter and will be referred to the Legal and Legislation Unit of the department.

## **STEPS TO FOLLOW**

### **Stage 1 - tell the school first**

Contact the school to arrange a time to meet with the teacher or have a discussion with them on the phone. They will look into your concerns and get back to you as soon as possible.

If the matter is not resolved, or if your complaint is about a teacher, you may want to meet with, or write to, the principal or director. They will work with you and the staff member to resolve the issue.

If the complaint is about the principal, contact The Western Adelaide Regional Office.

The school will aim to resolve your concern or complaint as soon as possible - ideally within 15 working days.

## Stage 2 - contact the your regional office

You may choose to contact The Western Adelaide Regional Office for help if:

- you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved by the school
- the principal or director is the subject of your complaint

The regional office will review your complaint and work with you and the school to resolve the matter as soon as possible - within 20 working days.

## Stage 3 - refer your matter to the Parent Complaint Unit

If you are still not satisfied you can refer your feedback or complaint to the Parent Complaint Unit by completing the on line form at [www.decd.sa.gov.au/parentcomplaint](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/parentcomplaint) or calling us on 1800 677 435.

The complaint unit will:

- assess your complaint
- decide what action is needed
- let you know what has been done and when you can expect to hear about the outcome

The department's Head of Schools or the Head of Early Childhood Development and the Chief Executive's office will be advised by the Parent Complaint Unit of the outcome of the review. One of these senior leaders will make a decision about your complaint.

In most cases you can expect to hear of a decision within 35 days.

## ADVICE AND SUPPORT

You can contact the unit on 1800 677 435 to discuss your concern or complaint, or to seek advice about resolving school problems. Staff will follow up with you to check about progress.

### WILL I BE TREATED FAIRLY?

You will not be discriminated against if you make a complaint. All staff are bound by the [Code of Ethics for South Australian Public Sector](#) which requires staff to act impartially, fairly and equitably.

You can ask for your identity to be confidential when making a complaint. However, keep in mind:

- this may limit options for investigating and negotiating a resolution.
- while every effort will be made to comply with your request, freedom of information requirements may result in your identity becoming known.

You can make an anonymous complaint. However:

- the extent to which it can be investigated is limited as staff cannot liaise with the parent about the complaint.
- anonymous complaints raise issues in relation to natural justice - those who have allegations made about them have a right to know the particulars of the allegation.

### OTHER OPTIONS

In cases where a complaint requires an independent review by an external agency the department's senior managers will refer the matter to them.

You also have the right to refer any education or care concern to an external body such as the [South Australian Ombudsman](#)



**Government of South Australia**

Department for Education