



# Woodville High School

DIVERSITY INTEGRITY RESILIENCE





## Grievance and Complaint Procedure



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Good relationships within our school community give students a greater chance of success. However, in the event of a grievance, the following guidelines may be used. Refer to the Department's documents, Grievance Resolution for Employees and DFE Grievance Procedures for Employees in Children's Services and School Sector including administrative and support services. The aim of this document is to provide those who need assistance the information necessary to process a complaint, the conditions surrounding the complaint, and provide support for all parties involved. A grievance is the cause or source of a complaint. The cause to feel wronged by an action or inaction of a person, group of people, or organisation. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an agency, relating to its products, services, employees, or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

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## Underlying Principles

### **Commitment**

To resolve complaints and a culture that recognizes an individual's right to complain.

### **Accessibility**

A complaints process that is culturally responsive, accessible, and inclusive to everyone, particularly to those who require assistance.

### **Transparency**

Access to how to make a complaint, where to complain and how the complaints are handled is publicly available.

### **Objectivity and Fairness**

Complaints are addressed with integrity, impartiality, within estimated timeframes, assessed, and prioritized in an equitable manner.

### **Privacy**

Feedback and complaint information is handled according to the Information Privacy Principles Instructions.

### **Accountability**

Explanations are provided for decision making and complaint handling performance and are subject to internal and external review.

### **Continuous Improvement**

Feedback and complaint data is acted on, learnt from, and used to enable the identification of problems and the improvement of services.

### **Complaints out of a Scope**

Where the complaint relates to a matter that is out of the scope of this policy, the customer and their complaint will be advised and redirected to the appropriate authority or service.

Please see Department for Education Guidelines at

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/policies/shared/complaint-management-policy>  
<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/policies/pdf/complaint-management-procedure.pdf>

- Ensure corrective action is taken, recorded, and reported to the appropriate authority or service.
- If it is believed that a person or child is at risk of harm, information must be shared with third party service providers in accordance with the Information Sharing Guidelines (ISG), and the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017.
- Support staff members to respond effectively to complaints.
- Consider complaint data and systematic issues as part of strategic planning and policy improvement.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar with the complaint management system and local complaint procedures.
- Consider organizing a support person to be present at meetings.
- Advise all relevant parties that a complaint has been received.
- Advise the parent of their rights to contact the Customer Feedback Unit (CFU) if a resolution at the school cannot be found.
- Advise and encourage staff of online training in complaints management and resolution for education sites that are available on plink.

## Staff

- Acknowledge the complaint.
- Help students and/or parents/caregivers who wish to make complaints and document as per school/department processes.
- Consider relevant legislation, departmental policy, and guidelines and school processes, and/or seek advice from your Site Leader.
- Seek advice and support from the Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division.
- Identify and discuss with the parent possible courses of action that can be taken to resolve their complaint and an estimated timeframe.
- Concerns and complaints received by a staff member about another staff member or an issue outside their responsibility to resolve, must be reported to a member of their leadership team.
- Raising a complaint with the DfE is mandated for use in all schools. This information must be easily accessible for parents:
  - On the department's website.
  - On the school website.
  - In the school administrative office.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Leadership Team

- Acknowledge the complaint.
- Ensure the promotion of an effective feedback and complaint management system to be used by all staff.

# Rights and Responsibilities of the individuals involved

- To maintain confidentiality.
- To communicate honestly.
- To reflect on the issue or concern.
- To seek constructive solutions.
- To expect opinions to be heard and sought.
- To be supported throughout the process.
- To be given the opportunity to present all sides to an issue.
- To expect that the agreed actions are adhered to.
- To have the right information according to DfE policies.
- To consult outside agencies at any stage of the proceedings.
- To be respectful in meetings discussing a grievance(s), refraining from insults or behaving in an offensive manner.

## Grievance and Complaint Process

Students With a grievance could	Parent / Caregiver With a grievance could	Staff With a grievance could
<p><b>STEPS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Talk to the person about the problem.</li> <li>2. Talk to a teacher or School Support Staff Officer about the problem at an appropriate time.</li> <li>3. If you feel uncomfortable, speak to someone who you feel comfortable with.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- e.g., House Group Teacher or House Leader.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. If you are still unhappy, arrange a meeting with the Assistant or Deputy Principal.</li> <li>5. If the issue is unresolved, speak to your parent(s) or caregivers.</li> </ol>	<p><b>STEPS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Please do not enter school classrooms or offices about a major grievance without prior arrangement.</li> <li>2. <b>CLASSROOM BASED</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contact the teacher concerned to set up a mutually convenient meeting.</li> <li>- To find a workable solution or plan.</li> <li>- If issues remain, set up another meeting with the Curriculum Coordinator or House Leader, Assistant/Deputy Principal.</li> <li>- If issues remain, set up another meeting or contact the principal to set up a mutually convenient meeting.</li> <li>- If issues remain, contact the District Director of Education.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. <b>NOT CLASSROOM BASED</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specific incident/general school practice</li> <li>- Contact House Leader, Assistant/Deputy Principal to set up a mutually convenient meeting.</li> <li>- To find a workable solution or plan so that the issues are resolved.</li> <li>- If issues remain, contact the principal to set up a meeting or contact the Governing Council Chairman.</li> <li>- If issues remain, contact the District Director of Education.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><b>STEPS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arrange a time to speak to the person concerned.</li> <li>2. Allow reasonable time for the issue to be addressed.</li> <li>3. If the grievance is not resolved, speak to –               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Your Site Leader/Faculty Leader</li> <li>- A nominated grievance contact:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o H&amp;S Reps</li> <li>o Racial or sexual harassment contact</li> <li>o Union Representative</li> <li>o PAC (where appropriate)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Principal.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Ask their support in addressing the grievance by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Speaking to the person involved on your behalf.</li> <li>- Monitoring the situation.</li> <li>- Investigating your concern.</li> <li>- Acting as a mediator.</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. If the issue is not resolved within a reasonable time, arrange a time to speak to the District Director.</li> </ol>

# Raising a complaint with the Department for Education

We recognise that sometimes things go wrong, and you may feel that your expectations are not being met. If you have an unresolved complaint or want to provide feedback, we would like to hear from you. It's important to work together, talk, listen and find solutions in a courteous and respectful manner, so we can improve our services.

## Before making a complaint

Before making a complaint, you should:

- clearly identify issues and the resolution you are after
- provide complete and factual information
- cooperate with any requests for more information
- not include deliberately false or misleading information
- treat staff handling the complaint with courtesy and respect.

## Types of concerns and complaints

You may choose to make a complaint if you believe that the school, preschool or corporate office has:

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

Your complaint or feedback may be about:

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

Complaints and feedback may be about something we have to do because of state or federal law. We will talk to you and help you understand the requirements and why they exist.

## Where to get help to make a complaint

[Accessibility and support to making a complaint](#) – if you have special needs or require additional assistance in making a complaint.

[Tips to make a complaint or give feedback to the department.](#)

## Making a complaint

### Step 1 – frontline complaint handling and early resolution

Talk to the school, preschool, area or the person that made the original decision. We encourage a process where the original decision maker is given the opportunity to resolve the concern or complaint wherever possible. In a school setting this might be a line manager.

If you're still not satisfied that your complaint has been addressed, you can contact that person's line manager. This might be a Principal or Preschool Director in a school setting or a manager or Director in a corporate office. Ask to make an appointment time for you to contact them to discuss your concerns. You may want to put your concerns in an email. [Find the school or preschool contact details](#). Most complaints are resolved quickly, but some complex matters may take more time. We will advise you if this is the case.

### Step 2 – Central complaint resolution

If you're not satisfied that your complaint has been addressed at the local level, you can get help from our Customer Feedback Unit (CFU).

Contact the CFU:

- online feedback and complaints form
- feedback and complaints about a school or preschool
- phone 1800 677 435 (free call).

We can help you in relation to preschool and school complaints by: **giving advice about the issues behind the complaint** **liaising with schools and preschools to ensure all options for resolution have been explored** **objectively reviewing complaints that have not been resolved at the local level, including through a review. Refer to [internal and external reviews for complaints](#) for more information.**

**We can support you in relation to corporate office complaints by:**

connecting you to the correct person or area to address your complaint referring your matter if unable to be resolved, to the relevant Manager or Executive.

### Step 3 – external complaint resolution

If we haven't been able to resolve your complaint through steps 1 and 2, you may choose to seek independent advice from the [Ombudsman SA](#). The circumstances of your complaint will determine if they can help.

External agency contact:

Ombudsman SA (OSA)  
Free call: 1800 182 150  
Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.sa.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.sa.gov.au)

Depending on the nature of the matter, the OSA will usually ask if you have taken your complaint to the school, preschool or the CFU before approaching the Ombudsman.

## Overview - steps for raising your complaint



## Grievance and Complaint Procedure Flowchart

### Appendix 1: Employee complaints procedure flowchart

