

## RAISING AND RESOLVING CONCERNS

Good relationships between home and school give our children and students a better chance of success. Child or student learning is at the heart of everything we do. From time to time issues may arise which may lead to questions or concerns. If there is an issue, please make a time to discuss it with the teacher who knows about the issue (class or yard duty teacher)

Parents can raise a concern or a complaint about any aspect of the school or preschools operations (for example, the type, level or quality of services, the behaviour and decisions of staff or policy, procedures and practices).

### Guiding Principles

This policy is based on the following principles:

- The safety and educational wellbeing of students is the first priority.
- Students, parents, employees and volunteers have the right to be treated with respect and courtesy.
- Parents and students have the right to raise concerns and complaints about their school or preschool life and be supported to do so.
- Wherever possible, complaints should be resolved with the staff member concerned first.
- Complaints will be considered in a confidential, timely and impartial manner and in accordance with due process and principles of natural justice.
- The rights and responsibilities of all parties should be considered and balanced in finding a mutually acceptable outcome to complaints.

### Grievance Procedure For Parents

If a parent has an issue, query or complaint, he or she may take the following steps to raise his or her grievance and have the problem resolved.

#### Stage 1 – Talk to the School

Approach the staff member directly involved in the particular situation (class or yard duty teacher). Find an appropriate time to talk to the teacher involved. Come in or phone the school (87389231) to arrange a time for you to meet with the teacher or have a discussion over the phone. If your concern is about a teacher then you may prefer to talk to the principal. If your complaint involves the principal then contact the Limestone Coast Regional Office (87245300). The Teacher will look into your concern and get back to you. However if you are still not satisfied, you may choose to follow up your complaint with the principal. They will work with you and the staff member to resolve the issue. You may choose to write to the principal (who will then acknowledge receipt of your complaint with a written response as soon as possible), or telephone the school to make a time to meet with the principal.

#### Stage 2 – Contact the Regional Office.

If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved by the school – or the principal is the subject of your complaint – you may choose to contact the Limestone Coast Regional Office (Ph 87245300). The Regional Office will review your complaint.

### **Stage 3 – Parent Complaint Unit**

If your complaint has been unable to be resolved by the school and the regional office, the Parent Complaint Unit (1800 677 435 Freecall or DECD.parentcomplaint@sa.gov.au) will assess your complaint and decide what action is needed. Staff will discuss what has been done with your complaint, 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.

### **Rights and responsibilities**

When raising a concern or complaint with staff parents can expect to:

- be treated with respect, courtesy and consideration
- have the complaint dealt with in a confidential and timely manner
- have access to appropriate and easily understandable information regarding the complaint resolution process
- have the complaint considered impartially and in accordance with due process and principles of natural justice
- be kept informed of the progress and outcome of their complaint.

In return we expect that when making a complaint parents will:

- treat staff with respect, courtesy and maintain confidentiality
- raise the concern or complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen
- provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
- ask for assistance or further information as needed
- act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- have realistic and reasonable expectations about what course of action is required to resolve your concern or complaint.

### **Confidentiality Statement**

It is important that your concerns are kept confidential, and although at times you may wish to seek support from friends or an advocate, it is important to do this wisely.

When the matter is discussed in the students' hearing, it is important that the student understands that you have confidence that the issue will be resolved confidentially at the school level. Criticism of the school or teacher does not support the child's education as it can undermine trust and confidence.

Similarly, staff are expected to keep concerns that have been raised confidential and must not discuss the issue/s in front of students. Staff would expect the matters to be resolved with parents and caregivers appropriately.

### **Complaints not covered by this policy**

This policy does not apply to matters where there are legislated requirements or existing policies and processes of appeal, such as:

- Complaints or appeals relating to student suspension and expulsion.
- Concerns and allegations of misconduct by staff, volunteers and service providers at DECD schools and preschools (criminal matters, child protection, corruption etc).
- Duty of care or mandatory reporting responsibilities.
- Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare related issues.

If, at any stage, it becomes apparent that the concern or complaint relates to such matters, the relevant procedures will be implemented immediately.

### **Monitoring and review**

Parent complaints, the action taken to resolve the complaint and the outcome will be recorded and monitored at the school.

# How to get help with a concern or complaint

