

Ingle Farm East Primary School



Parent guide to raising a concern or complaint

Solving concerns in
public education schools and preschools

Contact:

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Education and quality care are vital for your child's success

We are committed to delivering high quality education and care. Working with you to resolve any concerns or complaints is a key part of how we will deliver on this commitment.

But we recognise that sometimes things go wrong and you may feel that your expectations for your child are not being met. If you have an unresolved issue or a complaint, then you are encouraged to raise it. It is important to work together, talk, listen and find solutions so that we can improve your child's experience and learning, and improve our services to the community.

While this guide aims to help you raise concerns, keep in mind that we also welcome your positive feedback and compliments, which can sometimes be overlooked in our busy lives.

Use this guide to help you think about what you are concerned about and how to resolve the matter respectfully and effectively.

About concerns or complaints

Members of the public (including parents, carers and students) can raise a concern or complaint if they think that the school or a staff member has:

- Done something wrong
- Failed to do something it should have done
- Acted unfairly, unreasonably or disrespectfully

Your concern or complaint may be about:

- The type, level or quality of service
- The behaviour and decisions of staff
- A policy, procedure or practice

Teachers, principals, preschool directors, 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.

What to do if you have a complaint

So that we can all work together to get the best outcome for your child, there are some simple steps to keep in mind if you have a complaint about public education and care.

Keep in mind that you are welcome to contact the Department for Education and Child Development's Parent Complaint Unit on DECD.EducationComplaint@sa.gov.au or 1800 677 435 (standard call rates apply for calls from mobile phones)

Before you begin

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

- Clearly identify the issue and let us know how you believe the issue can be resolved.
- Write down key points to refer to when you report the problem.
- A friend or support person can attend any meetings with you or help you work out the best way to present your concerns. 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.
- 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 resolution process. This will help limit damage that can be caused by rumours.

- When a lawyer is engaged to represent you in your complaint, the issue becomes a legal matter and will be referred to the Legal Services Directorate of the department.

Making a complaint

1. Tell the school or preschool 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 preschool director. They will work with you and the staff member to resolve the issue.

The school or preschool will aim to resolve your concern or complaint as quickly as possible.

2. If you are unsatisfied contact the Education Complaint unit

If you are not satisfied, contact the Education Complaint unit.

Email: DECD.EducationComplaint@sa.gov.au

Phone: 1800 677 435 (standard call rates apply for calls from mobile phones).

The complaint unit will:

- assess your complaint
- work with you to decide what action is needed
- let you know what has been done and when you can expect to hear about the outcome
- advise you about how you can escalate your concerns if you haven't been satisfied by the outcome.

Where to get help

You can contact the unit on 1800 677 435 to discuss your concern or complaint, or to seek advice about resolving school problems.

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, or make an anonymous complaint. However, keep in mind:

- this may limit options for investigating and negotiating a resolution
- this may limit the ability of staff to follow up with you about your concerns
- there are situations where staff have to disclose that you have made a complaint.

Other options

You also have the right to refer any education or care concern to an external body such as the [South Australian Ombudsman](#) or the [Education and Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards Board](#).

