



Raising a concern

Making a complaint

During your children's school years, you may have cause to make a complaint about an issue with their 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 families and students to work through any issues they may have.

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

- Provide complete and factual information in a timely manner;
- Deliver your complaint in a non-threatening and non-abusive manner; &
- Never make frivolous or vexatious complaints or include deliberately false or misleading information.

You 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. You also have the right to have a support person participate throughout the process.

If your complaint relates to suspected official misconduct or criminal activity then you should make your complaint directly to the Crime and Misconduct Commission www.cmc.qld.gov.au or the Queensland Police Service www.police.qld.gov.au.

Procedures for making a complaint

The following 5-step procedure may assist families and school staff to reach an outcome that is in the best interests of the child.

Step 1 Discuss your complaint with the class teacher

If your complaint is with your child's teacher or relates to an issue concerning your child's experience at school, make an appointment with that teacher as soon as possible. Share the information you have about the problem with the teacher. Give the teacher an opportunity to tell you all they know about the incident or problem. Together, the family and teacher should then take steps to resolve the problem at this level. The teacher may provide a record of the complaint and any outcomes to the Principal.

Step 2 Discuss your complaint with the principal or deputy

Where the teacher has been approached as above but the issue remains unresolved, make an appointment with the Principal or Deputy to discuss the issue further. Alternatively, you and the teacher may agree to ask the Principal to assist with a resolution. If your complaint is related to the school more generally you should raise your complaint directly with the Principal or Deputy Principal. Complaints may be lodged in person, by telephone, writing or email.

Step 3 Contact South East Regional Office

If you have discussed the issue with the Principal and still feel that your complaint has not been addressed, you have the right to contact Regional Director's office. The Regional Director is the supervisor of the Principal and oversees activities.

Complaints may be lodged by telephone or in writing. They should be specific in detail, and outline the steps taken to date to resolve the issue. The regional office staff 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.

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

Step 4 Contact Central Office of Education Queensland

If you feel that your issue has not been resolved through the regional office process, you have a further right to make a complaint to the Central Office of Education Queensland. Families 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 Regional Director for further action; or
- To another departmental unit for appropriate action.

The Office of Education Queensland can be contacted at:

Postal: Education Queensland, PO Box 15033, CITY EAST, Qld 4002

Telephone: (07) 3237 0618

Fax: (07) 3221 4953

Step 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:

Postal: Office of the Ombudsman, GPO Box 3314, Brisbane, Qld 4001

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au

Telephone: (07) 3005 7000 or Toll Free 1800 068 908

Fax: (07) 3005 7067

A role for Parents and Citizens' Associations (P&Cs)...

It is understandable that families may sometimes feel overwhelmed when approaching a school or Education Queensland with a complaint. While the Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens' Associations Inc (QCPCA) does not advocate on behalf of individual families, individuals can request their own P&C to provide support in these circumstances. The P&C can in turn seek assistance from QCPCA to provide guidance in resolving the complaint. Complaints about services that are run or managed by the P&C at your school, for example, the canteen, should be directed to the P&C in the first instance.