Making a complaint

During the course of your child's school years, you may have cause to make a complaint about an issue you feel is adversely affecting your child's education.

Education Queensland is committed to ensuring that all complaints - whether they relate to a school staff member or a school's operations - are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner.

When making a complaint, you have a responsibility to:

- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
- deliver your complaint in a nonthreatening manner
- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints or include deliberately false or misleading information.

In most instances, staff members are told of complaints made about them and offered the right of reply. A complainant also has the right to have a support person throughout the process. If your complaint relates to suspected official misconduct or criminal activity, then you should direct your complaint directly to the Crime and Corruption Commission or the Queensland Police Service.

The following five-step procedure assists parents, guardians, staff and school personnel in reaching an outcome that is in the best interests of the student:

1. **Discuss your complaint with the class teacher**

   If your complaint is with your child's teacher or an issue concerning your child's experience at school, make an appointment with that teacher as soon as possible through the school administration to resolve the problem at this level. The teacher will make a record of the complaint and report your meeting and any outcomes to the school principal. Where the teacher has been approached but the issue remains unresolved, make an appointment with the school principal to discuss the issue further.

2. **Discuss your complaint with the principal**

   If your complaint is related to the school more generally, you should raise your complaint directly with the principal. The principal will make a record of your complaint and work with you to resolve the issue.

   Complaints to the principal may be lodged by telephone, writing or in electronic format. Email addresses can be accessed through the Schools Directory.
3. Contact district 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 the Executive Director (Schools) who is the supervisor of the principal and oversees activities of schools. Complaints may be lodged by telephone or in writing. Complaints should be specific in detail, and outline the steps taken to date to resolve the issue. When you contact the district office you will be advised that your name and the nature of your issue will be reported back to the principal of your school. Staff at the district office will attempt to resolve the issue. Addresses and telephone numbers of district offices are listed on pages 45-46 of this publication.

4. Complaint still not resolved?

If you feel that your issue has not been resolved through the district office process, you have a further right to make a complaint to the central office of Education Queensland. You may choose to progress your complaint in writing to the: Deputy Director-General Education PO Box 15033 City East QLD 4002 phone (07) 3237 0618 fax (07) 3221 4953.

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: Office of the Ombudsman GPO Box 3314 Brisbane QLD 4001 phone (07) 3005 7000 fax (07) 3005 7067.

A role for parents and citizens' associations

Parents and guardians may sometimes feel overwhelmed when approaching a school or the department with a complaint. While P&Cs Qld does not advocate on behalf of individual parents or caregivers, individuals can request their own P&C Association to provide support in these circumstances. Complaints about services that are run or managed by the P&C at your school, for example after-school care or tuckshop - should be directed to the P&C in the first instance.