

SIDE Enquiry, Concerns and Complaints Management - Policy and Procedures

SIDE is characterised by a commitment to responding positively to enquiries, concerns and complaints. The educational well-being of our students is our priority, fostered by the development of effective partnerships with parents/carers, supervisors and schools. SIDE staff promotes the highest standards of professionalism when working with our community.

What might you talk to us about?

Seeking information as early as possible can solve many problems. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's progress, the homework set or the assessment procedures, contact the class teacher. The best way to do this is to contact the teacher via email or phone. All teacher contact details are on the SIDE website.

Issues you may want to raise with your child's teacher include:

- Engagement in the teaching and learning program – including participation, attendance, learning difficulties and learning adjustments.
- Learning program issues – homework, revision, study techniques or academic progress.

When you have a problem

- Try to identify the problem before contacting the teacher. If there is more than one problem, list them to ensure that the extent of the problem is clear to the teacher.
- Decide whether the problem is an enquiry, a concern or a complaint. This will help in finding a solution.
- If your concern is about the conduct of a staff member, you may prefer to discuss the matter with a school administrator, either a Head of Learning Area or the Deputy Principal - Students.

Definitions

- *Enquiries* may be a question or clarification about a teaching and learning program, support for students at educational risk, assessment tasks, work completion calendars or policy clarification. You would normally contact your child's teacher.
- *Concerns* may be raised about the quality of teaching and learning programs, staff-student interactions, student-student interactions or irregularity of teacher contact with students. You would normally contact your child's teacher or Head of Learning Area.
- *Complaints* are formalised and may be raised regarding the provision of education, conduct of any staff, a policy or a decision. You would normally contact the Deputy Principal- Students or the Principal.

Complaints

Complaints are formalised. A complaint must contain sufficient detail to enable it to be addressed and recorded. To do this, you may write to or speak with the Deputy Principal – Students or Principal who will acknowledge the complaint with a written reply.

- The deputy principal/principal will consider the issue and identify what action is to be taken and by when, and will clarify the process if a formal complaint is to proceed.
- The deputy principal/principal may seek the support of the Coordinator Regional Operations or other relevant district office staff.

When a complaint is made in writing about the conduct of an individual staff member, that staff member will receive documentation of the substance of the complaint and, in most cases, the name of the complainant.

You should provide the following information when making a complaint:

- Your name and contact details.
- Copies of any relevant correspondence or documents relating directly to the complaint.
- The nature of the complaint.
- What you consider is needed to resolve the complaint.

In the case of a verbal complaint, where you do not want to be identified or to lodge the complaint in writing, SIDE will endeavour to work directly with you to resolve the matter.

Responsiveness

SIDE will acknowledge written complaints within five (5) working days, seeking to resolve the complaint within fourteen (14) working days. If because of the serious nature of the complaint, it is deemed necessary to forward it on to another section of the Department of Education, SIDE will do this without delay.

In all cases you will be kept informed of the progress of your complaint.

Enquiring on a Complaint's Progress

You may enquire as to the progress of your complaint at any time by directly contacting the person with whom you have made contact. At the time of lodging a verbal complaint, or in the acknowledgment letter for a written complaint, this person will be identified for you.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

A person who has made a complaint is able to withdraw the complaint at any time.

- A written complaint should preferably, be withdrawn in writing. However, a signed and dated notation on the complaint by an employee that it has been withdrawn by the complainant will suffice.
- A verbal complaint can be withdrawn verbally and a notation made to that effect.

The officer who received the complaint must give notice in writing to any parties affected by the complaint that it has been withdrawn. Complaints that warrant investigation must be pursued even though the complaint has been withdrawn.

Rejecting a Complaint

Complaints judged to be vexatious, trivial or without substance, or where it is judged to not warrant further action, will not be progressed. You will be advised of this decision in writing.

When a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of a complaint

If you are unsatisfied with SIDE's attempts to resolve your complaint, you may wish to express your concerns to the DOE Regional Director.

To do this contact:

Pam Moss
Assistant Executive Director
Statewide Planning and Delivery
151 Royal Street
East Perth
Western Australia 6004