

Advice and support:

You can contact the unit's hotline (1800 677 435) at any time to discuss your concern or complaint or to seek advice about solving school problems. Staff will follow up with you at a later stage to check about progress.

Additional information:

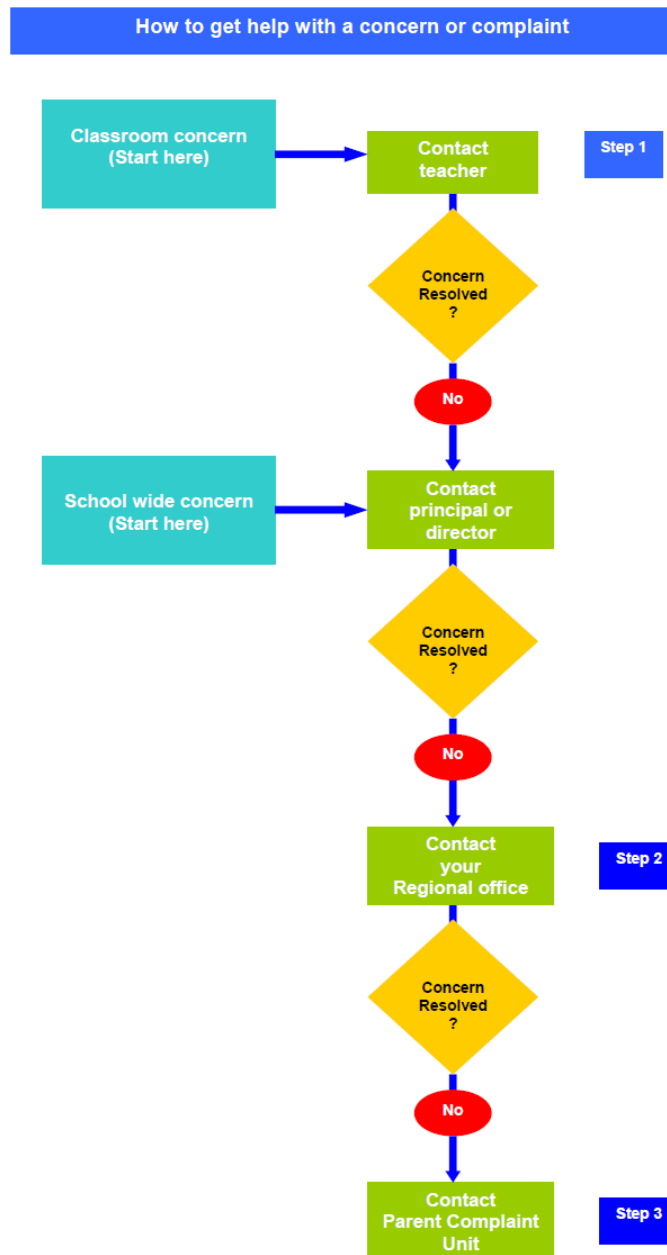
Parent Complaint Unit of the Department for Education and Child Development

1800 677 435 (Freecall)
DECD.parentcomplaint@sa.gov.au
www.decd.sa.gov.au/parentcomplaint

The South Australian Ombudsman

You can make a complaint to the SA Ombudsman About any action or inaction by an agency within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. Further information is available at: <http://www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au/>

Any written or verbal complaints that contain personal abuse, inflammatory statements, and comments of a threatening nature or intended to intimidate will not be addressed and the parent will be advised accordingly.



Parent Complaints Unit
Level 6
31 Flinders Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Phone: 1800 677 435
Email: DECDparentcomplaint@sa.gov.au



Linden Park Schools
Phone 8379 21 71



Eastern Adelaide Region
Phone 8366 88 00

PARENT CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Parents are partners in the education of children. Regular two-way communication between parents and schools is essential in helping children achieve their potential. Parents and schools need to know if there are concerns that effect the learning of children.



Government of South Australia
Department for Education and Child Development

DECS is committed to a complaints procedure that ensures anyone with parental responsibilities for a child can raise a concern or complaint, with confidence that it will be heard and responded to within an appropriate and timely fashion.

What to do if you have a complaint

Step 1: Talk to the school

If your concern or complaint relates to an issue concerning your child's teacher, you should talk to the teacher as soon as possible. Contact the school and organise a mutually convenient time to meet or have a telephone conversation.

If the matter is not resolved, is school wide or you wish to have a person act as a mediator, you may want to meet and raise the issue with the director or principal.

Interpreters and Aboriginal Education Coordinators are available to assist parents in communicating with their school. Please contact your school or regional office for assistance.

Step 2: Contact your Adelaide Eastern regional office

If you don't feel the issue has been addressed by the school, contact the regional director at your local DECS regional office.

Regional office staff will:

- refer, if appropriate, any complaint that has not been raised at the school level to the school
- determine the appropriate person to handle the complaint
- acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing
- make an *assessment* of the complaint and if required, a negotiated /mediated solution or undertake a *formal review* following DECS guidelines
- if no solution or agreement can be made a decision in relation to the complaint will be made according to the weight of the evidence and on the balance of probabilities.

Hint:

It may be helpful to write down the answers to these questions for reference when discussing a concern or complaint:

What happened, or what is the problem?

When did it happen?

Who was involved?

Where did it happen?

Why did it happen?

Did anyone see it?

How does it affect my child?

Who can help solve the problem?

What is an acceptable solution?

All of the parties involved in a DECD complaint management process can bring a support person to any of the meetings held to resolve your complaint

Step 3: Contact the Parent Complaint Unit

If your complaint remains unresolved after working together with the school and regional director, you should submit, in writing, your complaint to:

Manager, Parent Complaint Unit
Level 6
31 Flinders Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Email DECDparentcomplaint@sa.gov.au

You should include information about the complaint including why it remains unresolved and an outline of what actions could be feasibly taken to resolve the complaint.

The Parent Complaint Unit, on behalf of the Chief Executive, will:

- acknowledge receipt of the complaint
- assess and make a recommendation to the Principal that:
 - ◇ a review is not warranted and that the complainant is to be advised that no further action is considered necessary and that the complaint is now concluded; or
 - ◇ a review is necessary; or
 - ◇ the complaint should be referred to an external agency for investigation or review.

The Principal will review the advice and decide that the complaint:

- can be resolved (all parties agree on an appropriate response)
- should be dismissed (complaint is either unsubstantiated, vexatious, outside of reasonable expectations in relation to confidentiality, cooperation, courtesy and respect or is orientated towards conflict)
- remains unresolved and that an independent review by an external agency is required.