

Woodcroft Primary School

Consumer complaints management and resolution policy



**Government
of South Australia**

Department for Education
and Child Development

Document control

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Title

Woodcroft Primary School Parent Complaint Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Parent Complaint Policy is to ensure that Woodcroft Primary School (WPS) and Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) manages complaints in a fair, efficient and effective manner

Scope

The WPS Parent Complaint Policy is directly linked to the DECD Consumer Complaints Management and Resolution Policy and applies to complaints about decisions and actions undertaken in the provision of education, early childhood services, family support, and care services by DECD.

This policy applies to all staff in DECD schools, preschools, early childhood, care and family support services.

The policy does not apply to matters that are subject to judicial determination, or determination by a statutory authority including: Child protection proceedings including court orders per the Children's Protection Act, 1993: Adoption proceedings per the Adoptions Act 1988.

Proceedings that have been brought before the Equal Opportunity Commission or the Australian Human Rights Commission

Matters that are under investigation by Ombudsman SA, or the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner

The policy does not apply to decisions by the Minister, Chief Executive or delegated authority, made under a legislative instrument, such as: Suspensions, exclusions and expulsions per the Education Regulations 2012.

Control of trespass and misbehaviour on school premises per the Education Regulations 2012

Approval of foster carers per the Family and Community Services Act 1972

Approval of children's residential facilities per the Family and Community Services Act 1972

Family Care Meeting outcomes per the Children's Protection Act 1991

Determination of Freedom of Information applications per the Freedom of Information Act, 1991

The policy does not apply to non DECD staff and services even where there may be an interface with DECD, such as: | Consumer Complaints Management and Resolution Policy August 2015

The decisions, services, members and employees of Governing Councils

The decisions, services, members and employees of external agencies who may be utilising DECD premises

The policy does not apply to employee disputes and grievances, or complaints of misconduct by staff, volunteers and services providers. Employee grievances are managed through the Complaint Resolution for Employees Procedures.

The policy does not apply to matters that are subject to civil litigation.

Where it becomes apparent that the issue relates to a matter that is out of the scope of this policy, the complainant will be advised, and assisted to redirect their complaint where possible.

Policy detail

WPS will ensure that there is an effective complaints management system that supports the educational attainment and wellbeing of children and young people.

WPS is open and responsive to receiving complaints from children, young people, parents, families and members of the community as a means of promoting continuous service improvement.

Staff at WPS will make every effort to resolve complaints, preferably at the local level, in accordance with policy, procedures and guidelines.

Where WPS is unable to resolve complaints internally, complainants will be provided with information about their avenues for seeking resolution and/or appeal externally.

WPS is committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint management, and all staff will demonstrate this commitment through their service delivery to children, families and community members. WPS endorses a Three Level Model of Complaint Handling recognised as best practice in the Australian / New Zealand Standard (Guidelines for complaint management in organisations) AS/NSZ 10002:2014.

WPS will enable complaints by ensuring:

Information about how and where a complaint may be made is accessible and transparent. Complainants are able to raise complaints through different means, including face-to-face at DECD sites, via telephone and email.

Vulnerable populations and individuals with special needs are assisted to make complaints. People from non-English speaking backgrounds and cultures with strong oral traditions (such as Aboriginal and TIS people), people with disabilities, people who struggle with literacy, and children (especially children in care) may require assistance to formulate and document their complaint. They may also need to be connected to an advocate or support person who is able to assist them to pursue their complaint.

The right for individuals to raise complaints is acknowledged, and complainants are treated with respect.

Complainants are not adversely affected because they have made a complaint. WPS will manage complaints by ensuring:

Complaints are promptly acknowledged, assessed and prioritised in accordance with the urgency of the issues raised.

Complaints management and resolution occur at a local level where-ever possible, and are only escalated where local resolution has not been successful.

Complainants are advised if their matter is out of the scope of the Policy and are redirected to appropriate authorities where possible.

Complainants are advised of the complaint process, expected timeframes, how they are able to contribute to the complaints management process, the possible outcomes, and avenues of review and appeal.

Procedural fairness, objectivity and fairness requirements are adhered to.

Unless resolved at the first point of contact, complaints will be documented (including information about the issues raised, any supporting documentation provided, the enquiries undertaken, and the outcomes achieved).

Personal information is treated confidentially and is only used and disclosed in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles, confidentiality requirements in the Children's Protection Act 1993, and other legal and ethical obligations regarding privacy.

Records of complaints will be documented, stored and managed in accordance with the Department's obligations under the State Records 1997, the Information Privacy Principles (Cabinet Administrative Instruction 1/89), and the relevant General Disposal Schedules.

The legal, policy, procedural and factual basis for decisions are provided in communications with complainants, staff and others. The Department will support parties involved in complaint resolutions by ensuring:

The roles, responsibilities and expected behaviour of complainants and staff managing complaints are communicated.

Policies and practices are established to ensure the health and safety of staff involved in complaint management.

Policies and practices are established to manage unreasonable complainant conduct.

Consultation and advice is provided to Site Leaders managing complex and intractable disputes WPS will utilise DECD's complaints management system to ensure continuous learning and accountability by:

Collecting complaints data (including the number and types of complaints received, sources of complaints, time taken to respond) to support performance monitoring, analysis and evaluation of complaint trends.

Providing internal and public reporting on key performance indicators in complaints management on regular basis.



Utilising complaints data on a continuous basis to inform policy and programmatic development

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility for
Site Managers including Families SA Managers, Principals, Early Childhood Directors (or their delegate)	<p>Ensuring that information about WPS parent complaint policy and the DECD complaint management system is easily accessible by staff, clients and members of the public, especially vulnerable populations (including Aboriginal people, people from CALD backgrounds, people with disabilities).</p> <p>Ensuring that complaints are responded to in a fair and consistent manner, in accordance with the policy and procedures.</p> <p>Ensure the WPS parent complaint policy and the DECD complaint management system is implemented at their site, including any subordinate local policies and procedures</p> <p>Ensuring that appropriate records and documentation are kept of complaints received by their site.</p> <p>Working with the Complaints Unit staff to resolve any disputes that have been escalated to the Complaints Unit.</p> <p>Ensuring that complaint management data is kept and available for review by Senior Management and others.</p>
Staff	<p>Ensuring that they are familiar with WPS's parent complaint policy, the DECD complaints management system, and WPS's parent complaint procedures.</p> <p>Ensuring that complaints raised with them are acknowledged and responded to in a fair and consistent manner, or referred to the appropriate party for a response, in accordance with the policy and procedures.</p> <p>Enabling clients and community members to make complaints through the provision of information and advice.</p>

Monitoring, evaluation and review

This policy will be reviewed every three years (in accordance with the DECD Policy Framework) or earlier if required by legislative or organisational imperatives.

Site Managers will provide ongoing monitoring of their site's/service's compliance with this policy.

Definitions and abbreviations

Term	Meaning
	Family members, guardians or friends who have an interest in, or are responsible for the care of a client
Client	Someone who receives, relies upon, is the subject of, or benefits from DECD education, early childhood, care and family support services. Interchangeable terms used are “consumer” and “customer”.
Complainant	Person or their representative making a complaint
Complaint	Expression of dissatisfaction made to or about DECD related to its services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly required.
Complaint Management System	Encompasses all aspects of the policies, procedures, practices, staff, and infrastructure used by DECD in the management of complaints.
DECD	Department for Education and Child Development
WPS	Woodcroft Primary School
Disputes	Unresolved complaints escalated within DECD or externally, or both.

Supporting documents

WPS Parent Complaint Procedure

DECD Consumer Complaints Management and Resolution Procedure

DECD Unreasonable Complainant Conduct Procedure

Guide to raising a complaint in DECD brochure