



ALPHA STATE SCHOOL

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

RATIONALE/PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to ensure that all Alpha P – 10 SS community members, including staff, are aware of the policy and procedures around making and receiving a complaint.

All Queensland Government departments are required to have a complaints management system in place.

Parents, carers and members of the wider community have the right to make a complaint or raise any concerns at any time about the decisions or actions of a school. They are also welcome to provide compliments about the performance of a school.

Staff should ensure that all complaints are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner. The complainant should be contacted regularly with updates on progress with the complaint.

Schools develop a process for managing compliments and complaints in consultation with the school community and endorsed by the Parents and Citizens' Association.

The complaints management process should be readily available to students, parents, staff, teachers and the broader community, for example, on the school website and in the student handbook.

Compliments and complaints should be managed and stored electronically by the school, particularly when the request is for the review of a decision or action of the school.

Complaints should be dealt with in a timely and fair manner.

In some circumstances, the principal will be unable to resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction and may wish to refer the complainant to the regional office.

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY BELIEFS

Alpha P – 10 State School values the contribution of its community members and welcomes feedback and input from parents and friends of the school. Our school community has identified the following school values to teach and promote our high standards of responsible behaviour:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Learning
- Safety

All compliments and complaints will be dealt with confidentially and treated with the utmost importance.

All complaints are handled in a positive and open way.

DEFINITIONS

Complaint

For the purpose of this policy, a complaint does not include an allegation against employees or volunteers involving suspected official misconduct or criminal activity. Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a departmental service where the complainant requires a formal way of having a complaint heard and resolved. A complaint may be made verbally or in writing.

Complainant

A person who lodges a complaint with Education Queensland. A complainant may be a student, parent/carer or a member of the community who is aggrieved about a matter.

MAKING A COMPLAINT

During the course of your children's school years, you may have cause to make a complaint about an issue with your child's 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

parents/carers and students to work through any issues they may have with Education Queensland provisions. 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 and
- not 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/).

The following 5-step procedure may assist parents/carers, and school staff to reach 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 relates to an issue concerning your child's experience at school, make an appointment with that teacher as soon as possible through the school administration. Share the information you have about the problem with the teacher. Give the teacher an opportunity to tell you all he/she knows about the incident or problem. Together, both parent/carer and teacher, should then take steps 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.

2. Discuss your complaint with the principal or ask the principal to assist by participating in informal conflict resolution

Where the teacher has been approached as above but the issue remains unresolved, make an appointment with the school principal to discuss the issue further.

Alternatively, you and the teacher may agree to ask the principal to act as a go between in informal conflict resolution in an attempt to resolve the problem.

If your complaint is related to the school more generally including issues of school policy or its compliance or non-compliance you should raise your complaint directly with the principal. Complaints to the principal may be lodged in person, by telephone, writing or via electronic format through the “*Schools directory*” at

www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/directory - select relevant school, then click on the email link.

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 Assistant Regional Director (ARD), who is the supervisor of the principal and oversees activities of schools in that particular education district of Queensland.

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. Remember to date the letter, give your full name and address and sign it. The district office 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.

Addresses and telephone numbers of district offices are listed under the heading Education Queensland in the White Pages of your local telephone directory and are also available through the “*Schools directory*” at www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/directory. 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 assist in seeking resolution to the issue.

4. Complaint still not resolved

If, as a parent/carer 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. Parents/carers 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 Assistant Regional Director (ARD) for further action or
- to another departmental unit for appropriate action.

The Office of Education Queensland can be contacted at:

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

Tel (07) 3237 0618 or 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

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au

Tel (07) 3005 7000 or Toll Free 1800 068 908 or fax (07) 3005 7067

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT – REGIONAL OFFICES

Regional offices develop a process for managing compliments and complaints about the decisions or actions of their schools.

Regional staff should be available to investigate and respond to complaints in a fair and equitable manner. Once investigated, the regional director has the responsibility for decision making for the resolution or finalisation of the complaint.

Compliments and complaints should be managed and stored electronically by the region, particularly when the request is for the review of a decision or action of the region.

A ROLE FOR PARENTS AND CITIZENS ASSOCIATIONS (P & Cs)

It is understandable that parents/carers may sometimes feel overwhelmed when approaching a school or the department with a complaint. While the Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens Associations Inc. (QCPCA) does not advocate on behalf of individual parents or carers, 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 should be directed to the P&C in the first instance.

RELATED LEGISLATION

Complaints Management – State Schools

<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/management/Pages/Complaints-Management---State-Schools.aspx>

Education (General Provisions) Act – 2006 (Qld)

https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/Acts_SLs/Acts_SL_E.htm

Making a Complaint

http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/about/pdfs/making_a_complaint.pdf