


COWANDILLA

Primary School & Children's Centre

A photograph of a woman with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a light-colored short-sleeved button-down shirt, sitting at a wooden table. She is looking towards the left of the frame. In the foreground, the back of another person's head with long, curly dark hair and a white patterned top is visible. The background is dark.

Parent Concerns and Complaints Policy



Government of South Australia

Department for Education and
Child Development

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

Cowandilla Primary School and the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) are committed to ensuring the delivery of high quality education and care to the children at Cowandilla Primary School.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear and transparent information to parents, the community and staff on how concerns and complaints will be managed and resolutions found. It is also the intent of this policy to ensure parents have access to support and advice when attempting to resolve a concern or complaint.

Parents can expect that their concern or complaint will be responded to in a courteous, respectful and timely manner and that staff will work in partnership with them to resolve their concern or complaint. In return, we ask that parents are respectful, cooperative and courteous to staff and that they are realistic and reasonable about what course of action is required to resolve their concern or complaint.

The process has two stages, with the child's school being first point of contact for parents to raise concerns, followed by the DECD Parent Complaint Unit.

Julie Hayes, Principal

Marcello Bronzin, Governing Council Chairperson

Complaint Stages For Parents

Stage I – Raise the Concern

If you have a concern or complaint you should talk to the teacher as soon as possible. Contact the teacher to organise a mutually convenient time to meet. At any stage the Aboriginal Community Education Officer or an interpreter can be included in meetings to support parents.

Following this meeting if the matter is not resolved, you may want to raise the issue with the Preschool Director or Principal. The Principal will consider the most effective way of resolving the concern or complaint based upon:

- Information provided
- The school's Parent Concerns and Complaints Policy
- The DECD Parent Complaint Policy, and the DECD Parent Concerns and Complaint Procedure
- Consideration of any legislative and policy implications
- Advice from the DECD central office

The school or preschool will aim to resolve the concern or complaint, ideally within 15 working days.

Complaint Stages For Parents

Stage 2 – Contact the DECD Parent Complaint Unit

If your complaint remains unresolved after working with the school, contact the DECD Parent Complaint Unit.

The Parent Complaint Unit has a dual function:

- To provide advice and support to parents about their concern and complaint
- To objectively review complaints that have not been resolved at school level.

A parent may contact the unit by phone (**1800 677 435**) or email (**DECD.EducationComplaint@sa.gov.au**) anytime to discuss their concern or complaint or to seek advice.

If a complaint has not been resolved by the school, the unit will be asked to assess the complaint and decide what action is needed.

The complaint unit will:

- assess your complaint
- decide what action is needed
- let you know what has been done and when you can expect to hear about the outcome.

The department's Chief Education Officer or the Executive Director of the Office for Children and Young People, and the Chief Executive's office will be advised by the Education Complaint Unit of the outcome of the review. One of these senior leaders will make a decision about your complaint.

In most cases you can expect to hear of a decision within 35 working days.

Rights and Responsibilities

When raising a concern or complaint with staff, parents can expect to:

- Be treated with respect, courtesy and consideration
- Have the complaint dealt with in a confidential and timely manner
- Have access to appropriate and easily understandable information about the complaint resolution process
- Have the complaint considered impartially and in accordance with due process and principles of natural justice
- Be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the complaint

We request that when making a complaint parents will:

- Treat other parties with respect and courtesy
- Maintain confidentiality
- Raise the concern or complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen
- Provide complete factual information about the concern or the complaint
- Ask for assistance or further information as needed
- Act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- Have realistic and reasonable expectations about what course of action is required to resolve the concern or complaint

The safety and educational wellbeing of children is our first priority. Our aim is for everyone involved to act in good faith to find mutually acceptable outcomes to complaints and concerns.

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