

# Complaint Resolution Process



## Mawson Lakes School

Ratified by Governing Council: Tues, 21 Jun 2022

(Principal: David Cowles, GC Chairperson: Peter Richings)

Mawson Lakes School Complaint Resolution Process aims to:

- ensure an open, accessible and transparent complaint management system
- ensure feedback, suggestions and complaints are managed effectively, fairly, confidentially and objectively
- inform and identify where service improvements can be made
- provide guidance on key principles and concepts of the complaint management system.

Mawson Lakes School's process aligns with the Department for Education [Complaint Management Policy](#).

## Before making a complaint

Before making a complaint you should:

- clearly identify issues and the resolution you are after
- provide complete and factual information
- cooperate with any requests for more information
- not include deliberately false or misleading information
- treat staff handling the complaint with courtesy and respect.

## Types of concerns and complaints

You may choose to make a complaint if you believe that the school has:

- done something incorrectly
- failed to do something they should have done
- acted unfairly or impolitely.

Your complaint or feedback may be about:

- the type, level or quality of service
- the behaviour and/or decisions of staff and/or students
- a policy, procedure or practice.

## Making a complaint

### Students

- Use their WITS
  - Walk away and think
  - Ignore the concern/person if possible
  - Talk it out with person/people involved e.g. Can you please stop that because.../When you...I feel...
  - Seek help from a trusted adult (member of staff and/or parent/caregiver) if the issue continues
- Apply strategies from the Child Protection Curriculum
- Report any unsafe behaviour to a staff member

### Families

#### Step 1 – frontline complaint handling and early resolution

Talk to the school or the person that made the original decision. We encourage a process where the original decision maker is given the opportunity to resolve the concern or complaint wherever possible. This might be a teacher or a member of leadership.

It is expected that teachers will:

- acknowledge the complaint
- make a time available (face-to-face, by phone) as soon as reasonably possible to discuss with the parent/s their complaint
- consider relevant legislation, departmental policy and guidelines, school or preschool processes, and/or seek advice from their site leader
- identify and discuss with the parent possible courses of action that could be taken to resolve their complaint and the timeframe for this to occur

- where practicable, follow up with the parents, after a reasonable period of time for any changes to take effect, to ensure that the parent is satisfied with the outcome. For example, at parent interview, telephone or email
- if appropriate (depending on the nature of the concern or complaint) keep a written record of the complaint, its progress and outcomes

If you're still not satisfied that your complaint has been addressed, you can contact that person's line manager. This might be a principal or another member of leadership. Ask to make a time to contact them to discuss your concerns. You may want to put your concerns in an email.

It's expected that when leadership staff handle a complaint they will:

- wherever possible, make every reasonable effort to resolve parent concerns or complaints at the local level in a timely and effective manner
- ensure that staff are familiar with the department's complaints policy and that school has a link to the policy
- ensure staff understand the complaint process and are aware of and have access to appropriate training
- advise all relevant parties once a complaint has been received
- consider whether the parent may require a support person at a meeting
- ensure the complaint is documented and appropriate action determined
- recommend to the Education Director any system improvements at a broader level that may reduce the likelihood of similar complaints
- seek advice and support from the Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division, phone 8226 1290
- refer to [feedback and complaints about schools and preschools](#) and contact Customer Feedback as required
- advise the parent of their right to contact Customer Feedback, if a resolution at the school can't be found.

## Step 2 – central complaint resolution

If you're not satisfied that your complaint has been addressed at the local level, you can get help from the Customer Feedback Team:

- [online feedback and complaints form](#)
- [make a complaint or give feedback about a school or preschool](#)
- phone 1800 677 435 (free call).

The Customer Feedback Team can help you in relation to school complaints by:

- giving advice about the issues behind the complaint
- liaising with schools to ensure all options for resolution have been explored
- objectively reviewing complaints that have not been resolved at the local level, including through a review.

## Step 3 – external complaint resolution

If we haven't been able to resolve your complaint through steps 1 and 2, you may choose to seek independent advice from the [Ombudsman SA](#) . The circumstances of your complaint will determine if they can help.

Free call: 1800 182 150

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.sa.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.sa.gov.au)



## Staff

- Follow the Department for Education policy and refer to the [Employee Complaints Procedure](#)