

[RESOLVING PROBLEMS IN CONSTRUCTIVE WAYS](#)

There will be occasions when parents/carers, students or staff have concerns about particular aspects of the school. With this in mind, we offer the following guidelines and processes for resolving issues constructively.

Guidelines for Constructive Resolution

- Our school's staff is committed to providing a stimulating, successful and supportive learning environment for all of our students.
- All children, parents/carers and staff have a right to feel safe and secure within the school environment.
- Showing respect and courtesy builds positive relationships and constructive outcomes.
- Parents/carers have a right to discuss their child's progress with teachers and to raise concerns. This is best done at an early stage.
- Parents, students and school staff are encouraged to work as a team to resolve issues and to develop mutually agreed upon plans to improve student success.
- Issues may relate to relationships between students or with adults, behaviours in the classroom or yard, areas of learning and curriculum, concerns regarding school management, its grounds, etc.
- Teachers can deal with minor inquiries before and after school; for more complex issues that require time, privacy and/or preparation, a mutually agreed upon time needs to be set. If the matter is urgent and the teacher is not available, the principal or deputy principal may be able to assist.

Where to next?

- If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the meeting, you may phone or write to the principal or deputy about your concerns. If school staff do not receive further information from you, they will assume that the issue has been resolved to your satisfaction.
- If the problem is still unresolved or re-emerges within a short time of your initial meeting, ask for another meeting to be arranged between yourself, the teacher and the principal.
- The school will aim to resolve the concern or complaint ideally within 15 working days.

NB: If a staff member commits to contacting you and does not do this, ring or write to remind them of this agreement and state that you are still waiting for them to come back to you. Their failure to get back to you does not mean that they did not take your concerns seriously, nor that they did not follow up on points raised at the meeting. They may still be working through the issue or may have lost track of the time since you both met.

Further options available to you.

- You may contact the Southern Adelaide Regional Office if the above steps have not lead to a satisfactory outcome and you wish to pursue the matter further, or if your complaint involves the principal.

Assistant Regional Director for the Blue Group

Address: Adelaide South Regional office

Noarlunga House, Colonnades

Phone: 8207 3700

The ARD's expectation will be that the above steps have been followed. The Regional Office will aim to resolve the complaint within 20 working days.

[THE RESOLUTION PROCESS](#)

If you have a concern, set up a meeting.

- Contact the most relevant person [for classroom issues, contact class teachers; for broader issues, contact principal or deputy] to arrange an appointment at a time that is mutually convenient, so you can discuss the matter together without distractions.
 - Give the staff member a general idea of your concern beforehand, so that he/she is able to gather any information that may assist with resolving the issue.
 - If you can't speak directly to the relevant staff member, contact the Front Office staff so that they can assist you to make an appointment with the person you wish to speak to.
- Making an appointment ensures the most productive use of the time available. If you feel that it would be valuable to have a senior staff member present at the meeting, please ask the Front Office staff to organise this for you.

At the meeting, . . .

- Clearly explain what is worrying you and why you consider it an issue that needs resolution.
 - Make clear the effect that the issue is having on you or your child.
 - Talk with the staff member in a way that shows that you are looking to work together with him/her towards achieving a resolution that is satisfactory to all parties.
- If you feel that the raised issue is still unresolved at the conclusion of the meeting, you need to state this. You may choose also to indicate what your next course of action may be.

If your concern has still not been addressed to your satisfaction, you may contact the **Parent Complaint Unit**.

This unit has a dual purpose –

- To provide information, advice and support to parents/carers about concerns or complaints.
- To objectively review complaints that have not been resolved at the school or regional level.

☎ The Parent Complaint Unit: 1800 677 435

☎ Head of Schools: (08) 8226 2536

In most cases, the complaint review outcome should be communicated within 35 working days.

At any point in the process, parents/carers have the right to refer any educational and care concern to an external agency, such as the **South Australian Ombudsman**. Further information is available at www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au or ☎ 1800 182 150

The Department for Education and Child Development defines –

- a **concern** as an issue of interest [because of its importance and effect] which is raised informally in order to improve or change a situation.
- a **complaint** as an expression of grievance or resentment where the parent/carer is seeking redress or justice.

A parent is entitled to a support person such as a friend, colleague or person provided through an appropriate support agency, as long as they do not receive a fee for service.

Where a person employs a third party [eg legal representation] in relation to their complaint, the complaint must be referred to the Department's Legislation and Legal Services Unit for action.

Confidentiality should be adhered to throughout the complaint resolution process ie only discussed with those directly involved in the resolution process. This helps to protect the rights of everyone and limits damage to any existing trust.

Parents/carers can expect that their concern or complaint will be responded to in a courteous, respectful and timely manner and that staff members will work in partnership with them to resolve their concern or complaint.

In return, staff members ask that parents/carers are respectful, co-operative and courteous to them and that they are realistic and reasonable about what course of action is required to resolve their concern or complaint.

Often, grievances arise from misunderstandings, misinformation or lack of information and can be resolved through open and clear communication and shared problem solving.

Concerns and grievances that are resolved successfully create a stronger and more supportive learning community.

Successful outcomes start with constructive beginnings –

- Raise the concern or complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen.
- Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint.
- Plan what you want to say before the meeting; come with some notes so that you cover all the points that you want to raise.
- Speak honestly, clearly and calmly.
- Listen openly to the responses received.
- Be willing to compromise.
- Aim to arrive at a realistic and mutually acceptable resolution ie win / win.

Seaview Downs Primary School

Grievance Procedures



**At Seaview Downs Primary School,
we understand that conflict can occur,
and value open, positive communication
to achieve mutually agreeable resolution.**

Address: 26 – 44 Ross Street, Seaview Downs 5049

Phone: 8298 1327

Fax: 8298 3155

Email: principal@seaviewdps.sa.edu.au