



# Complaints Policy

This is an extract from the [complaint management policy \(PDF 263KB\)](#) that gives an overview of information with information added specific to Ardtornish Children's Centre. Staff must review the full version of the complaint management policy before making a decision or action.

## Purpose

At the Ardtornish Children's Centre we believe parents are partners in the education of children. Regular two-way communication between parents/carers and the Centre is essential in helping children achieve their potential.

We recognise that sometimes things go wrong, and you may feel that your expectations are not being met. If you have an unresolved complaint or would like to provide feedback, we would like to hear from you. It's important to work together, talk, listen and find solutions in a courteous and respectful manner, so we can improve our services.

The Department for Education (department) promotes and values feedback and works to manage complaints in order to improve performance, systems and service delivery. The department is committed to resolving complaints and providing an accessible, transparent and fair process to everyone.

All complaints will be taken seriously. When complaints are received, they will be assessed, prioritised, documented and recorded. Resolution will occur at a local level (with the original decision maker or educator) wherever possible and as quickly as possible. Most complaints are resolved quickly, but some complex matters may take more time and if this is the case, we will advise you.

## What is a complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the department relating to services, products, employees or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is expected.

It's important that the person making the complaint can talk directly to the decision maker if they are not satisfied with a decision. The staff member will make themselves available by phone or arrange a meeting time to talk about the decision and to hear the concerns.

## Types of concerns and complaints

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

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



Your complaint or feedback may be about:

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

Complaints and feedback may be about something we have to do because of state or federal law. In those cases, we will talk to you and help you understand the requirements and why they exist.

## How can I make a complaint?

The best and usually quickest way to resolve a complaint is by raising it at the school or preschool.

Find out more on the department's website:

- [complaints about a school or preschool](#)
- [raising a complaint with the department \(PDF 232KB\)](#) – sets out step-by-step process
- [tips to make a complaint.](#)

The department has a 3-level complaint management process.

## Steps for raising your complaint



### Level 1 – school or preschool

If a person is not happy with a decision made or action taken by a school or preschool they should first contact the original decision maker or educator involved to discuss the matter and raise their concerns directly. This might be a teacher, year level coordinator, deputy principal, principal or preschool director.

Talk to the teacher or director as soon as possible. You may prefer to call or email to organise a mutually convenient time to meet a staff member rather than address the concern by phone or in writing.



Following a complaint, our staff will:

- Listen to the complaint
- Record what you say
- Identify actions to resolve the concern
- Let you know what will or has been done
- Get back to you to see how things are going
- If appropriate, refer the matter to the Centre director

If you feel your concern has not been resolved following discussions with the teacher, you should contact the Centre director. The Centre director will:

- acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as reasonably possible
- listen to the you
- provide support to you if necessary while the complaint is being considered
- investigate, consider and determine the most appropriate way to resolve the issue fairly and promptly
- consider relevant legislation, Departmental policy and guidelines, preschool procedures
- inform you if there is a delay in the process
- ensure your complaint and the outcome is documented
- ensure that the outcome of the process is communicated to you.

Please note: Interpreters and Aboriginal Education Coordinators are available to assist parents in communicating with us. Please contact the Felixstow Education Office (8366 8800) for assistance.

All persons in the Ardtornish Children's Centre community including children, parents, staff and volunteers have the right to be treated with respect and courtesy in accordance with the Centre's values. Individual complaints will be assessed objectively and without bias using principles of natural justice. The rights and responsibilities of all parties will be considered and balanced in attempting to find a mutually acceptable outcome to complaints. The confidentiality of all parties will be maintained wherever possible.

Approaches that may be used to resolve a parent complaint include:

- an acknowledgement that the complaint is valid and is worthy of investigation (overall or in part)
- identification of areas of agreement between the parties involved
- opportunities for all the parties involved to express their concerns, explain their point of view and clarify any misunderstandings
- an opportunity for an apology where appropriate
- recognition that the situation presents an opportunity for changes or alternate arrangements to be made to resolve the complaint



- discussion with the parties about the steps that will be taken to ensure that the event complained about will not reoccur
- an undertaking to review school policy, procedures or practices.

## Level 2 – central complaint resolution

If a person is not satisfied that their complaint has been addressed at the school or preschool level, including the principal or preschool director (or delegate), they can contact the Customer Feedback Team.

The role of Customer Feedback is to give advice and support about the issues behind a complaint and to confirm if departmental policy and procedure has been followed. Customer Feedback liaise with schools and preschools to help all parties to explore appropriate options for resolution.

A complaint or feedback can be lodged to Customer Feedback by using the [online submit a complaint form](#) or by phone (free call) 1800 677 435.

## Level 3 – external resolution

If all avenues to resolve the complaint by the department have been exhausted and the matter remains unresolved, a review or advice can be sought through the [Ombudsman SA](#) (OSA). The OSA is an independent body that investigates complaints about SA government. Contact the OSA on (08) 8226 8699. The circumstances of the complaint will influence whether the option of an external review is available.

## Unreasonable conduct

Staff safety and wellbeing is vital when dealing with unreasonable conduct at a school or preschool. There's a need to balance the right for someone to make a complaint with the rights of staff safety and respect, and the rights of others to equal time and resources.

There are a number of actions that can be taken by the school or preschool if a person making a complaint is unreasonable.

Unreasonable may include:

- constant phone calls, visits or emails to staff
- swearing, yelling, intimidation or offensive remarks
- making demands to staff on how the complaint should be managed.

Depending on the severity and frequency of the behaviours, actions can range from changing or limiting access to staff, students and school premises through to involving police. You can find out more about unreasonable conduct when making a complaint in appendix 4 of the [complaint management policy \(PDF 263KB\)](#).



## Our commitment

We know that when we can work together, things can be better. We are committed to a resolution; we have experience in getting things right and we want the opportunity to resolve issues in a fair and timely manner. Be assured, we take customer feedback and complaints seriously.

## Supporting information

Please see Behaviour, Interaction and Guidance Code

### Approvals

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Approved by: Heather Fuss | Director, Ardtornish Children's Centre

Approved by: Governing Council, Ardtornish Children's Centre

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(List the revision record in order of most recent updates at the top)

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Approved by: | Director, Ardtornish Children's Centre

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