



Grievances and Complaints Resolution Policy Saint Spyridon College

Saint Spyridon College staff support the *Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector (2015)* as the basis for all professional and personal interactions within the workplace and school community.

Saint Spyridon College supports the right of any member of the school community who believes our school policies are not being supported or enforced appropriately to have their grievances and/or complaints addressed.

The *Complaint Resolution for Employees Policy (2007)* aims to provide fair and consistent treatment to employees involved in complaint resolution and to achieve successful resolution at the local level wherever possible.

This process is specifically supported by the following DECD documents;

- *Complaint Resolution for Employees (Human Resources Policy Series HR 17) (July 2007)*
- *DECS Complaint Resolution for Employees: Procedure (2007)*
- *Complaint Resolution for Employees – Supporting Information Appendix E (2007)*
- *Guide to Resolving Grievances and Complaints for DECS Employees (2007)*

The parent complaints policy and procedures provides parents and staff with an overarching policy framework, supported by detailed procedural information, for managing concerns and complaints made by parents of children and young people attending DECD preschools and schools.

FOR EMPLOYEES

What is a grievance?

‘Grievances are often the result of unresolved issues, problems, or conflicts that have been avoided or not addressed to the satisfaction of those involved. Examples include a person:

- feeling they have been unfairly treated by others;
- being excluded or experiencing discrimination;
- being the butt of a colleague’s continual jokes and/or taunted in a way that they find offensive;
- fearing that decisions or processes in their group are unethical, or even illegal;
- feeling afraid to complain about something because they fear the consequences from another person;
- feeling that a decision that directly affects them does not take into consideration all of the facts, and that their issues or concerns haven’t been heard.’ (*Guide to Resolving Grievances and Complaints for DECS Employees, 2007, page 2*)

What is a complaint?

‘A complaint is a notice to DECS that an employee is protesting against what she/he perceives to be an inappropriate, unfair or offensive act against her/him by another employee, and that intervention by DECS is requested or necessary. Formalising a protest against someone in this way is a serious step.’ (*Guide to Resolving Grievances and Complaints for DECS Employees, 2007, page 6*)

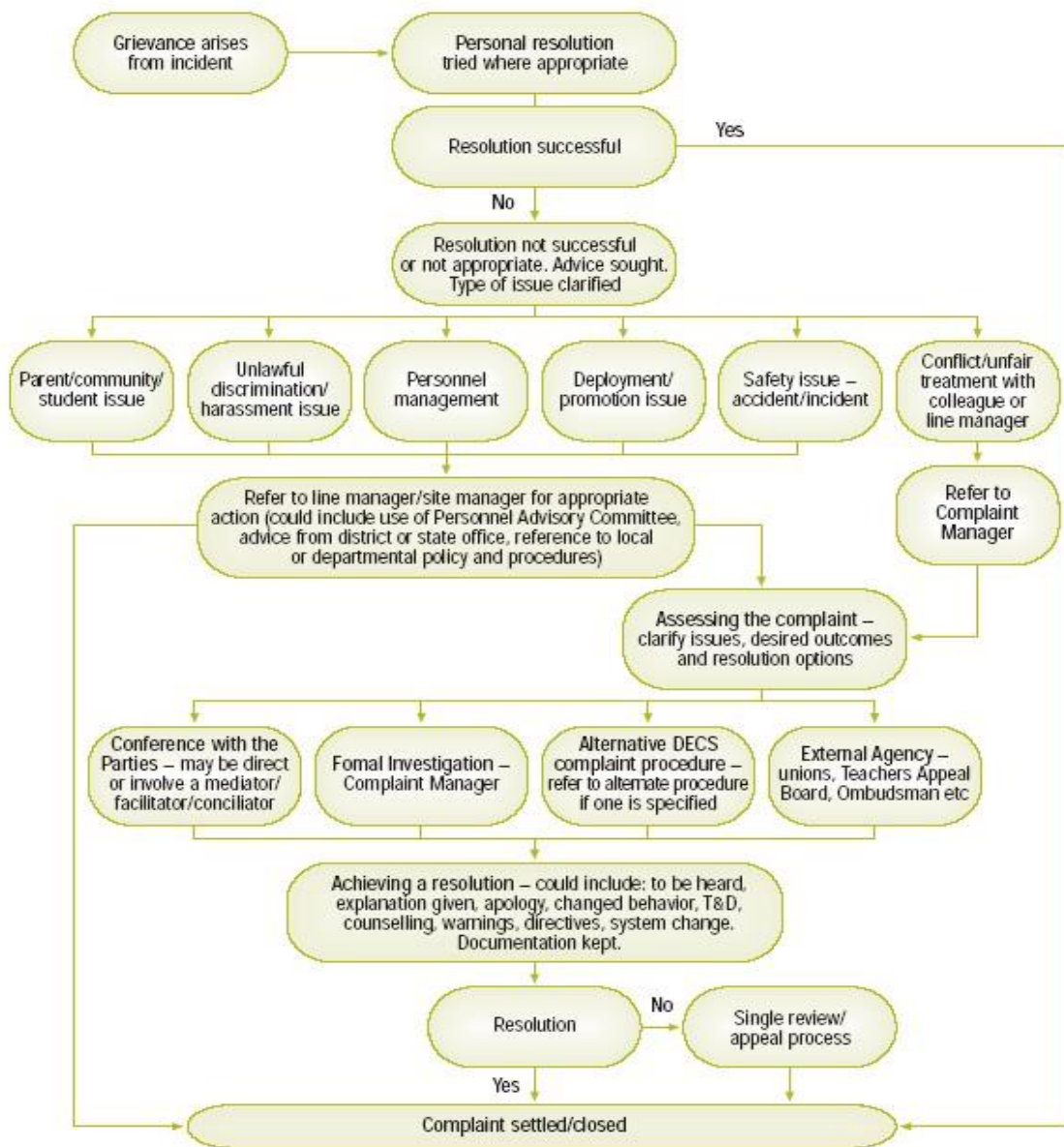
What does the DECD policy say about dealing with grievances raised by employees?

‘In the first instance, resolution of issues through personal actions at the local level is encouraged. Where employees feel that an action is unreasonable, unfair or has an unduly negative impact on an individual or group, they should take up their concerns directly with the people involved where possible. Early action at this level generally provides the best opportunity for positive resolution.’
 (Guide to Resolving Grievances and Complaints for DECS Employees, 2007, page 2)

DECS RESOLUTION PROCESS FOR EMPLOYEES:

Complaint Resolution Flowchart

(Must be used in conjunction with full Complaint Procedure)



Reference: DECS Complaint Resolution for Employees Procedure (2007) Appendix A, page 19

Accessing Assistance

Who you decide to contact for help in personally dealing with a grievance, conflict situation or complaint will depend on your particular needs. You may choose to seek professional help or turn to a colleague, mentor or friend.

The following list provides useful contacts to assist you:

Refer to DECD Documents:

- *DECS Complaint Resolution for Employees Policy and Procedure (2007)*
- *Guide to Resolving Grievances and Complaints for DECS Employees*
- *Complaint Quick Reference Guide.*

Web reference: http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/policy/pages/OSPP/policy_index

Ethical Standards and Merit Protection Unit on 8226 1342 for:

- information about the DECD Complaint Resolution for Employees Policy & Procedure
- confidential advice about grievance resolution at the local level
- information and advice about the complaint resolution process
- referral to appropriate DECS services.

Health and Safety Services:

Organisational Health Consultants for mediation, conciliation, counselling and coaching
Employee Assist Program (EAP) for:

- counselling and advice
- Manager Assist Program.

For further information phone 8226 1440 or go to: <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/hr/>

Australian Education Union (AEU) Information Unit

Phone: 8272 1399 for referral to the appropriate AEU officer.

Public Service Association (PSA) members' rights hotline

Phone: 8205 3227 for initial advice and referral to the appropriate PSA officer.

FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

'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.' (*Parent complaint policy: A guide to raising a concern or complain*, DECD, 2012, page 1)

Definitions

What is a concern?

A concern is an issue of interest (because of its importance and effect) which is raised informally in order to improve or change a situation.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of grievance or resentment where the parent is seeking redress or justice.

Confidentiality

Observing confidentiality helps to protect the rights of everyone by limiting knowledge of the details of the complaint to those who will work together for a resolution. Complaints will be considered in a confidential, timely and impartial manner and in accordance with due process and principles of natural justice.

Complaint Resolution Stages for Parents

*** Please note that neither the Minister for Education nor the Department for Education have any power to directly intervene in any complaints relating to the operations of non-government schools. They have no power or authority over the day to day operation of independent schools and will not receive or consider any complaint.*

Stage 1: Talk to the school

- raise the concern with the class teacher
- if the concern is about a teacher talk to the Principal (phone: 8272 1655)
- the Principal may request a meeting to discuss the concern and resolution possibilities
- Saint Spyridon College staff will aim to resolve parent concerns within 15 working days.

Stage 2: Contact the regional office

- if the complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily, contact the Southern Adelaide Regional Office (phone: 8207 3700)
- if the complaint involves the Principal contact the Southern Adelaide Regional Office (phone: 8207 3700)
- the regional office will aim to resolve the concern or complaint within 20 working days.

Stage 3: Parent Complaint Unit

- parents may contact the Parent Complaint Unit's hotline (phone: 1800 677 435) to discuss their concern or complaint or to seek advice
- the Parent Complaint Unit will objectively review complaints that have not been resolved at the school or regional level
- in most cases a decision will be disseminated within 35 working days.

Recording of Complaints

Saint Spyridon College Staff will follow the procedures outlined in the *Parent concerns and complaints procedure: Solving concerns in public education schools and preschools* (DECD, March 2012 Section 8.4).

Recorded information will include;

- the contact details of the parent
- the way the complaint was communicated to the school (verbally, over the phone, email, letter...)
- the nature of the complaint and the requested remedy
- the staff member responsible for managing the complaint
- practices or procedures relevant to the complaint
- actions taken, time taken and outcome
- recommendations for improvement to school policies, procedures or practices
- potential improvements that could be made to school policy, procedures or practices that would resolve the parent's complaint and prevent a recurrence of similar complaints.

Withdrawal of a complaint

A parent may withdraw a complaint at any stage of the resolution process without prejudice. If a complaint is withdrawn, the matter will be considered finalised, unless the School at its discretion is required to continue to address a matter raised.

Other options

Parents also have the right to refer any educational and care concern to an external agency, such as the South Australian Ombudsman. (www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au)

REFERENCES:

Complaint Resolution for Employees (Human Resources Policy Series HR 17) DECS 2007
<http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ComplaintResolutionforEmp.pdf>

DECS Complaint Resolution for Employees: Procedure (DECS, 2007)
http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/hrstaff/files/links/DECS_COMPLAINT_RESOLUTION.pdf

Guide to Resolving Grievances and Complaints for DECS Employees (DECS, 2007)
http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/hrstaff/files/links/GUIDE_TO_RESOLVING_GRIEVAN.pdf

Parent Concerns and Complaints Policy: Solving concerns in public education schools and preschools (DECD 2012)
<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ParentConcernsandComplain.pdf>

Parent guide to raising a concern or complaint: Solving concerns in public education schools and preschools (DECD Brochure 2012)
<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ParentComplaintBrochure.pdf>

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A: Concern, Grievance or Complaint Flowchart

Document No. 1: June 2017

To be reviewed in 2019 or earlier if needed

Saint Spyridon College
Concern, Grievance or Complaint Flowchart

At Saint Spyridon College we support the right of any member of the school community to have issues and concerns addressed.

The usual procedure to be followed in addressing a grievance is, in the first instance, to approach the person with whom you have the grievance, concern or complaint. However, if you feel you are unable to do this, the following is a set of guidelines you may wish to consider.

When raising a concern staff, parents and learners are expected to;

- treat each other with respect, courtesy and maintain confidentiality
- raise the concern as soon as possible; provide complete and factual information
- act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- have realistic and reasonable expectations about the course of action required to resolve the concern.

Learners	Parents	Staff
<p>The <i>Saint Spyridon College Behaviour Support Policy</i> outlines how staff and families work together to create supportive learning environments that address safety and wellbeing for all Saint Spyridon College learners and staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrange a time to speak to the person concerned • let the person know what you consider to be your concern • if the grievance is not addressed let the person know you will be speaking to someone else • arrange a time to speak to someone in the school leadership team, e.g. Principal (phone: 8272 1655) who will aim to resolve the concern within 15 working days • if the complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily contact the Southern Adelaide Regional Office (phone: 8207 3700) who will aim to resolve the concern within 20 working days • If you are still dissatisfied you may wish to direct concerns to the DECD Parent Complaint Unit 1800 677 435. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrange a time to speak to the person concerned • if the grievance is not addressed speak to your line manager or trusted colleague and ask for their support in addressing the grievance by speaking to the person involved • at this stage you may also wish to speak to the OHS&W representative who may guide you to the access the Employee Assistant Program (EAP) • if the grievance has still not been resolved speak to someone in the leadership team. • If you are still dissatisfied approach the Assistant Regional Director who will aim to assist you to resolve the situation (phone: 8207 3700)