

# MAKING A COMPLAINT

IN TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS



Schools and CFLCs are constantly communicating with parents, guardians, carers, families, learners, and the wider community. Sometimes misunderstandings or dissatisfaction can arise at schools or CFLCs. Complaints can provide the opportunity to reflect, learn, improve and build positive relationships, which most importantly support students to have a positive learning and schooling experience.

## What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, in words or writing, from a person who has been directly affected by an action, decision, or service. It can also be based on a lack of decision, action, or service.

## How do we manage complaints?

We are committed to responding to complaints in an accountable, transparent, quick, respectful, and fair way. We will acknowledge your complaint in three working days (excluding school holidays).

Everyone involved should aim to resolve complaints early and with the learner's education as the focus.

There is a complaints process to follow. Some complaints are not part of the Department of Education (DoE) [Enquiries and Complaints Policy](#). Some examples include:

- Concerns about [out of area enrolments](#) which have a separate review process.
- Incidents outside of school.
- [Student transport](#).
- A complaint raised by someone who is not directly involved in the incident.

For the complete list of complaints that are not part of the DoE's Enquiries and Complaints Policy please refer to the [Excluded Complaints Factsheet](#).

The [Enquiries and Complaints Policy](#) provides further information about how DoE manages complaints.

## How to make a complaint

There is a three step approach to making a complaint:

### I. Early Resolution

It is important to resolve complaints as early as possible. The best place to raise an issue or concern is at the point where the problem first arose, by contacting the [school](#) or [CFLC](#).

In the first instance, ask to speak to the teacher or a senior staff member. If the matter is unresolved, arrange a time to talk to the Principal.

You can also lodge a complaint with a school or CFLC through the online [Complaint Form-Early Resolution](#).

Remember to give the school or CFLC time to respond. Some matters can be complex and take longer to consider.





If you contact another area of DoE before you speak to your school or CFLC, you will be asked to speak to the school or CFLC first.

## 2. Internal Review

If you have raised the complaint at the school or CFLC and are unhappy with the process followed or the decision made, you can contact Learning Services. You can complete a request for an Internal Review with Learning Services through the online [Internal Review Form](#), or by phoning Learning Services Northern Region on (03) 6777 2440 or Learning Services Southern Region (03) 6165 6466.

## External Review

If you remain dissatisfied after completion of the Internal Review, you can seek an External Review through [Ombudsman Tasmania](#) (phone: 1800 001170).

## What happens after I make my complaint?

We aim to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible. This can be affected by the complexity and timing of your complaint and the resolution you want.

As a guide:

- A complaint made at a school or CFLC level can take up to 45 working days (excluding school holidays) to complete.
- The Internal Review process can take up to 90 working days (excluding school holidays) to complete. Internal Review Forms need to be submitted within 28 days of receiving a complaint outcome from the school or CFLC.

A resolution may or may not satisfy everyone. Resolutions can include:

- an explanation
- reaching a compromise
- changing a decision or action
- speeding up a decision.

We will contact you about the outcome of your complaint and any review options available to you.

For privacy reasons, we cannot give you information about other people involved in your complaint.

## Important things to remember when making a complaint

- Keep learners' educational needs as the focus.
- Include all facts and evidence to support your complaint. Identify in detail the reason for the complaint and the resolution you want.
- If the complaint is complex, it can take more time to deal with and resolve.
- Make complaints in good faith and bring all parties together to find a resolution.
- Don't include harmful/untrue comments.
- Don't make a complaint to annoy someone
- Those involved in a complaint should cooperate with the complaint process. They should also be courteous and act with respect. Abusive language or behaviour is not acceptable and will not help resolve the issue. See the [Enquiry and Complaint Behaviour Expectations](#).

## Useful resources

- [Enquiries and Complaints Policy](#)
- [Department of Education Website Contacts](#)
- [Complaint Form-Early Resolution](#)
- [Internal Review Form](#)
- [Respectful School Visitor and Volunteer Behaviour Procedure](#)
- [Enquiry and Complaint Behaviour Expectations](#)
- [Excluded Complaints Factsheet](#)
- [Ombudsman Tasmania](#)

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