

Raising a complaint with the department

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 want 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.

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, preschool, or corporate office has:

- Done something incorrect.
- 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 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. We will talk to you and help you understand the requirements and why they exist.

Where to get help to make a complaint

[Support for making a complaint](#) – if you have special needs or require additional assistance in making a complaint. Please use link above.

[Tips to make a complaint or give feedback to the department.](#)



Making a complaint

Step 1 – frontline complaint handling and early resolution

Talk to the school, preschool, area 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. In a school setting this might be a Teacher or a year level coordinator. In a corporate office it might be an officer or Team Leader.

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 preschool director in a school setting or a manager or director in a corporate office. Ask to make a time to contact them to discuss your concerns. You may want to put your concerns in an email. [Find the school or preschool contact details](#).

Most complaints are resolved quickly, but some complex matters may take more time. We will advise you if this is the case.

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 our Customer Feedback Unit (CFU).

Contact the CFU:

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

We can help you in relation to preschool and school complaints by:

- giving advice about the issues behind the complaint
- liaising with schools and preschools 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. Refer to [internal and external reviews for school or preschool complaints](#) for more information.

We can support you in relation to corporate office complaints by:

- connecting you to the correct person or area to address your complaint
- referring your matter if unable to be resolved, to the relevant Manager or Executive.

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.

External agency contact:

Ombudsman SA (OSA)

Free call: 1800 182 150

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.sa.gov.au

Depending on the nature of the matter, the OSA will usually ask if you have taken your complaint to the school, preschool or the CFU before approaching the Ombudsman.



Overview: Steps for raising your complaint



After You Make a Complaint

After submitting your complaint, you may be:

- Sent a message to let you know your complaint has been received.
- Given a reason for actions taken or decisions made.
- Given a chance to explain your point of view and hear the school's view.
- Told the next steps in the department's complaint process.
- Given information about the policy, procedure, or guideline that relates to your complaint.

Most complaints can be resolved quickly, but complex matters may take more time. We will let you know if this is the case.

Outcome of the Complaint

After you receive a final outcome:

- The issue might be confirmed, or you might receive information showing why it can't be proven.
- A decision, process, or procedure might be reviewed, or you might get more information about why it can't be changed (for example, due to law).
- It might be confirmed that the matter was managed properly or could have been handled better.
- You may receive an apology.

Requesting a Review

You can seek a formal review if you're not satisfied that your complaint has been addressed or you have identified an error in the assessment. You must have already:

- Followed the complaint steps on this page.
- Allowed enough time for Customer Feedback to follow up on your complaint.
- Exhausted all avenues and options to resolve your concerns.
- Provided all information and evidence requested.



See the internal and external review process for school or preschool complaints in the [complaint management policy](#) (appendix 3) for details.

Treatment and Behaviour During the Process

Receiving Fair Treatment

You will not be discriminated against if you make a complaint.

All department staff are bound by the Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector. This requires that all staff act impartially, fairly, and equitably.

Avoiding Unreasonable Conduct

We understand you might feel frustrated or upset when you make a complaint. However, this is not an excuse for unreasonable conduct.

If you start behaving unreasonably, we will take steps to manage this.

Unreasonable conduct includes:

- Constant phone calls, visits, or emails after you have received a final response to a complaint.
- Threats, harassment, demands, yelling, or insults to staff.

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