Freeling P-6 School
PARENT COMPLAINT POLICY

PURPOSE

Freeling Primary School is committed to ensuring the delivery of high quality education and care to all students. Working in partnership with parents to resolve any concerns and complaints that they may have about their child's school, is a key part of how we deliver on this commitment.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear and transparent information to parents, the community and staff on how concerns and complaints will be managed and resolutions found.

OUR VALUES

Respect - We show respect by speaking and acting with courtesy. We treat others with dignity and honour the rules of our family, school and nation. Respect yourself, and others will respect you.

Responsibility - Being responsible means others can trust you to do things with excellence. When you make a mistake, you offer amends instead of excuses. Responsibility is the ability to respond ably and to make responsible choices.

Trust - Trust is having faith in someone or something. It is a positive attitude about life. You are confident that the right thing will happen without trying to control it or make it happen. Even when difficult things happen, trust helps us to find the gift or lesson in it.

Honesty - Honesty is being truthful and sincere. It is important because it builds trust. When people are honest, they can be relied on not to lie, cheat or steal. Being honest means that you accept yourself as you are. When you are open and trustworthy, others can believe in you.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE COMPLAINT

So that we can all work together to get the best outcome for your child, there are some simple steps to keep in mind if you have a complaint about public education and care.

The process has 4 stages, with the child's school being the first point of contact for parents followed by the regional office and then the Customer Feedback Unit if the complaint cannot be resolved at the local level.



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STAGE 1 – TALK TO THE TEACHER or STAFF MEMBER INVOLVED

School staff

Parents are, in the first instance, to raise any concerns or complaints in relation to their child's education with their child's teacher.

It is expected that teachers:

- Treat all parties with respect, courtesy and maintain confidentiality. In any situation staff will maintain confidentiality for all parties concerned. Specific details of outcomes and/or consequences involving the other party cannot be shared due to privacy.
- Make a time available as soon as reasonably possible (ie within 5 working days), to discuss with the parent (face-to-face, by phone) their complaint.
- Listen to the parent
- Identify and discuss with the parent possible courses of action that could be taken to resolve their complaint and timeframe within which this will occur.
- Follow up with the parent(s) after a reasonable period of time has elapsed for any changes to take effect to ensure that the parent is satisfied with the outcome.
- Keep a written record of the complaint, its progress and outcomes, which will be stored in confidential file.
- If appropriate, refer the complaint to the relevant member of the leadership team.

Parents

It is expected that when making a complaint parents:

- Treat other parties with respect and courtesy
- Maintain confidentiality and refrain from posting on social media ie Facebook
- Raise the concern or complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen
- Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
- Ask for assistance or further information as needed
- Act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- Have realistic and reasonable expectations about what course of action is required to resolve the concern or complaint.

If a parent is not satisfied with the outcome of this stage of the complaint management procedure, or decides that it is more appropriate to discuss their complaint with a member of the leadership team (coordinator, deputy principal, principal), then the parent is to contact the school to make time to meet with the appropriate leader.

STAGE 2 – CONTACT THE LEADERSHIP TEAM AT SCHOOL

Leadership team

It is expected that the leadership team:

- Treat all parties with respect, courtesy and maintain confidentiality. In any situation staff will maintain confidentiality for all parties concerned. Specific details of outcomes and/or consequences involving the other party cannot be shared due to privacy.
- Whenever possible, make every reasonable effort to resolve the concerns or complaints at the school level in a timely and effective manner.
- Ensure when parents lodge a complaint they are made aware of the school's procedure for responding to complaints, the department's dedicated parent support free call number (1800 677

435) and how to access other information about the parent complaint process through the department's website.
- Advise all relevant parties of the complaint
- Assess the complaint and its management to date
- Investigate, consider and determine the most appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint in a fair and prompt manner, including negotiation between the parties and whether mediation services are required
- Document the complaint process and outcome, which will be stored in a confidential file
- Communicate the outcome to all parties involved verbally, and if appropriate, in writing within 15 working days

If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved by the school – or if the principal is the subject of your complaint – you may choose to contact your regional office for help. The regional office will review your complaint. The regional office will aim to resolve your concern or complaint within 20 working days. The Gawler Education office is located in Phoenix Plaza Gawler, Ph: 85250900

STAGE 3 – CUSTOMER FEEDBACK UNIT

This unit has a dual function:
• To provide advice and support to parents about their concern or complaint
• To objectively review complaints that have not been resolved at the school or regional level.

Advice and support
You can contact the unit's hotline (1800 677 435) at any time to discuss your concern or complaint or to seek advice about solving school problems. Staff will follow up with you at a later stage to check about progress.
Impartial review

- If the complaint has not been able to be resolved by the school and regional office, the unit will assess your complaint and decide what action is needed. Staff will discuss what has been done with your complaint, and when you can expect to hear about the outcome. The department's Head of Schools or the Head of Early Childhood Development and the Chief Executive's office will be advised by the Customer Feedback Unit of the outcome of the review. One of these senior leaders will make a decision about your complaint. You can expect that you will hear of a decision within 35 working days in most cases. Make a complaint online: Feedback and complaints form

HELP WITH CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

All department staff – teachers, principals, preschool directors, regional and Central Office staff – will help you to agree on a plan of action and a timeframe.
These people will help:
• explain and guide you through the resolution process
• gather information about policies and procedures and explain them to you
• clarify the problem and help you make your complaint
• follow up on the progress or outcome of your complaint.

We all want the best outcome for you and your child. You can also call the Customer Feedback Unit hotline at any stage on 1800 677 435 for information, advice and support. You can also make a complaint online: Feedback and complaints form

STAGE 4 - OMBUDSMAN

Your complaint may require an independent review by an external agency. This will be determined by the circumstances of the complaint. You also have the right to refer any educational and care concern to an external agency, such as the South Australian Ombudsman.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Department of Education's policies (outlined above), and in consultation with Freeling Primary School Staff and Governing Council. This policy has been approved by the Governing Council and will be reviewed every three years.



This policy was last ratified by Governing Council in:	2026	Review 2029

Government of South Australia
Department for Education