

POLICY

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT (SCHOOLS)

Responsibility of:	School Support Services	FILE2014/427
Effective Date:	December 2016	EDOC2016/49293
Next Review Date:	December 2020	Version Number: 3
Target Audience:	Whole school community/corporate staff	

This document should be read in conjunction with the **Complaints Management for Schools guidelines** and the **Privacy Complaints policy**.

1. POLICY

The department will manage complaints in accordance with this policy, and the Complaints Management for Schools guidelines, to ensure a fair process, and appropriate and timely resolution. There are exceptions and these are listed in the Scope section below.

Complaints may be made in regard to any aspect of service:

- provided by the department, including practices, policies, guidelines or procedures, and the conduct or decisions of staff
- that is regulated by the department, including legislative compliance with approval to operate, and the provision of services for children.

In managing complaints, the principles of procedural fairness must apply to all processes, requiring that:

- if a complaint is against a person, the person is informed of the allegations against them, has an opportunity to be given a fair hearing before a decision is made, and is given the opportunity to consider the information that the decision is based upon
- decision makers are fair and impartial and address complaints in a timely manner
- the decision must not be pre-determined and must be objective, measured, and based on all the information gathered from as many sources as possible.

All business areas of the department must create and maintain appropriate records of complaints and actions taken in response to complaints. Staff must manage complaint records in accordance with the internal records management guidelines.

2. BUSINESS NEED

The department is committed to improving its services. A key element of service improvement is prompt resolution of complaints in relation to services, or actions taken by employees. This policy and supporting guidelines assist with that goal.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to Northern Territory Government schools.

This policy does not apply to complaints relating to:

- breaches of privacy. Privacy complaints are to be handled in accordance with the Privacy Complaints policy and guidelines found [here](#)
- approved early childhood education and care services. Information regarding the management of early childhood complaints can be found [here](#)
- vocational education and training (VET) quality and regulation, which are to be referred to the [Australian Skills Quality Authority](#)
- higher education, which are to be referred to the [Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency \(TEQSA\)](#)
- non-government schools, which are to be referred to the relevant non-government provider
- departmental employees in relation to issues affecting them in the course of their employment. Departmental staff acting in an official capacity may raise their concerns with the person, workplace manager or seek advice from their Human Resources Consultant on how best to manage concerns or actions of another employee. Employees also have recourse under the [Public Sector Employment and Management Act](#) to the grievance provisions in section 59.

4. DEFINITIONS

Approved early childhood education and care services refer to long day care services, family day care services, outside school hours care services, preschool programs and early childhood programs.

Complaint is the expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the service provided, or not provided or regulated by the department. It may include the behaviour or decisions of staff, or practices, policies or procedures. A complaint must contain sufficient detail to enable it to be recorded and addressed.

Workplace manager refers to the immediate supervisor of a workplace.

5. RELATED POLICY, LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Departmental	Bullying, Harassment and Violence Policy Grievance Management Policy (link for staff only)
Northern Territory	Care and Protection of Children Act and Regulations Education Act and Regulations Information Act and Regulations Public Sector Employment and Management Act and Regulations Anti-Discrimination Act and Regulations Ombudsman NT Effective Complaints Management Fact Sheets Records Management policy and guidelines.