



COMPLAINTS - INFORMATION FOR PARENTS & COMMUNITY

Employees of the Department of Education are responsible for managing the resolution of enquiries, concerns, complaints and disputes lodged by students, parents, and members of the community, employees of government and non-government agencies, including members of the Department in their private capacity.

Employees of the Department will make every effort to promptly resolve enquiries, concerns and complaints preferably at the local level where appropriate, in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness.

Principals, directors and line managers are responsible for establishing and maintaining processes for managing and reviewing enquiries, concerns and complaints that are appropriately managed at the local level.

The Executive Director, Professional Standards and Conduct is responsible for resolving complaints that cannot be resolved at a local level.

The Department of Education Complaints Policy is based on relevant government legislation and department policies. For further information go to the Department of Education Website and search Complaints.

What might your complaint be about?

A complaint may be made about the:

- Provision of education; or
- Conduct of any Department employee

What can you do if you have a problem?

- Seeking information as soon as possible can solve many problems. If you have any questions or concerns about a child's experience with the School of Special Educational Needs:Medical and Mental Health (SSEN:MMH), such as the work set or the assessment procedures, contact the SSEN:MMH coordinating teacher. The best way to do this is to contact SSEN:MMH directly.
- Interpreters and Aboriginal Officers are available to assist parents in communicating with their school. Please contact SSEN:MMH if you would like the assistance of an interpreter or an Aboriginal Officer. You can have a friend or adviser present during any discussion.
- Try to identify the issue clearly before going to the school. If there is more than one issue, list them to ensure that the extent of the issue is clear to the school. Talk with family and friends to clarify your issue. Writing down your issue may help.
- Decide whether the issue is a query, a concern or a complaint. This will help in finding a solution.
- Make an appointment to talk with the teacher. This can be arranged through the school office. If your concern is about the conduct of a staff member, you may prefer to discuss the matter with the School Principal or, if your complaint involves the Principal, the Director of Student Support Services.
- Try to stay calm, even if you don't feel it. Being calm will help to get your concerns across more clearly than if you are upset or angry. It may help to take someone with you to the appointment.

PROCEDURES FOR MAKING COMPLAINTS

At all stages, staff will work with you to establish an agreed plan of action and timeline.

School-level resolution

Stage 1: Discussion with staff member

Contact the SSEN:MMH teacher or other relevant staff member to discuss your complaint. This is best done by making an appointment through the SSEN:MMH office. The staff member will work with you to resolve the problem.

Stage 2: Review or investigation at the school level

If stage 1 is unsuccessful the SSEN:MMH Principal will work with you and the staff member to resolve the issue. You may wish to formalise your complaint. To do this, you may write to the SSEN:MMH Principal who will acknowledge the complaint with a written reply as soon as possible, even if a resolution is not available at this stage.

The principal will consider the issue and identify what action is to be taken and by when, and will clarify the process if a formal complaint is to proceed. The principal may seek the support of other Statewide Services or Central Office staff.

This action and timeline will be confirmed with you in writing.

You should be aware that when a complaint made in writing is received about the performance of an individual staff member, that staff member will receive documentation of the substance of the complaint.



Written complaints should be addressed to:

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
School of Special Educational Needs:Medical & Mental Health
Locked Bag 2010
Nedlands WA 6909
Phone: 08 6456 0383
Fax: 08 6456 2016

Email: SSENMMH@education.wa.edu.au

Central-level resolution

Stage 3: Contact Statewide Services

If resolution is not reached at the school level or, if the Principal is the subject of your complaint, contact the Director of Student Support Services for assistance in resolving the issue. This will involve an independent review of the situation and may include mediation.

The Department of Education
SSSD - Statewide Services
33 Giles Avenue
Padbury WA 6025
Phone: (08) 9402 6101

If you have difficulty expressing the complaint, please make a free call to 131450 for assistance with English as a Second Language (EALD).

Stage 4: Formal Complaints - reporting staff misconduct

In those exceptional circumstances where a complaint relates to the alleged improper conduct of a department employee, the complaint should be forwarded to:

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Executive Director, Professional Standards and Conduct
Department of Education
151 Royal Street
EAST PERTH WA 6004

How long does the process take?

The Department of Education aims to resolve complaints related to the delivery of educational services within 14 days. Complaints about the conduct of staff will generally take longer, particularly when a formal investigation is required.

Who can I contact to discuss the progress of my complaint?

You may contact the SSEN:MMH Principal or person nominated by the Principal to support your complaint any time during working hours. For central level complaints please contact Standards and Integrity Directorate.

Contact Information

The **Standards and Integrity Directorate** at the Department of Education offers general advice on matters related to staff conduct.

Standards and Integrity Directorate
151 Royal Street East Perth WA 6004
9264 4740 or 1800 655 985 (country areas)
complaints@education.wa.edu.au

The **Equal Opportunity Commission** offers advice about discrimination.

Equal Opportunity Commission
PO Box 7370 Cloisters Square Perth WA 6850
9216 3900 or 1800 198 149 (country area)
eoc@eoc.wa.gov.au
www.eoc.wa.gov.au