Complaints & Compliments Policy

Responsibilities and delegations
The Director-General of DEC and Managing Director of TAFE NSW, Senior Executives, Senior Officers, Principals, Managers and Supervisors are responsible for the effective management of suggestions, complaints and allegations.
All staff need to be aware of their responsibility to comply with the DEC Code of Conduct Procedures and act in a manner which promotes a productive and harmonious working environment.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements
All senior executives, senior officers, principals, managers and supervisors are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the operation of this policy within their area of responsibility.
All senior executives, senior officers, principals, managers and supervisors will comply with all mandatory reporting requirements detailed in the guidelines to this policy.

What can a complaint be about?
A complaint can be about any aspect of the service provided, or not provided, in any Department of Education and Communities site, the behaviour or decisions of staff, or practices, policies or procedures.

Who can make a complaint?
Any person can make a complaint, including a student, parent or caregiver, a community member who uses the services of the Department, any employee, contractor or volunteer in a location where Department services are provided. The guidelines do not impinge on the right of a union to lodge a dispute notification or raise an issue directly with the Department.

How can a complaint be made?
Ideally, most complaints should be resolved informally with the relevant employee or supervisor. However, should you feel that you must raise a concern formally, see Making a Complaint which includes an optional Complaint Form (https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/aboutus/epac/makingcomplaint/index.htm)

The Goulburn East Public School Principal will need to advise the parties involved about these guidelines and provide information on how to access the guidelines. The Goulburn East Public School Principal will include information about making a complaint in at least one school newsletter each year. See the Sample Advice for Newsletter listed below.

Sample advice for school newsletter

I extend a reminder to all that if at any time you find that you have a concern about anything to do with our school, you are encouraged to come to the school and tell someone so that your concern can be resolved. It is our aim to work with all of our school community to ensure that we do the very best we can to ensure a productive, safe and enjoyable experience for our students. However, should you feel that you must raise a concern formally, the NSW
Department of Education and Communities has procedures for ensuring that complaints are handled fairly. Information about how to lodge a complaint and a Complaint Form are available from the NSW Department of Education and Communities website. Further information is also available in the Department's Complaints Handling Guidelines which includes a guide to Lodging a Complaint.


Who can receive a complaint?
Any Department employee can receive a complaint. In general, the complaint should be made where the problem occurred (e.g. the school) unless there are concerns about the local principal, manager or supervisor, in which case the complaint should be made to the next supervisory level. It is appropriate, when receiving a complaint, to give consideration to Managing Complainants:


If unsure, the Queanbeyan District Office can be contacted and the relevant party notified.

PO box 1933,
Queanbeyan NSW, 2626
Phone – 02 6200 5000

What should be done when a complaint is received?
An employee who receives a complaint will need to determine, applying these guidelines, whether it is a matter that can be resolved informally or whether it should be referred to a supervisor, principal or manager.

Minor complaints should be resolved informally if possible and without delay. Any matter which cannot be resolved informally must be referred to a supervisor, principal or SED. Assistance in making this decision is available at the Quick Assessment Guide or in Assessing a complaint.


Complainants’ Expectations
A person making a complaint will have expectations as to how the complaint will be handled and may require assistance in making the complaint.

To manage complainant expectations, the recipient of the complaint should:

- explain the complaint handling process to the complainant
- if the matter is to be referred, explain why and to whom
- confirm with them that their complaint has been fully understood and ask them what outcome they are seeking
- outline the possible outcomes, including whether or not the outcome being sought is reasonable
- provide realistic timeframes for dealing with the matter
- ensure that any promises made are followed through.

At times, Principals will be confronted with complainants which are very challenging. See the related issue Dealing with Difficult Complainants.


This policy will be reviewed in line with DEC policy and memorandums.

Bede Darcey
Principal
Goulburn East Public School
May, 2012

Communicated to the P&C association 9.5.2012