

**GAWLER HIGH SCHOOL
PARENT COMPLAINT POLICY & PROCEDURE**

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

At Gawler High school we believe that the safety and educational wellbeing of our students is our first priority.

We will work in partnerships with parents/caregivers to resolve any concerns and complaints that they may have about their child's schooling.

We acknowledge that parents have the right to raise concerns and complaints about their child's school life and that they will be treated with respect and courtesy during the process.

We also believe that wherever possible, complaints should be resolved at the school level.

When staff work with parents/caregivers to resolve a complaint or concern they will follow a process that is founded on fairness, impartiality, accessibility, respect and responsiveness.

Parents/caregivers can expect that their concern or complaint will be responded to in a courteous, respectful and timely manner and considered on its merits and without prejudice arising from any previous contact that a parent/caregiver may have had with the school. Staff will work in partnership with them to resolve the concern or complaint.

In return we expect that parents be respectful, co operative and courteous to staff and that they will be realistic and reasonable about what course of action is required to resolve the concern or complaint.

Confidentiality will be adhered to throughout the complaint process.

At Gawler high school we will aim to resolve the concern or complaint ideally within 15 working days.

Definitions

For the purpose of the policy the following definitions mean:

Concern: an issue of interest which is raised informally in order to improve or change a situation.

Complaint: an expression of grievance or resentment where the parent is seeking redress or justice.

Complaints not covered by this policy:

This policy does not apply to matters where there are legislated requirements or existing policies and processes for appeal.

Examples:

- Appeals about student suspension and expulsion
- Staff disputes and grievances
- Mandatory reporting responsibilities
- Some health, safety and welfare issues.

This policy does not apply when a parent has employed a third party (legal representation) in relation to the complaint. However parents/caregivers are entitled to support from a person such as a friend, colleague or a person provided through an appropriate support agency.

Complaint procedure:**Raise the concern:**

1. Contact the appropriate person at the school (in writing, by phone or make an appointment to speak in person.) Front office Phone Number: 85222044

If parents do not know who they should speak with regarding the concern/complaint the front office staff will be able to assist in referring them to the appropriate person. Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint.

2. The appropriate person (class teacher, counsellor, year level manager or member of the leadership team) will contact the parent within 5 working days to work with the parent to consider the most effective way of resolving the concern or complaint based on the information provided. Parents/caregivers will be kept informed of the progress and the outcome of the complaint.

3. If the parent/caregiver is not satisfied after speaking with the school contact person they may choose to speak with the Principal. The Principal will acknowledge the complaint as soon as reasonably possible (within 5 working days) and communicate the outcome to all parties within 15 working days. If a resolution is still not reached - the complaint can be referred to the Regional Office on 85220900

4. The parent/caregiver may at any time contact the Parent Complaint Unit hotline on 1800 677 435 to discuss their concern or complaint or to seek advice.

5. If a complaint cannot be resolved at the School or Regional Level then the Parent Complaint Unit will be asked to assess the complaint and decide what action is needed.

Responsibility of school staff:

On receiving a complaint it is expected that teachers, Counsellors, Year Level Managers/Leadership will:

- Make a time available as soon as is reasonably possible (within 5 working days) to discuss with the parent/caregiver (face to face, by phone) their complaint.
- Listen to the parent
- Keep open communication between the parent and the school re the progress of the complaint.
- Consider relevant legislation, policy and guidelines and school procedures and/or seek advice/support.
- Identify and discuss with the parent possible courses of action that could be taken to resolve their complaint and the timeframe within which this will occur.
- Follow up with parent after a reasonable period of time has elapsed for any changes to take affect to ensure that the parent is satisfied with the outcome.
- If appropriate keep a written record of the complaint, its progress and outcomes.
- If appropriate, refer the complaint in line with the school's complaint management procedure.

The staff member who receives the initial complaint is to advise the parent of the reason/s why the matter is to be referred elsewhere.

If a complaint is in relation to the Principal then the parent is to contact the Regional Director.

Responsibility of the Leadership Team

If the principal is unable to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the parent then the formal complaint management process is to be utilised.

Recording of Complaints.

If a complaint is easily resolved over the phone then recording of the issues may not be required.

Complaints, in most instances, will be acknowledged in the form that they were made (i.e. a phone call acknowledged with a return phone call)

All meetings with parents to discuss complaints will be documented and copies given to all parties so that all involved have the same understanding of what was discussed and agreed.

This Policy will be reviewed in 2013 and following that at intervals of 2 years. The school community will be randomly surveyed to provide written feedback on the Policy.

**CAWLER HIGH SCHOOL
PARENT COMPLAINT RECORD SHEET**

1. Details of Parent/caregiver making complaint.

Name:

Address

Contact phone number:

2. Date complaint received & in what form:

Acknowledged by:

Staff member managing complaint:

3. Nature of the complaint: (details and requested remedy)

4. Action taken: (to resolve the complaint/time/outcome)

5. Recommendations: (for improvements to school policy, procedures or practice to prevent reoccurrence of a similar complaint)

Copies to be given to parent/caregivers/student file/Complaint Central File (Front office)

