



# East Marden

## PRIMARY SCHOOL

*'Learners today, Leaders tomorrow'*



## Complaints and Grievance Policy

### Parent Information



Government of South Australia  
Department for Education

CRICOS Provider No. 00018A

*Respect, Kindness, Perseverance, Creativity*

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## COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

### Purpose of this Policy

East Marden Primary School has the commitment to creating a supportive learning environment in which students, staff and parents work together harmoniously. There will be occasions when students, staff and parents may have concerns about particular aspects of school, classrooms, and yard or behaviour expectations.

These guidelines outline a process for resolving issues in a positive and responsible manner. Quality resolutions can be achieved through collaborative communication and mutual respect between all parties. Ethical conduct is maintained by staff, students and parents at all times. Grievances are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation and Department for Education (DfE) requirements.

### Scope

This procedure clarifies the steps that can be taken within the school setting before complaints and grievances are advanced to the formal avenues of DfE Customer Feedback Unit (CFU) and the Incident Management Division.

**The Customer Feedback Unit** provides advice and support to the community in relation to complaints about DfE public schools, preschools and early childhood services.

#### The unit:

- facilitates complaints resolution procedures between complainants and DfE schools wherever possible
- advises complainants about their avenues or internal and external review where complaints have not been resolved at a local level
- may provide a formal review of complaints where there are concerns of procedural error/unreasonableness by a DfE public school.

**The Incident Management Division (IMD)** assesses complaints of suspected or alleged misconduct against department employees. This includes allegations related to suspected or alleged misconduct towards children and young people.

The Incident Management Division is made up of six areas of responsibility:

- Case Management
- Intake and Assessment – Complaint Assessment Panel
- Investigations Unit
- Misconduct, Discipline and Advice Unit
- School Care (notifiable incidents in schools)
- Education Complaint Unit
- Incident management division

### Objectives

We believe positive and effective working relationships within the school community provides:

- A safe and supportive learning and work environment
- Open communication for increased opportunities for success

## COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

### Principles of our Resolution Procedures

- Everyone listened to and treated with respect with the right to feel safe and supported
- Resolving problems and/or conflict as soon as possible to maintain a climate of trust
- Meetings to discuss grievances will be suspended if any person behaves in an inappropriate, insulting, offensive or disrespectful manner.

### The Resolution Procedure Detail

In the event of a grievance at our school, the following guidelines are recommended:

In the first instance approach the person with whom you have the grievance. If you are unable to do this, follow the set of guidelines. When raising a concern, staff, parents and students are expected to: treat each other with respect; courtesy and maintain confidentiality; raise the concern as soon as possible; provide complete and factual information; act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties; have realistic and reasonable expectations about the course of action required to resolve the concern.

### Grievance Procedures for Parents

#### Step 1

- Contact the person involved and arrange an appointment so that you can discuss the matter privately
- If you are unable to speak to the person directly, phone the school office to arrange a meeting time. If you feel uncomfortable approaching the school, a member of the Governing Council familiar with school procedures can support you to establish contact.
- Meet with the person concerned to discuss your concern. Respectful, quiet discussion, without accusation and blame enables points of view to be discussed and resolutions made.
- If you regard the issue as serious particularly if it relates to students' safety and well-being, contact the school for an appointment with a member of the leadership team.
- Staff will respond within 2 working days to establish a meeting time.

#### Step 2

- If you consider the issue you have raised is not resolved, make an appointment with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal or Wellbeing Leader. Inform them about the subject that you would like to discuss as this will help the problem-solving process. An appointment will be made within 2 working days.

#### Step 3

- Attend an appointment. You may wish to arrange for another adult to support you by attending the meeting with you. The school will aim to resolve your concern or complaint as soon as possible. Meeting notes will be taken and signed by all parties for common agreements.

#### Step 4

- If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome, your feedback or grievance can be directed to the Customer Feedback Unit. [online submit a complaint form](#) Phone: 1800677435
- The Customer Feedback Unit will assess your grievance, decide what action is needed, let you know what has been done and when you can expect to hear about the outcome.
- You can make an anonymous complaint or ask that your identity remains confidential, however this may limit options for investigating and negotiating a resolution.

## COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

***Throughout this process it is important that students learn that the school and the family are working together in support of their learning and well-being.***

### When you make a grievance

- Be clear about your issue and what you want to happen.
- Give complete and honest information.
- Give more information if asked for it.

### Helpful parent tips to raise your grievance for a positive outcome

Grievance made in person

If you make a grievance in person, take time to prepare.

- Make a time to meet to talk about your concern.
- Know what outcome you want. Think about what will help with your concerns.
- Make a list of the points you want to talk about.
- Before you meet, let the school or preschool know what outcome you want. This gives them time to look into it. This can help get a quicker answer.
- Advise if you want to bring someone with you (a friend or advocate) before you meet.
- Take relevant documents, a pen and paper to the meeting.
- Record who else is involved. For example who have you already talked to about your concern?

### Grievance made in writing

- Sometimes it helps if a grievance is put in writing or email.
- It gives you time to describe the points you want to make clearly.
- Usually means you will get a written response that you can refer back to if needed.
- It gives staff time to look into your concern so they can see how they can help.

### Grievance made on the phone

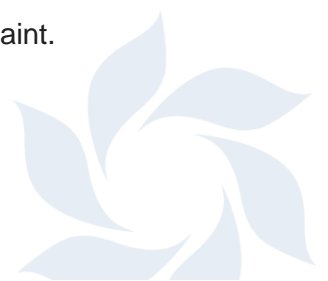
If you make a complaint or give feedback on the phone think about:

- what time you call so you won't be distracted and you're prepared
- staying calm so you can be clear about your concern
- being as specific as you can and stick to the facts
- sending an email before you call as this can help get a quicker answer

### After you make a complaint

You may receive one or more of the following:

- a reason for actions or decision taken
- a short message early on to let you know your grievance has been received
- a chance to explain your point of view and clear up any confusion or misunderstandings
- told who will manage your grievance, how long it'll take and next steps
- Information about the policy, procedure or guideline that relates to your complaint.



## COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

### What can happen after your grievance has been looked into

- The concern might be confirmed or you might get information to show why it's not able to be proven.
- A decision, process or procedure might be changed or you might get more information about why it cannot be. For example, it can be due to policy or law.
- It might be confirmed that the matter was managed properly or could have been handled better.

### Unreasonable conduct and grievances

We understand you might feel frustrated or upset when you make a grievance. However this is not an excuse for unreasonable conduct.

If conduct becomes unreasonable there are steps that will be taken to manage this.

The response will depend on how serious the conduct is.

Responses can include:

- limited access to staff and premises
- restricted ways to communicate
- contact from SA Police.

#### Unreasonable conduct includes:

- constant phone calls, visits, letters and emails after you have a response to a complaint
- threats, harassment, demands, yelling, insults, violence.

Refer to unreasonable customer conduct for more information.

#### Will I be treated fairly?

You will not be discriminated against if you make a complaint.

All staff are bound by the Code of Ethics for South Australian Public Sector.

This requires staff to act impartially, fairly and equitably.

If you're not satisfied that your complaint has been addressed at the local level, you can get help from the department Customer Feedback unit (CFU)

To contact CFU:

- [Online Complaint Form](#)
- Phone 1800 677 435 (toll free)

This policy was last updated in Term 4 2020 and is scheduled for review in Term 4 2023.

*This policy was last ratified by School Council in 2020*