

Complaints Management Policy and Procedures



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Compliance and Review

The King's College is committed to the continuous improvement of its Child Protection Programme and adhering to the WA child protection laws, regulation and standards.

The King's College Complaints Management Policy and Procedures

Reviewed by:	The Principal	Updated:	March 2023
Endorsed by:	The School Board	Next review:	March 2025

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY

VERSION MANAGEMENT			
Version	Date Published	Changes Made	Author of Changes
2022	July 2022	Minor changes including online professional mandatory training update, titles of staff/departments, electronic copy locations, flowcharts.	Ian Elder, Principal
2023	March 2023	Minor updates to positions and flows	Kyle Baggaley, Principal
2023v2	August 2023	Minor update to flow charts	Kyle Baggaley, Principal

1. OVERVIEW

The King's College encourages open and respectful communication. Complaints will be received in a positive manner, taken seriously and dealt with sensitively, with a view to resolving issues as speedily as possible. At all times the overriding principle will be to treat others with love and respect. The College will endeavour to maintain unity and build genuine relationships within the context of a Christian community.

2. DEFINITIONS

- A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem, whether it is about an individual, group, department or the College as a whole.
- A complainant may be a parent or guardian, student, member of the public, supplier, contractor or staff member.

3. COMMITMENT

The College is committed to providing an efficient and fair complaint resolution process. We acknowledge the right to complain and welcome feedback in order to help us improve The King's College and ensure the safety of the students in our care.

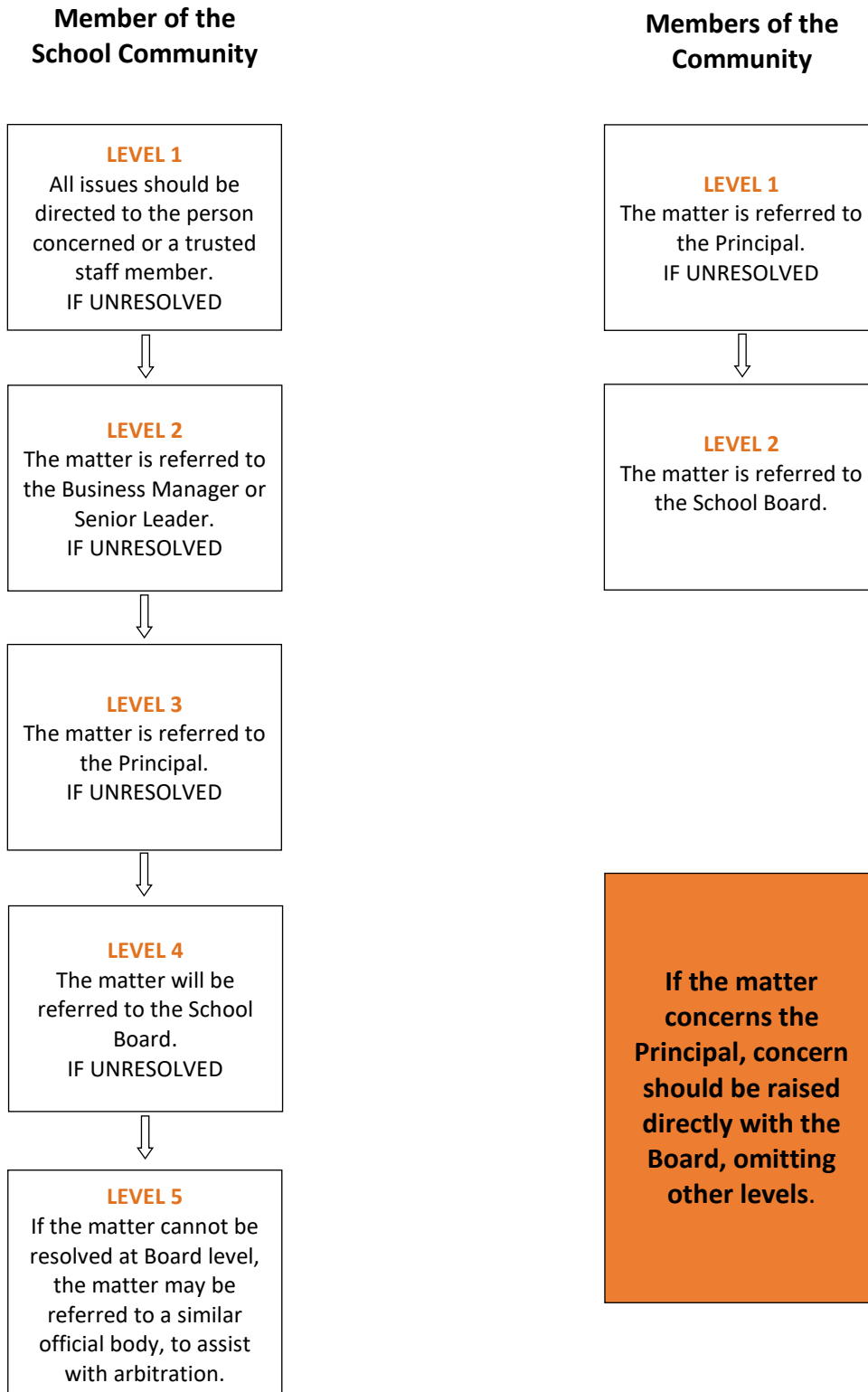
4. PRINCIPLES

- The College will take complaints from members of its community seriously and the process of making a complaint will be clear, open and accessible to all members of the College community.
- Complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children, and similarly complaints made by students or staff should not rebound onto them or onto other students or staff.
- All members of staff will be given the opportunity to respond to any complaints that are made against them.
- Every reasonable effort will be made to resolve internal grievances before the intervention of outside agencies or mediators.
- We recognise the importance of fairness in the complaints handling process. To ensure objectivity, the investigation of a complaint against a staff member will not be handled by the staff member whose actions are the subject of the complaint.
- There must be an end to the process at some point. That is, it may be necessary for the complainant to accept that their complaint has been heard and that it cannot be resolved as they would wish it to be.
- Clear confidential notes and records should be kept, and a Complaint Register maintained.
- As an organisation responsible for children, we will respond to allegations and complaints in the best interest of the children.

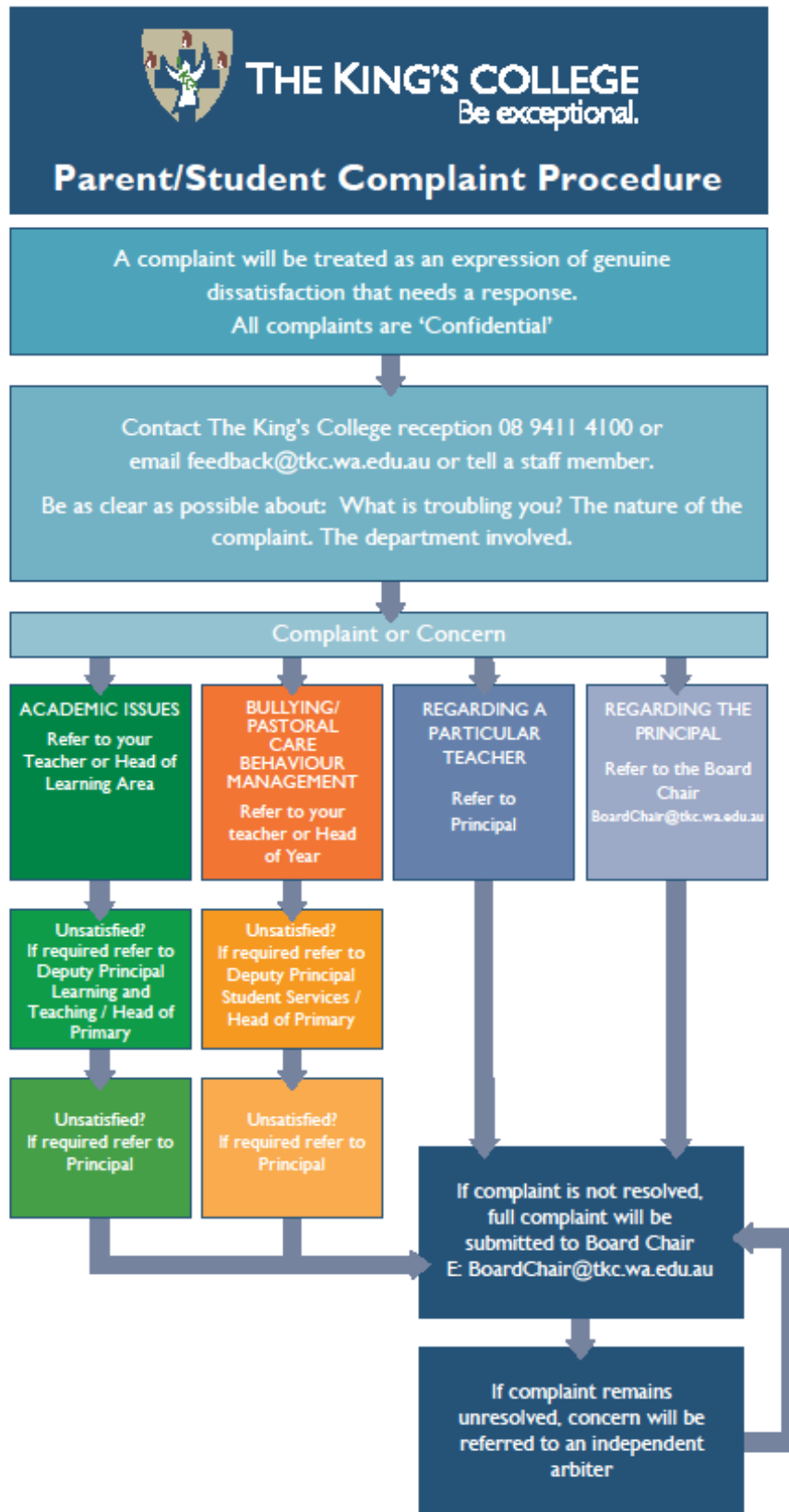
Note: If at any time there is a situation involving the Police or a Lawyer, the Principal must take responsibility for the actions of the College. The Board Chair will be contacted as soon as possible, and the procedures outlined in this policy will no longer be relevant.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

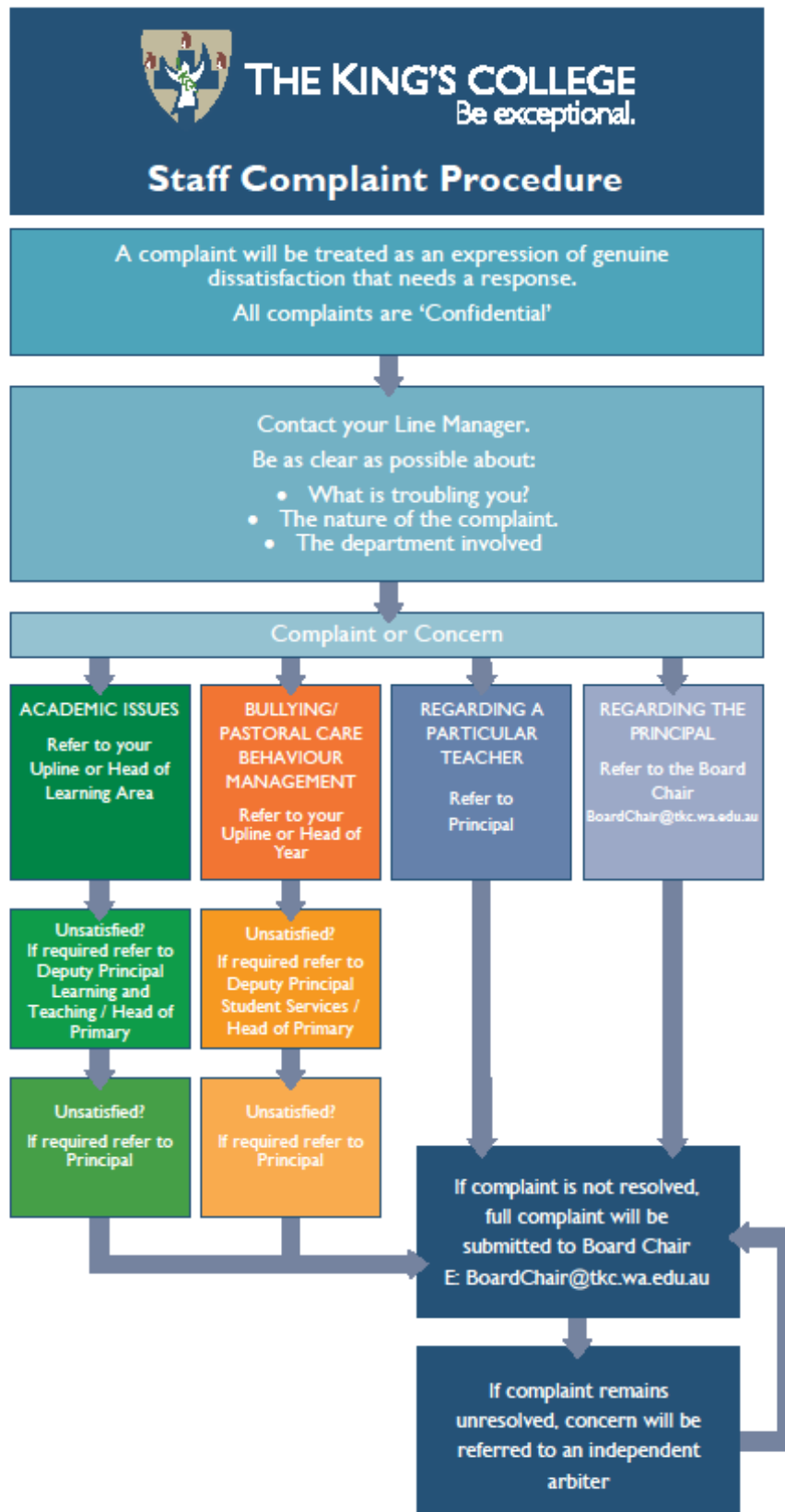
5a. Lines of approach - Flow Chart



5b. Lines of Approach (cont.) - Flow chart Complaints Procedure for Parents/Students



5c. Lines of Approach (cont.) - Flow chart Complaints Procedure Staff



5.1 Complaints from parents (or guardians)

- Parents should feel free to approach whichever member of staff they believe is the most appropriate to deal with the issue.
- This may be the Principal or other Senior Staff, although in the first instance the most productive approach would normally be to approach the relevant teacher.
- If the complaint is about a member of the Executive Team, the parent would normally go straight to Principal.
- If the complaint is about the Principal, the parent is entitled to contact the Board Chair
- If the complaint is about the Board, the parent should refer the matter to the Board Chair, who may determine if mediation is required from an independent reviewer.

5.2 Complaints from students

- Students are entitled to choose an appropriate avenue of complaint. The line of approach for students is clearly outlined in the Student Diary. (See Appendix 1 and 2)

5.3 Complaints from former students and/or their parents or guardians

- Complaints from former students and/or their guardians are accepted and dealt with in accordance with the standard despite enrolment having ceased.

5.4 Complaints from staff

- Staff members are entitled to choose an appropriate avenue of complaint. This should be a trusted colleague, a senior member of staff or Principal.
- Staff members are encouraged, where possible, to speak directly to the persons involved. Staff may choose to seek the support of a colleague or talk to their line manager for help in resolving a complaint or may choose to use an alternative medium such as email.

5.5 Mandatory Reporting

- Submissions of complaints that fall within the area of child protection should follow the requirements of the School's Child Protection Policy.

5.6 Complaints from the public

- These should be referred to the Principal, or Business Manager and may be submitted via an appointed meeting and/or in writing.

6. PROCEDURES

6.1 Managing Complaints

In many instances, staff will be the first point of contact for a complaint, especially from parents and students. All staff members are encouraged to deal with complaints that lie within their area of responsibility. In dealing with complaints, staff should:

- keep a written record of the concern or complaint and how the matter was resolved or is being dealt with
- let the complainant know **in writing** what will be done in response to their complaint, and when they will do it
- maintain confidentiality, and respect the concern that many complainants have that their complaint will rebound adversely on themselves or on their children or friends
- **Ensure that a senior member of staff, e.g. the Business Manager, or the Principal is aware of the complaint and of its proposed resolution.**

6.2 When Complaints become Grievances

In the first instance, it is hoped that the complaint will be resolved through open and respectful communication. However, there will be occasions when grievances develop, or the complaints are of such a serious nature that more formal action needs to be taken. The complainant will be permitted to bring a support person with him/her at any stage of the process. In the case of a student, this may be a friend, parent or trusted adult.

6.3 Alternative action includes:

- **Referral to an outside agency**

There could be instances in which the Principal, in consultation with the Board Chair, refers the complaint to an outside agency e.g. the Police or Department of Child Protection and Family Support (DCPFS).

- **Referral to the Board Chair**

In most cases, the Principal refers the matter to the Board Chair and informs the complainant that this stage has been reached. However, the complainant will also be able to write directly to the Board Chair via email: BoardChair@tkc.wa.edu.au

The Board Chair will discuss the matter with the Principal and be provided with relevant documentation. If a briefing is required from a member of staff or another person, this will occur in the presence of the Principal.

The Board Chair will respond to the complainant, notifying him/her that the matter is being reviewed, asking him/her if they wish to add anything further and providing a date by which they may expect a written response.

The Board Chair's response will be clear and detailed and will offer a meeting if the complainant remains troubled.

- **Meeting with the Board Chair**

If a meeting is requested, the Board Chair will offer to meet the complainant. The meeting will include the Board Chair, the Principal and the complainant.

If a solution is not found, the Board Chair may consider referring the matter to another similar organisation, for mediation.

- **Referral to a mediator**

It must be noted that referral to the mediator should not be resorted to until all internal procedures have been exhausted.

Referral to the mediator would normally be through the School Board. All parties will participate fully and openly in this process and determination made under this process will be final.

7. RECORDS

If a complaint is dealt with by the Principal, Senior Staff or at the Board level, confidential records are kept by the Principal and copies are placed in the relevant student file in SEQTA or the College staff member's file. However, many concerns and complaints are resolved before they come to the Principal. Staff members keep records of all communication with parents/carers, especially if it is more than a quick conversation. Such records **must be** stored electronically on the student profile in SEQTA.

8. CHILD-FRIENDLY COMPLAINTS (SEE APPENDIX 1 AND 2)

The Complaints Process for students is outlined clearly in the Student Diary.

- Students are integral members of our community and should be acknowledged as such and encouraged to have open and honest conversations regarding matters of concern or complaints.
- Students must be given opportunities to raise concerns, give feedback and discuss experiences.
- Students are provided with a variety of choices to make complaints including face-to-face.
- The complaint process is outlined in the Student Diary which is developmentally suitable and appealing.
- The school allows advocates to complain on behalf of the student and when that occurs, makes sure the student can participate directly to the extent they wish.
- Student complaints as with all others will be dealt with promptly.
- Specific training for staff who may deal with student complaints will be included in professional training days/opportunities.
- Understanding, helpfulness and responsiveness is demonstrated toward students' complaints.
- The complaint process is clearly articulated in the Family Handbook and the Student Diary.
- The identity of the complainant is required to be kept confidential, particularly in relation to child protection matters, except in limited circumstances.
- Maintaining confidentiality and obtaining student consent in relation to complaints should be given appropriate priority depending on the nature of the complaint.
- Victimisation of students for making an allegation or complaint in accordance with the school's policies is forbidden, including where the allegation is unfounded.

9. ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

Anonymous complaints occur when there is no indication of either name or address, or when the complainants say they do not wish to be identified. They may come from members of the public, from parents or from students.

Parents and students should be encouraged to give their names and should be given reassurance of the issue being dealt with discretely. If they persist in wishing to remain anonymous, it is at the Principal's discretion as to what action should be taken, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Anonymous complaints will be recorded in the Complaints Register.

10. SCHOOL'S RESPONSE

- A request should be made for any complaint to be made in writing (where appropriate). In order to support our student complaints process, students may make their complaint verbally or in any form they are comfortable with. It is important the College ascertains all the relevant information, particularly if the nature of the concern is not clear. All staff should request complicated/convoluted complaints be submitted in writing.
- Complaints should be acknowledged as soon as possible. The issue should be dealt with as quickly as possible and the person raising the concern informed of the outcome in a timely manner.
- Complaints raised verbally will generally be responded to verbally, although every effort should be made to have the complaint expressed in writing.
- Complaints raised in writing will be responded to accordingly.

11. COLLEGE COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT REGISTER

The College will maintain a Complaints Management Register.

- Complaints or allegations raised at a Principal or Board level will be recorded and allocated a reference number.
- The Register will be reviewed regularly by the Principal, and Senior Executive Team - a minimum of once per term to identify any patterns or identify any areas of concern.

The Register should contain the following information:

- Register number;
- Date when the complaint or allegation was raised;
- Name of the person raising the complaint;
- Category of the complaint to assist in identifying patterns.
- Brief description of complaint;
- Member of staff handling the complaint;
- Date a resolution reached;
- SEQTA entry where applicable.

12. SEQTA

Matters of concern and complaints relating to student conduct, conversations with parents and student management strategies are recorded on the students' profiles in SEQTA. The Executive Team regularly check student profiles and respond appropriately to patterns/trends.

13. RELATED POLICIES AND INFORMATION:

Behaviour Management

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Student Code of Conduct Policy

Parent Code of Conduct Policy

Child Protection Policy

Student Cyber Safety Code of Conduct

Family Handbook

Student Diary

APPENDIX 1

Student Complaint Procedure

1 How do I make a complaint?
By talking about it or by writing it down if you find that easier. You can do it by yourself, or through your parents.

2 To whom?
To anyone on staff.

3 Does it matter what the issue is?
No, it can be a big problem or a small one. By discussing it, you may come up with some positive ideas.

4 What will happen next?
If possible, the staff member will deal with it in person. If not, he or she will go on your behalf to someone who can help.

5 Do others have to know?
If you are worried about confidentiality, tell the staff - they will understand. Even if you find the issue hurtful or embarrassing, don't worry- it will only be discussed by staff that can help you.



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APPENDIX 2

Top tips for making a complaint

1 Get support

Talk to a parent, carer, friend or someone you trust and ask them to help you. They can even be with you when you complain. You can also use an interpreter if you need to.

2 Find out how

Sometimes it is tricky to know how to make a complaint. It is usually best to talk to the organisation you are dealing with first.

- Talk to someone in the organisation you feel comfortable with or check out the website to find out about their complaints system.
- Find out who is the person responsible for complaints. This will save you from having to tell lots of people your full story.
- What are the different ways you can make a complaint (face-to-face, by phone, in writing - letter, email, any others)?

If you are not safe or do not want to talk to someone in the organisation there are other agencies that can help you. Check out our website coyp.wa.gov.au

3 Plan what you want to say

Write down what you are not happy about and how this has affected you. Also decide what you think should be done.

This will help you when you have to talk about it. You may need to tell a couple of people in the process, so it will also help you remember what you've said before.


Commissioner for
Children and Young People
Western Australia

4 Be calm and ask questions

When you make your complaint, try to be calm and polite even if you feel upset. Staff of the organisation should also treat you with respect.

Ask as many questions as you like. You may want to know:

- How they will keep your complaint private?
- What will happen next?
- Who will get back to you and your support person?
- When will they get back to you?
- If you're not happy about the result of your complaint what is the next step - who will review your complaint then?



5 Keep notes

Write down who you speak or write to, the dates, anything they promise they will do and the date they say they will get back to you. This will help you keep track of things. You can also write down how you feel about the complaint process, this may be useful later.

6 Keep at it

Don't be afraid to complain further if you are still not safe or feel the matter has not been resolved fairly.

