

Complaints Management 101

- Parents, carers and members of the wider community have the right to make a complaint or raise any concerns at any time about the decisions or actions of a school.
- The [Queensland Public Service Customer Complaint Management Guideline](#) provides that a complaint must:
 - Be acknowledged within 3 school days; and
 - Responded to within 30 school days

Strategies

- Determine whether the correspondence is a customer complaint or rather a request for or providing information, a suggestion for service improvement, feedback or out of scope. It will be a customer complaint if all criteria below are met:
 - the complainant is dissatisfied with the service or action of the department or its staff;
 - the complainant is directly affected by the service or action; and
 - some outcome is sought.
- Always try to resolve customer complaints quickly at the point where the complaint is received, so issues can be resolved locally and efficiently.
- Consult with your school community to develop a clear complaints and compliments process for your school and inform the community of this process.
- Develop a designated school compliments and complaints email address and determine who is responsible for monitoring this.
- Implement a [school complaints register](#) to track complaints and responses.
- Communicate clearly, proactively, factually and only manage new issues raised. If a response has been provided previously, refer the complainant to previous correspondence.
- Options for resolving the customer complaint should be tailored to the circumstances of the complaint and may include:
 - providing an explanation to the complainant about the decision, action, etc that is the subject of the complaint and reasons for the decision, if not previously provided;
 - finding the customer complaint to be unsubstantiated (for example, the events did not happen as described);
 - reaching a compromise solution (for example, through alternative dispute resolution);
 - concluding the customer complaint be substantiated and implementing specific action, such as overturning a decision, apologising, or providing a service not previously provided;
 - addressing or referring the issue for system improvement.

Resources

For school leaders to develop capability and understanding of effective complaints management:

[Customer complaints management](#)

This page includes a range of excellent materials which help build understanding of customer complaints, internal reviews, managing unreasonable complainant conduct and school resources.

For managing customer complaints at schools:

<i>Templates</i>	<i>Resources</i>
<p>School complaints register School complaints process template Exemplar of school complaints process School complaints process checklist Customer complaint outcome letter</p>	<p>School reception poster Brochure for school staff Child-friendly complaint form Child-friendly complaints poster Making a complaint—easy guide Instructions for publishing complaints processes to school website</p>

Regional Supports

Principal Advisor Education Services (PAES)

Your PAES can support you in developing your school's complaint process, promoting the school's complaints process and advising of strategies to resolve a complaint.

Where you determine a complaint is becoming quite complex or a complainant is acting unreasonable or hostile, and you need assistance, please contact your PAES.

Principal Hotline and Complex Matters (PHCM) team

The [PHRC team](#) can assist with conflict resolution including capability programs, conflict coaching and proactive mediation. Early intervention is best and the team encourages contact at the first indication that complaint resolution may become complex.

Information & Complaints Unit, South East Region

The Information and Complaints Unit (ICU) respond to complaints that have been escalated to Regional Office. ICU staff may contact you for information to assist in response to complaints. Principals may share information to assist ICU by email at correspondence.ser@qed.qld.gov.au.