

# PARK LAKE STATE SCHOOL

## Resolving Concerns: Where do parents stand?

During the course of your children's school years, you may have cause to raise a concern about an issue you feel is adversely affecting your child's education. Education Queensland is committed to ensuring that all parents/guardians have their concerns - whether they relate to a school staff member, the school or its operations - dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and there are processes and support structures in place to enable parents to work through any issues they may have.

Our school belief is that strong relationships between parents and staff assist greatly in the management of concerns either may have in relation to a student. We encourage you to 'get to know' your child's teacher and to build a relationship conducive to the on going learning of your child. Many issues can be resolved simply and effectively through the creation of open and honest relationships between parents and teachers.

When making a complaint, it is in the best interest of complaint resolution to ensure that you:

- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
- deliver your complaint in a non-threatening and non-abusive manner and
- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints or include deliberately false or misleading information.

You should be aware that if you are making a complaint about a staff member, that in most instances the staff member will be told of the complaint and offered the right of reply. You also have the right to have a support person participate throughout the process.

If your complaint relates to suspected official misconduct or criminal activity then you should make your complaint directly to the Crime and Misconduct Commission ([www.cmc.qld.gov.au/](http://www.cmc.qld.gov.au/)) or the Queensland Police Service ([www.police.qld.gov.au/](http://www.police.qld.gov.au/)).

The following guidelines may assist parents/guardians, staff and schools to reach an outcome that is in the best interests of the student.

The procedure to follow is:

1. Discuss your concern/complaint with the class teacher.

If your concern is with your child's teacher, make an appointment with that teacher as soon as possible through the school office. Share the information you have about the problem. Give the teacher an opportunity to tell you all he/she knows about the incident or problem. Together both parent/guardian and teacher should then take steps to resolve the problem at this level. The teacher will, as part of their employment role, report your meeting and any outcomes to the School Principal and may make a record of the complaint.

2. Discuss your concern/complaint with the Principal or ask the Principal to act as mediator.

If the complaint/concern is school based not classroom based, this of course is the first step in the process. If your complaint is related to the school more generally including issues of school policy or its compliance or non-compliance you should raise your complaint directly with the principal or his/her delegate. The principal may refer your complaint to a deputy principal or business services manager. The staff member will make a record of your complaint and work with you to resolve the issue. Complaints to the principal may be lodged in person, by telephone, writing or via electronic format through the "*Schools directory*" at [www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/directory](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/directory) - select relevant school, then click on the email link.

Where the teacher has been approached but the issue remains unresolved, make an appointment with the School Principal to discuss the issue further. Alternatively, you and the teacher may agree to ask the Principal to act as mediator in an attempt to resolve the problem.

3. Contact South East Regional Office

Contact South East Regional Office if you have discussed the issue with the Principal and still feel that your concerns have not been addressed, you have the right to contact the Assistant Regional Director who manages and coordinates the activities in schools in that District of Education Queensland. For the Assistant Regional Director to take any course of action, concerns/complaints should be in writing, should be specific in detail, and outline the steps taken to date to resolve the issue. Remember to date the letter, give your full address and sign it. Anonymous or verbal concerns/complaints will generally not be acted upon. Regional Offices are listed under the heading Education Queensland in the White Pages of your local telephone directory and are also available through the "*Schools directory*" at [www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/directory](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/directory). When you contact the Regional Office you should be advised that your name and the nature of your issue will be reported back to the Principal of your school. Regional Office will attempt to resolve the issue before progressing the matter through a formal complaints process if warranted. Results of the formal investigations are available to the parent/guardian who made the complaint through the Regional Office.

#### 4. Concerns still not resolved.

If, as a parent/guardian you feel that your issue has not been resolved through the Regional Office process, you have a further right of appeal that may be lodged once the Regional Office process has been finalised. Parents/guardians may choose to progress their concerns in writing to the Deputy Director-General, Office of State Schooling. The Office of State Schooling will initiate an independent investigation if required. The Deputy Director-General can be contacted at: Office of State Schooling P.O. Box 15033, CITY EAST, Qld 4002. If a resolution is still unable to be reached, other avenues to assist in the resolution of the problem include communicating concerns in writing to the Director-General of Education or the Minister for Education.

The Director-General of Education can be contacted at:

Office of the Director-General, P.O. Box 15033, CITY EAST, Qld 4002.

The Minister for Education can be contacted at:

Office of the Minister for Education P.O. Box 15033, CITY EAST, Qld 4002.

#### 5. Independent review.

If your concern/complaint is of a serious nature and as a parent you feel that your issue has not been resolved through these formal processes the Queensland Government Ombudsman provides an avenue to an independent review. The Ombudsman may be contacted at:

Office of the Ombudsman GPO Box 3314 Brisbane, Qld 4001.

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au)

Tel (07) 3005 7000 or Toll Free 1800 068 908 or fax (07) 3005 7067

Parents and Citizens' Associations (P&Cs) also have a role to play in this area. It is understandable that parents/guardians may feel overwhelmed when approaching a school or the Department of Education with a concern. While the Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens Associations Inc (QCPCA) does not advocate on behalf of individual parents or caregivers, individuals can request their own P&C to provide support in these circumstances. The P&C can in turn seek assistance from QCPCA to provide guidance in resolving the concern/complaint.