

NSW Department of Education

Making a complaint

Easy Read guide



How to use this guide



The NSW Government Department of Education wrote this guide.

When you see the word 'we', it means the Department of Education.



We have written this guide in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Not bold **Bold**

We have written some words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.

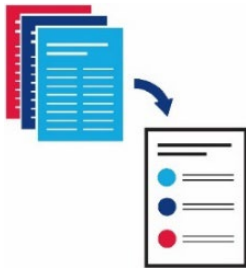


We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 28.



This Easy Read guide has clear and easy to understand information about how we deal with complaints.



This Easy Read guide is a summary of some information on our website.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the information on our website at [education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions](https://www.education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions).



You can ask for help to read this guide. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

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Public schools in NSW



Parents and carers help make schools a great place for students to learn.



We want parents and carers to give us **feedback**.



When you give feedback, you tell us what our schools can do better to help children.



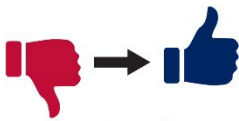
It's okay to give feedback.

You or your child won't be in trouble.



Your feedback can be a **compliment**.

When you give a compliment, you tell a school what they are doing well.



Your feedback can be a **suggestion**.



When you make a suggestion, you tell a school what they can do better.

Your feedback can be a **complaint**.



When you make a complaint, you tell a school:

- you're not happy about something
- something isn't working well.

Making a complaint

What can you make a complaint about?



You can make a complaint about our services.



You can make a complaint about:

- things that happened to your child at school
- any part of your child's learning.



You can make a complaint about what someone did at school.



You can make a complaint about a **policy**.

A policy is a plan for how we should do things.

Policies are where rules come from.

What should you think about?



There are things you should think about before you make a complaint.

You should think about:



- what happened



- who was there



- what are you not happy about



- what you would like the school to do when the school looks at your complaint.

How can you make a complaint?



To make a complaint, you can talk to someone at the school.

For example, you might talk to a:



- teacher



- year advisor – a teacher who looks after students in a school year.



- assistant principal – a senior teacher who helps other teachers do a good job



- deputy principal – a senior teacher who looks after all children and teaches at school



- principal.

You can talk to them:



- in person



- on the phone



- by sending an email.



You can also go to our website to:

- make a complaint
- give us feedback.



education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions/complaint-compliment-suggestion-form



You can also ask for an **interpreter** if you need help in your language.

An interpreter is someone who:



- speaks your language
- helps you understand what someone is saying
- helps you tell the school what you want to say.

Your child's school is a good place to deal with most:



- complaints
- feedback.



If the school can't help you, they will tell you who can.



The school will work with you to manage the complaint.

They will:



- treat you with respect



- keep your personal information private.

Who can support you to make a complaint?



You can get support from a **support person**.



A support person is someone who:

- helps you tell your story
- goes to meetings with you.



A support person can be a:

- friend
- family member.

You can also get support from an **advocate**.



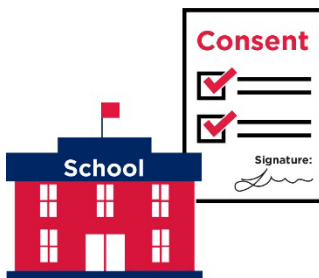
An advocate is a person who:

- helps you tell your story
- gives you information and advice
- can speak up for you
- can make decisions for you.

An advocate can be a:



- person from a community or disability organisation
- friend
- family member.



Your school will ask for your **consent** to let the advocate make decisions for you.



When you give your consent, you say it's okay to do something.



There are services you can contact if you need extra support.

You can ask the school if you:



- need help finding an advocate



- are not sure where to find an advocate.

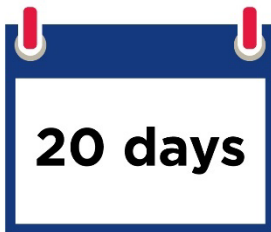
What happens after you make a complaint?



Someone from the school will contact you within 3 school days after you make a complaint.



They will tell you what is happening with your complaint.



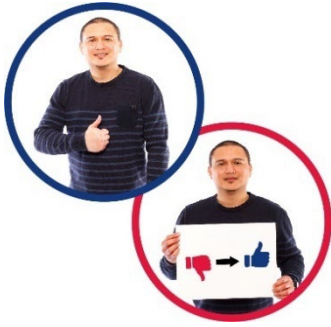
The school will try to find a way to solve the issue in 20 school days.



They will tell you if it takes longer than 20 days to solve the issue.

Reviewing a complaint

When we **review** something, we check to see what:



- works well
- needs to be better.



You can ask us to review a complaint if you're not happy with the result.

We will:



- look at what happened



- see if we can do more to find a way to solve the issue.



We will tell you if we can do more to find a way to solve the issue.

You can find more information about reviews on our website.



www.education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions/guide-for-parents-carers-and-students

What should you do if you're still not happy?



If you're still not happy with the result of your complaint, you can contact the NSW Ombudsman.



The NSW Ombudsman will tell you what else you can do.



You can call them.



(02) 9286 1000



1800 451 524



If you have trouble hearing or speaking,
you can use Speak and Listen.

1300 555 727



You can also go to their website.

www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

Mary's story



Mary's child Josh worries about going to school.



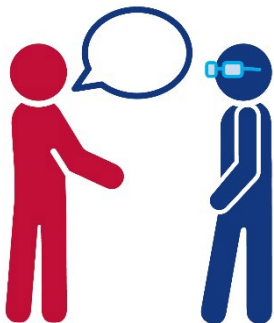
Josh is being teased by some students at school.

Josh is very upset.



There are different ways Mary can help Josh.

Mary can talk to:



- Josh's teacher
- the year advisor
- the assistant principal
- the deputy principal
- the principal.



Mary can also use our website to make a complaint.



Mary asked Josh what was wrong.



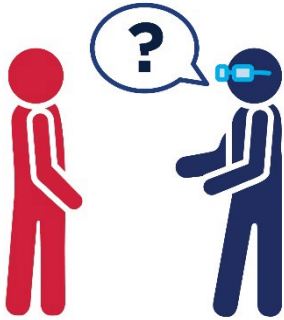
Mary made a note of:

- what happened
- who was there
- what Mary and Josh want to happen next.



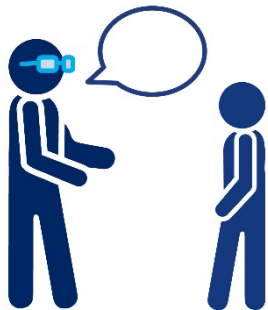
Mary met with Josh's teacher.

The teacher asked Mary:



- what happened
- when it happened
- who was there
- what Mary and Josh want to happen next.

After the meeting, the teacher:



- talked to Josh



- got help from the principal.



The students stopped teasing Josh.



Mary and Josh are glad they spoke up.

How can you support your child?

You can talk to your child's teacher if:



- your child doesn't want to talk



- you are worried about your child.

You can also talk to the:



- year advisor



- assistant principal



- deputy principal



- principal.

You can find more information about how to talk to your child on our website.



www.education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/going-to-school/preparing/starting-high-school/health-and-wellbeing-in-high-school/how-to-have-a-great-conversation

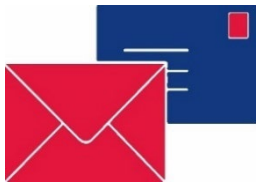
How to contact a school



You can call the school.



You can send the school an email.



You can write to the school.



You can go to the school's website.

Other services to support you



If you need more support, there are other services you can contact.



These services are free.



If you speak a language other than English, you can contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).



131 450



www.tisnational.gov.au



If you have trouble hearing or speaking, you can contact the National Relay Service.



nrschat.nrscall.gov.au/nrs/internetrelay



If you want to talk to someone using Auslan, you can contact The Deaf Society.



deafsociety.org.au/contact

Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.

Advocate

An advocate is a person who:



- helps you tell your story
- gives you information and advice
- can speak up for you
- can make decisions for you.

Complaint

When you make a complaint, you tell a school:



- you're not happy about something
- something isn't working well.

Compliment

When you give a compliment, you tell a school what they are doing well.





Consent

When you give your consent, you say it's okay to do something.



Feedback

When you give feedback, you tell us what our schools can do better to help children.

Interpreter

An interpreter is someone who:



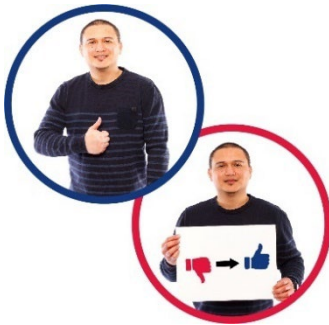
- speaks your language
- helps you understand what someone is saying
- helps you tell the school what you want to say.



Policy

A policy is a plan for how we should do things.

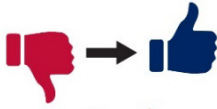
Policies are where rules come from.



Review

When we review something, we check to see what:

- works well
- needs to be better.



Suggestion

When you make a suggestion, you tell a school what they can do better.

Support person



A support person is someone who:

- helps you tell your story
- goes to meetings with you.

We will review this document:

- every 12 months
- as needed.

If you want to give us feedback about this document, please email the Feedback and Complaints Team.

fact@det.nsw.edu.au



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