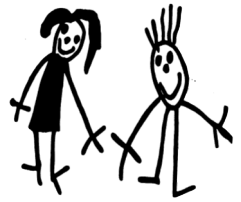




**Highbury Preschool**  
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## PARENT CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

*At Highbury Preschool, we believe parents are partners in the education of children. Regular two-way communication between parents/carers and the preschool is essential in helping children achieve their potential.*

*Our preschool is committed to ensuring that anyone with parental responsibilities for a young person can raise a concern or complaint, with confidence that it will be heard and responded to in an appropriate and timely fashion.*

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

***Safety of children is always the first priority. Our procedures are underpinned by the following principles:***

- All persons in the Highbury Preschool community including children, parents, Educators, volunteers and visitors have the right to be treated with respect and courtesy in accordance with the preschool's values.
- Parents have the right to raise concerns and make enquiries or complaints about any aspect of preschool life.
- Information about how, where and to whom complaints can be made should be visible and accessible through Preschool procedures.
- Complaints will be acknowledged and addressed promptly within specified timelines.
- Individual complaints will be assessed objectively and without bias using principles of natural justice.
- The rights and responsibilities of all parties will be considered and balanced in attempting to find a mutually acceptable outcome to complaints.
- The confidentiality of all parties will be maintained wherever possible.

### Step 1: Talk to us

If your concern or complaint relates to an issue concerning your child's education or experiences you should talk to the member of staff as soon as possible.

You may prefer to organise a mutually convenient time to meet the relevant Educator rather than discuss the issue via a telephone conversation. You are welcome to bring a support person with you, if you wish. The role of the support person is to provide advice and support during the process and not to answer questions on behalf of any of the parties or interfere with the discussion.

Our staff will, following a direct complaint:

- Listen to the complaint
- Record what you say
- Identify actions to resolve the concern
- Let you know what will or has been done
- Get back to you to see how things are going
- If appropriate, refer the matter to the preschool director

If your concern has not been resolved following discussions with the Educator, you should contact the Preschool Director.

**The Preschool Director will:**

- acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as reasonably possible (within 5 school days)
- listen to the issue you have
- provide support to you if necessary while the complaint is being considered
- investigate, consider and determine the most appropriate way to resolve the issue fairly and promptly
- consider relevant legislation, DECD policy and guidelines, preschool procedures
- inform you if there is a delay in the process
- ensure your complaint and the outcome is documented
- ensure that the outcome of the process is communicated to you verbally and, if appropriate, in writing including the right to refer the matter to the Northern Adelaide Regional Office.

**Step 2: Contact the DECD Education Complaint Unit**

If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved at the site level you can contact:

***Education Complaints Unit***

***Phone 1800 677 435***

***Email: [DECD.EducationComplaint@sa.gov.au](mailto:DECD.EducationComplaint@sa.gov.au)***

The Unit staff can help by:

- Providing advice and support about the issues behind the complaint.
- Advocating with local sites to ensure all options for resolution have been explored.
- Objectively review complaints that have not been resolved at the local level, including through a formal review.

**Step 3: Other ways to resolve your issue**

If you feel your issue has still not been resolved through the previous steps outlined in this policy, you may choose to seek independent advice and review by an external agency. The circumstances of your complaint will influence whether this option is available.

**EXTERNAL AGENCY CONTACT POINT:**

SA Ombudsman

Toll free: 1800 182 150

Phone: 8226 8699

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

[www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au)

This information has been adapted from 'Raising a complaint with DECD Process 2017.

***Please Note:***

*Any written or verbal complaints that contain personal abuse, inflammatory statements, and comments of a threatening nature or intended to intimidate will not be addressed and the parent will be advised accordingly.*

*Parents can also contact the Education and Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards Board of South Australia (EECSB) Ph: 1800 882 413 or the State Ombudsman: [www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au) for information, advice, support and in circumstances where the complaint remains unresolved.*

**Requesting your identity to remain confidential**

Parents may request that their identity remain confidential when making a complaint. In this situation, every effort will be made to keep the parent's identity confidential but this may limit options for negotiating a resolution. (For example, an apology is unlikely to be forthcoming if the identity of the complainant is not known.)

These circumstances also raise issues in relation to procedural fairness for those who have a complaint made about them as they have a right to know the particulars of the complaint.

While every effort will be made to comply with a request to keep the parent's identity confidential, Freedom of Information requirements may result in a parent's identity becoming known.

### **Anonymous complaints**

Highbury Preschool will assess every complaint that is made. The extent to which an anonymous complaint can be investigated will be limited, as preschool staff cannot liaise with the parent about the complaint. Anonymous complaints also raise issues in relation to natural justice for those who have a complaint of an anonymous complaint to what extent the complaint will be investigated. Where the complaint is in relation to a Director, the Education Director will make the determination and for Regional Directors, the Head of Schools or the Head of Child Development will make the final decision.

### **Approaches that may be used to resolve a parent complaint**

Our preschool may take one of the following approaches to resolve a parent's concern or complaint:

- an acknowledgement that the complaint is valid and is worthy of investigation (overall or in part)
- identification of areas of agreement between the parties involved
- opportunities for all the parties involved to express their concerns, explain their point of view and clarify any misunderstandings
- acknowledgement that the situation could have been better handled (this does not constitute an admission of negligence)
- an opportunity for an apology
- recognition that the situation presents an opportunity for changes or alternate arrangements to be made to resolve the complaint
- discussion with the parties about the steps that will be taken to ensure that the event complained about will not reoccur
- An undertaking to review school policy, procedure or practices.

### **Additional Information**

These procedures apply to parent concerns and complaints in relation to Highbury Preschool. These procedures do not apply to matters where there are legislated requirements or existing policies and processes of appeal, such as:

- Concerns and allegations of misconduct by staff, volunteers and service providers (criminal matters, child protection, corruption, etc.)
- Employee disputes and grievances. (Employees should refer to HR17 Complaints resolution for employees 2000 for these types of complaints.)
- Complaints or appeals relating to student suspension and expulsion
- Duty of care or mandatory reporting responsibilities
- Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare related issues
- Health support planning.

These procedures will be reviewed every two years.