

Not happy with something happening at school?

Information for Aboriginal families on how to make a complaint or provide feedback about our schools

If you are worried about something that is happening at school, let us know as soon as you can. If we know about something early, we can work with you to find a solution. You can start by contacting the teacher. In high school, you can also contact the year advisor. You can also ask to meet with the Principal, Deputy Principal, the Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO) or the Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) or at your school. If you are not sure about who to contact, ask the office staff.

How can I raise a concern?

We try to resolve concerns locally where possible. This means that most complaints about schools are actioned or looked after at the local school level.

You can raise your complaint with the school in person, by email, over the telephone or by letter if you prefer. Make a time to meet with the teacher or Principal or phone the school and ask for an appointment. You can also fill out our [online complaint, complaint or suggestion form](#) on the education.nsw website, and the information you give will be passed to the relevant school or area for action.

When responding to a complaint, our schools are committed to:

- Being understanding and open to all Aboriginal communities
- Understanding that all families are different and, like all communities, these differences will affect family choices and practices
- Respecting Aboriginal ways of knowing and communication
- Being open to families, communities, Kinship groups and Elders being involved in the complaints process

We recognise and value the learning that Aboriginal children bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom, and want to work with families to support children in their learning.

Want someone else to talk to inside the department?

We know that, sometimes, parents and carers would feel more comfortable talking with mob, or another Aboriginal person about what is happening. You can ask to speak to someone at the school, such as an Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO). You can also contact someone in your local Aboriginal Education and Wellbeing Team, such as the

Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer (ACLO) at your local network office. You can also contact the Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO), this will be a teacher at the school. To find the details of your network office go to: [Finding a Public School](#) on the education.nsw website.

Want someone else to talk to outside the department?

If you would like to speak with an independent person who can talk on your behalf or support you through the complaints process, you can contact your local NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG). To find details of the Regional Committee for your area, go to the AECG website at www.aecg.nsw.edu.au.

Not happy with the outcome?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can ask to speak to the person who has been looking after the complaint, to talk about the issues and raise. If you believe that the complaint outcome was incorrect and/or the complaint handling process was unfair, you can request a review. The request should be addressed to the initial person who was looking after the complaint or their supervisor. Reviews are completed by a person who has not been the subject of the complaint and has not been involved in managing the complaint. In many cases, this will be a senior staff member at the school or the Director Educational Leadership responsible for the school.

In some situations, organisations such as the NSW Ombudsman may review the handling of a complaint. More information can be found on the Ombudsman's website at www.ombo.nsw.gov.au.

For a direct link to our online complaint form, scan the QR code here:



This document will be reviewed every twelve months, or as needed. To provide any feedback about these resources, please email the Feedback and Complaints team at fact@det.nsw.edu.au

Evidence base: Strong strides together, July 2022 - Culturally safe schools

This information was created in collaboration with the department's Aboriginal Programs School Workforce Team.

Artwork by WUPA Artist - Craig Layer