



## **A guide for parents, carers and students when making a complaint or sharing a concern**

### **If you have a concern about any aspect of what we do at Dungog Public School.....**

We encourage you to contact us to talk about your concerns, as most problems can be solved by talking to the school office staff, your child's teacher or the school principal. Please let us know about your concerns as early as possible so we can work on a solution together.

#### **What can a complaint be about?**

- any aspect of the services we provide
- the behaviour or decisions of staff or students
- practices or procedures

#### **How to make a complaint**

It is best to discuss your concerns with your child's teacher first. Make an appropriate time to meet with them or phone the school and ask for an appointment with the teacher.

If you are not happy with the result, or if you do not feel it is appropriate to talk to them, phone and make an appointment to discuss your concerns with the principal.

You may bring a friend or relative to be your support. If you need an interpreter, we can arrange that - just ask beforehand.

If your complaint is about the principal you will need to contact the school education director in your area. Please contact the school and ask the school office staff for the Director's name and number.

If your complaint cannot be resolved in an informal way, we may ask you to put it in writing. It is important that you include specific details of the situation and tell us what you would like to happen as a result of your complaint. We can help you to put your complaint in writing, if you require it.

#### **Will my complaint be confidential?**

The person dealing with your complaint will advise you if confidentiality applies to your case, but generally it can't be guaranteed. If your complaint is about another person they have a right to know the allegations and be given a chance to respond.

#### **Can I make an anonymous complaint?**

Yes, you can make your complaint anonymously. However, it may be difficult to resolve an anonymous complaint if you do not provide your contact details and further information is required.

#### **What you can expect**

How your complaint is managed depends on what it is about. Most complaints can be resolved quickly and informally to everybody's satisfaction simply by talking to the teacher concerned or the

principal. Some complaints are covered by a particular policy or by special legislation (eg occupational health and safety or anti-discrimination policies). You will be advised if this is the case with your complaint and will be provided with information about how to proceed.

### **What are the possible results?**

1. The complaint is upheld and one or more of the following actions may be offered to you:

- action to fix or improve the situation
- an apology
- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- an undertaking to review the school's practices and procedures in light of the complaint.

2. Your complaint is not upheld. The reasons for this should be given to you clearly.

### **What if I am not happy with the result?**

If you are not happy with the result, you may ask for a review of your complaint by contacting the school education director. You can get the name and number from the administrative officer at your school.

We always strive to provide a safe and happy school for all those within it. These include students, staff and visitors. Open communication is the key to a happy school and we do urge parents to have frank and respectful conversations with us, and we expect our school staff to do the same.