DECD Procedure for Managing Parent Concerns and Complaints

All DECD employees will respect the right of the complainant to make a complaint and manage complaints in a respectful, confidential, impartial and timely manner that reflect, from beginning to end, the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.

Rights and responsibilities

*Parents lodging a concern or complaint with DECD can expect to:*
- be treated with respect, courtesy and consideration
- have their complaint dealt with in an efficient and timely manner
- have access to appropriate and easily understandable information regarding the complaints management process
- have personal information treated as confidential
- have their complaint considered impartially and in accordance with due process and principles of natural justice.

*In return DECD requests that parents making a complaint will:*
- treat all parties with respect and courtesy and maintain confidentiality
- raise the concern or complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen
- provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
- ask for assistance or further information as needed
- act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- have realistic and reasonable expectations about what course of action is required.

All parties involved are able to bring a support person to any of the meetings held as part of a (informal or formal) complaint management process.

Concern or Complaint made to Barossa Regional Office

*Following unsatisfactory resolution attempts at the school & preschool level contact with the Regional Office may be made.*

*Barossa Regional office staff will:*
- listen to and clarify the nature of the complaint including expectations
- acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 5 working days
- refer, if appropriate, any complaint that has not been raised at the school or preschool
- determine the appropriate person to handle the complaint. Some complaints may need to be referred to other agencies
- contact the relevant site to advise of the complaint and for information regarding the response to date
- determine what support or additional information needs to be provided to complainant or school / preschool while the complaint is considered
consider relevant legislation, policy and guidelines and/or seek advice within confidentiality guidelines

review the information provided and if required seek further clarification

make an assessment of the complaint following DECD guidelines

communicate the assessment process to the complainant within 15 working days

if no resolution or agreement the Regional Director will make a decision in relation to the complaint (5 days) according to the weight of the evidence and on the balance of probabilities

communicate the decision to all parties within 20 working days from receipt of complain at the regional office

if required, undertake a formal review following DECD guidelines and if possible, a negotiated / mediated resolution or agreement between parties should be reached as soon as reasonable (15 working days). The Parent complaints Unit will be notified in writing within 35 working days.

These procedures do not apply to the management of complaints or matters for which rights of appeal or review are provided for under specific legislation or another policy or procedure including allegations of employee misconduct (criminal matters, child protection, corruption etc) and employee disputes and grievances.