

NSW Department of Education

Making a complaint

Easy Read version

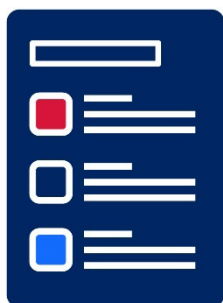


How to use this guide



We are the NSW Government Department of Education.

We wrote this guide.



We explain the words in **bold**.

There is also list of these words on page [35](#).



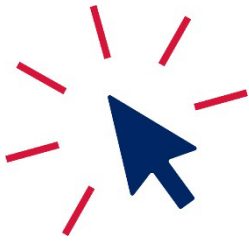
You can ask someone you trust for support to:

- read this guide
- find more information.



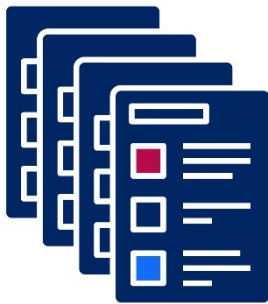
This Easy Read summary of another guide.

It only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other guide on our website.

www.education.nsw.gov.au/your-feedback/guide-for-parents-carers-and-students



This is a long document.



You don't need to read it all at once.

You can take your time.

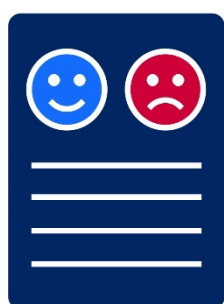
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Public schools in NSW



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.



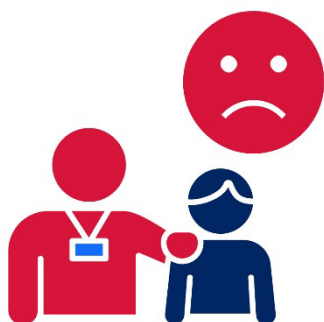
Your feedback can be a **complaint**.

When you make a complaint, you tell a school:

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

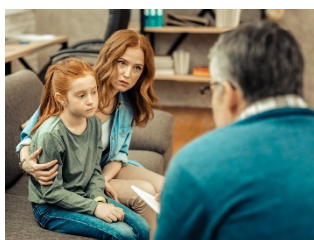
Making a complaint

What can you make a complaint about?



You can make a complaint about our services.

For example, you can make a complaint about our support 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 how a teacher or student behaves if it is:

- not okay
- harmful.



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

Policies are where rules come from.

You can make a complaint if a person uses a policy:



- in the wrong way



- in a way that affects your child unfairly.



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

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 you are not happy about



- what you would like the school to do when they look 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 – the person who looks after students in the classroom



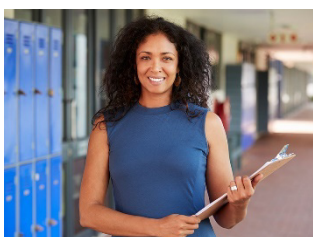
- year advisor – a teacher who looks after students in a school year



- assistant principal – a senior teacher who helps other teachers



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



- principal – the person who looks after the whole school.

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.

[www.education.nsw.gov.au/your-feedback/
complaint-compliment-suggestion-form](http://www.education.nsw.gov.au/your-feedback/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.

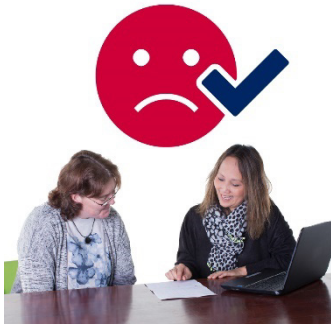


Your child's school is a good place to deal with most:

- 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



- get back to you in a fair amount of time



- make sure you have what you need to raise your concerns.

What do you need to do when you make a complaint?

When you make a complaint, you need to:



- be polite and behave with respect



- share clear and true information about what happened



- work with the school to help solve the issue



- ask for help if you need it.

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.



A support person should be over 18 years old.



A support person must agree to keep your information private.



They also can't make decisions for you.



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.

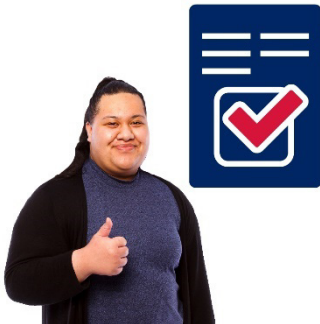


An advocate should be over 18 years old.

They 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 are your rights?



You always have the **right** to make a complaint.



Rights are rules about how people must treat you:

- fairly
- equally.

When you make a complaint, you have the right to be:



- listened to



- treated fairly and with respect.

You also have the right to:



- know what is happening with your complaint



- ask for support from someone – like a family member or friend



- feel safe to make a complaint.

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.

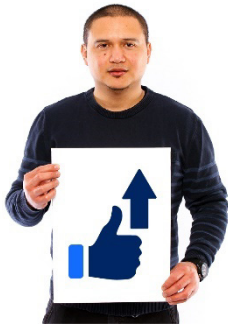


Reviewing a complaint

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 think the decision was:

- unfair
- not correct.

We will:



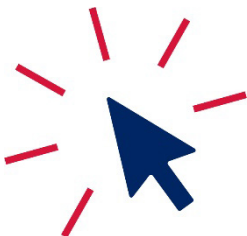
- look at what happened



- 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/your-feedback/complaint-compliment-suggestion-form

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.

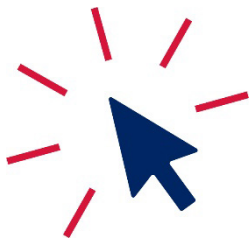


(02) 9286 1000



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.



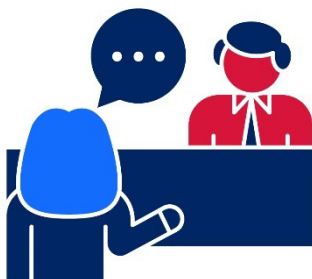
Mary thinks Josh is not getting the support he needs from school.

Josh is very upset.

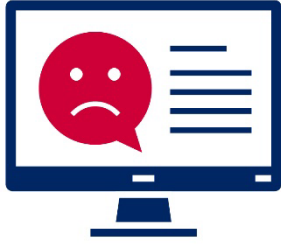


There are different ways Mary can help Josh.

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.

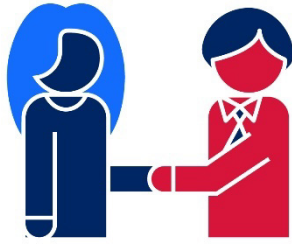


Mary asked Josh what was wrong.



Mary made a note of:

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

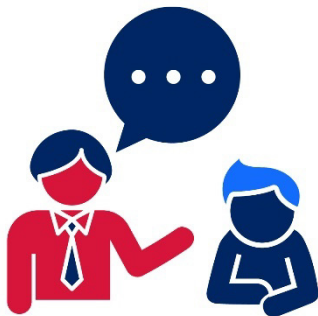


Mary met with Josh's teacher.



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.



Josh is happy he is getting more support.

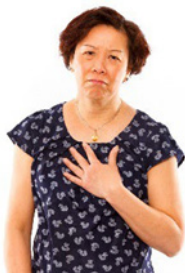
Mary and Josh are glad they spoke up.

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:



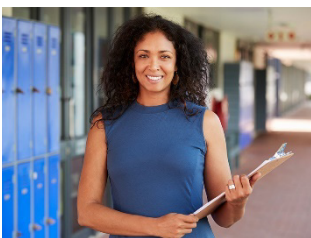
- year advisor



- assistant principal



- deputy principal



- principal.

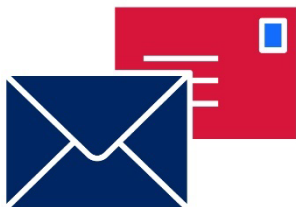
How to contact a school



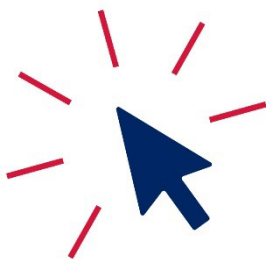
You can call the school.



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.

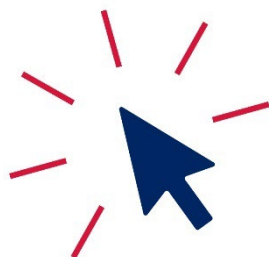


These services are free.



If you need something in a language other than English, you can call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).

131 450



You can also visit TIS's website.

www.tisnational.gov.au

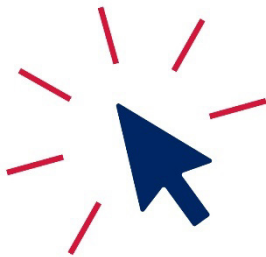


You can call the National Relay Service if you:

- are deaf or hard of hearing
- find it hard to speak using the phone.



133 677

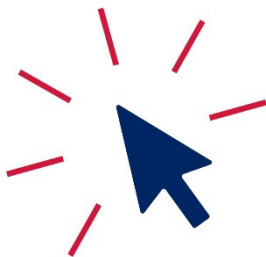


You can also contact the Nation Relay Service on their website.

nrschat.nrscall.gov.au/nrs/internetrelay



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



You can contact The Deaf Society on their website.

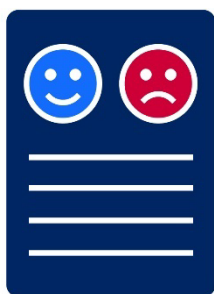
deafconnect.org.au/contact-us

How we will update this document



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

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



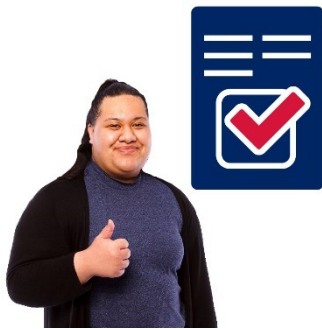
When you make a complaint, you tell a school:

- 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

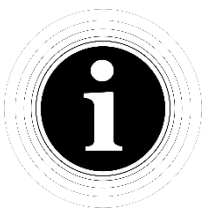
When you make a suggestion, you tell a school what they can do better.

Support person



A support person is someone who:

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



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