Raising a complaint with DECD

We recognise that sometimes things go wrong and you may feel that your expectations are not being met. If you have an unresolved issue or a complaint, please raise it. It is important to work together, talk, listen and find solutions so we can improve our services to the community.

The following information will walk you through **the steps** you can take when you have a complaint or concern.

Types of concerns and complaints

You may choose to make a complaint if you believe that a government public education or early childhood service has:

- done something wrong
- failed to do something they should have done
- acted unfairly or impolitely.

Your concern or complaint may be about:

- the type, level or quality of services
- the behaviour and decisions of staff
- a policy, procedure or practice.

Complaints may be about something we have to do because of state or federal law. In such cases we will talk to you and help you understand the requirements and why they exist.

Your local contact point

For further information visit
www.decd.sa.gov.au

Government of South Australia
Department for Education and Child Development

Raising a complaint with DECD

Working together to resolve complaints in DECD schools and early childhood services

Steps to take if you have a complaint...

Step 1: Talk to the school, preschool or other early childhood service first

We try to resolve concerns or complaints at the local level wherever possible. The care worker, teacher or staff member involved should always be your first point of contact. Make a time to talk to them to discuss your concerns, either in person or over the phone. You may want to put your concerns in a letter or email.

If your concern is about the staff member, then you may wish to contact the site leader. This will be the director in early childhood services, or the principal in schools. The leader will look into your concerns and get back to you. They will work with you and the staff member to resolve the issue.

Most complaints are resolved quickly, often within days. The local site leader will aim to resolve your complaint within four weeks, although complex and contentious matters may take longer. If this is the case we will advise you.

Step 2: Central resolution

If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved at the local level, you may choose to seek support from our complaints resolution services:

Complaints about education and early childhood services
Education Complaint Unit
Phone: 1800 677 435
Email: DECD.EducationComplaint@sa.gov.au

We can help you by:

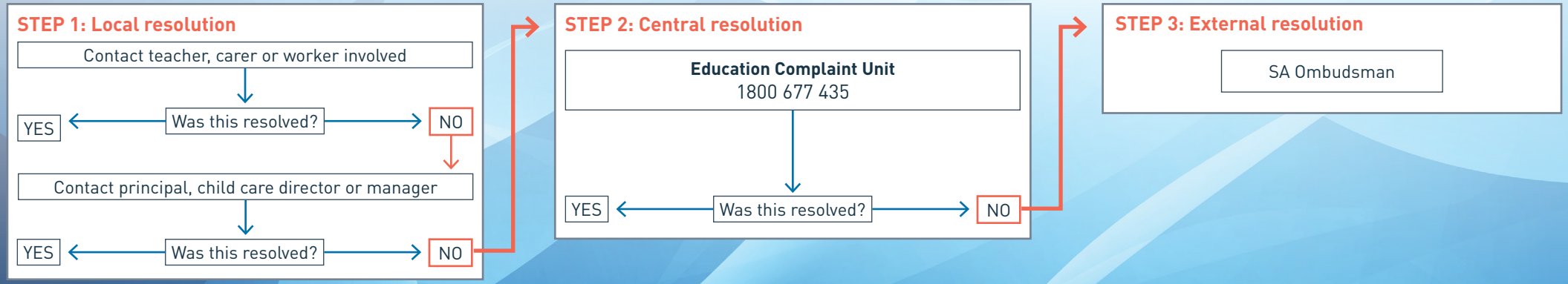
- providing advice and support about the issues behind the complaint
- advocating with local sites to ensure all options for resolution have been explored
- objectively reviewing complaints that have not been resolved at the local level, including through a formal review.

Step 3: Other ways to resolve your issue

If we can't resolve your issue through the previous steps, 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
www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au

Depending on the nature of the matter, the Office of the Ombudsman will usually ask if you have taken your complaint to the school or to the DECD Education Complaint Unit before approaching the Ombudsman.

Steps for raising your concern or complaint