



A Guide to Resolving Issues at Bororen State School

Our School's Commitment To Parents And Caregivers

The outcome of the investigation process at Bororen State School, is the restoration of harmony. This is achieved by working with students, staff and/or parents/caregivers to;

- uncover the facts of a matter
- discuss issues in an informal, fair and open manner,
- allow acknowledgment of feelings and responsibility,
- resolve the issue in the best interests of all involved.

These processes are supported by;

- open partnerships with staff, students and parents/caregivers
- positive learning and supportive school environments
- commitment to an effective behaviour management plan.

Ensure that the appropriate person to manages the matter

- Decide if the issue needs to be referred to a district or central office agency. Child protection and official misconduct matters must be referred to the Director, Audit Operations through the Principal
- Decide the level of involvement and ask for advice when needed.

Decide how best to restore harmony

- Determine the best outcome. Consider the best interests of the student, others involved and the school.
- Decide how a resolution can be best achieved by considering all options.
- Plan the approach so that there will be a prompt resolution.
- Keep everything as simple and informal as possible.
- Make a list of what needs to be done and of the people with whom we need to talk.
- Think about the implications of the issue and the proposed actions.

Show respect for people and observe protocols

- Treat everyone courteously and fairly – people are more likely to accept the decision, even though they might not be entirely happy with the final outcome.
- Ask who else the issue affects.
- Determine quickly when parents/caregivers need to be involved.
- Enlist parent/caregiver support in resolving issues with a phone call where possible
- Where appropriate, interview a student in the presence of another. Observe the correct search protocols.
- Recognise that parents/caregivers may seek legal assistance in appeals about school decisions.

Observe the principles of natural justice

- Make sure that people's rights and freedoms are respected.
- Begin with the presumption of innocence.
- Ensure that the processes are open, fair, and free from bias.
- Ensure all parties get a chance to state their case before a decision is made.
- Be aware of any bias held that might work against the student, staff or other persons involved
- Maintain impartiality – if necessary pass the matter on to a colleague or next-in-line.
- Ensure that the person who has been complained about sees or hears the full allegation and has the opportunity to state their case fully and in a fair way. Do not presume guilt.
- Ensure that processes do not have a negative impact on the quality of information.
- Be aware of the power differences in the situation, and that the student, staff member and/or parent/caregiver may be intimidated.
- Be assertive, but not coercive. Ensure that students have uninterrupted turns to speak.
- Communicate your decision to all concerned. Allow appeals.

We aim for the best interests of all involved, and are committed to alternative dispute resolution. We will help resolve issues with dignity and build community support for the school.

How To Make A Complaint

We want to hear your concerns. You can raise a concern with any member of our staff. Contact the school to make an appointment to see the teacher. Issues you think are serious should be raised with the administration (the Principal).

What You Can Expect

There are usually four phases in handling a complaint. In many instances these can all be worked through quickly in one process.

PHASE 1 – RECEPTION AND CLARIFICATION OF THE COMPLAINT

Try to state your concern calmly, clearly and courteously. Being aggressive will not help resolve the issue. Someone will listen to your concern and make sure they understand it. The teacher/administrator will summarise the main points. He or she will usually explain the school policy or procedure on the issue.

He or she will work out an action plan with you: what he or she will do, what you should do, what your child should do and when you will talk again. He or she may deal with the complaint or refer it to another person. In many cases they should be able to resolve your concern straight away.

PHASE 2 – DECIDING HOW TO HANDLE THE MATTER

Some matters must not be handled at a local school level because they are so serious. They must be referred to Education Queensland's central office or the local regional office.

Other matters will need further investigation. In this phase a decision will be made about how a complaint will be handled.

PHASE 3 – FINDING OUT ABOUT THE MATTER

In this phase the person handling the complaint will try to find out all about your concern. They will try to understand the context and causes. You should help by providing all the information you can. They may need to talk to people to get a complete picture. As they do this they may begin to explore options to resolve the matter.

You can help them by focusing on a positive resolution of the matter. Your information will be treated confidentially (but where the matter must be investigated by an external agency it will need to be passed on). You need to be aware that the person who is being complained about usually has the right to be made aware of the complaint.

PHASE 4 - MAKING A DECISION ABOUT THE COMPLAINT

Based on the facts gathered in Phase 3 about the complaint, the principal or delegate makes a decision on the complaint. Within 28 days of the receipt of the complaint, the principal provides the complainant with either:

- a written response, including reasons for the decision, or
- a written notification that their complaint has been referred to an internal or external agency.

PHASE 5 - REVIEW PHASE

If the complainant is not satisfied with this response, they are encouraged to discuss it further with the school principal and/or advised to contact the principal's supervisor, the Executive Director, Schools at the regional office. Further review of the decision is available from the Queensland Ombudsman.



Kim-Maree Lambert

Principal