

manypathways *No limits*

Benowa

STATE HIGH SCHOOL



Customer Complaints Policy

Respect

| Integrity

| Diligence

| Compassion

Benowa State High School

Customer Complaints Management (CCM) - Policy & Process

1. Our School Charter and School Values

We are committed to fostering a school environment that is supportive, respectful, compatible with human rights and provides all students with opportunities to engage in quality learning. Effective partnerships with parents, carers, students and school staff is an essential part of us achieving this goal. We want to know what we are doing well, but also if there are any areas where we can improve or do things differently.

2. CCM Purpose

Benowa State High School appreciates and acknowledges that parents, carers, students and community members have a right to make a complaint. This document outlines how Benowa State High School will manage these complaints and this management description is modelled and based on the Department of Education (DoE), Queensland's, Framework, Policy and Procedure for managing customer complaints.

3. What is a customer complaint?

A complaint is a customer complaint if the person is unhappy with the service or action of our school or staff, and directly affected by the service or action they are unhappy with.

In our school, the person making a complaint will usually be a parent, carer, student or other school community member, but could also be anyone else directly impacted by something at our school.

Some complaints must be managed using different processes. These include:

- issues about harm, or risk of harm, to a student attending a state school, which must be managed in accordance with the Student protection procedure; and
- complaints about corrupt conduct, public interest disclosures or certain decisions made under legislation - refer to the Excluded complaints factsheet for more information.

4. Roles and responsibilities

We treat everyone with respect, courtesy and fairness, and aim to act compatibly with human rights. Our responsibilities include:

- following the customer complaints management framework, policy and procedure when managing complaints;
- resolving complaints promptly; and
- providing information about our processes, timeframes and any available review options.

If someone makes a complaint, they also have responsibilities, including:

- cooperating respectfully and understanding that unreasonable conduct will not be tolerated;
- giving us a clear idea of the issue or concern and a possible solution;
- providing all relevant information when making the complaint;
- understanding that addressing a complaint can take time; and
- letting us know if something changes, including if help is no longer needed.

5. Complaints Management Process (CMP)

At Benowa State High School, our complaints management process involves the following steps:

i. Receipt

The complaint should be made where the problem or issue arose. At Benowa State High School, we ask parents, carers, students or community members who would like to make a

complaint to either email office@benowashs.eq.edu.au or visit the school office to make an appointment to meet with the principal or another member of staff.

The following information should be provided when making a complaint:

- what happened, including when and where it occurred, and who was involved; and
- what outcome or solution you are seeking to address your issue or concern.

We accept anonymous complaints, however it is important to understand that this could limit how a complaint is assessed and resolved, and it may also prevent an outcome being provided.

ii. Assessment and management

We will examine the issue(s) raised and try to resolve the complaint. We aim to do this promptly, but understand that we have many other responsibilities and it may not be possible to make contact or resolve a complaint immediately.

iii. Providing an outcome

Once we finish examining the complaint, we will let the person who has made the complaint know the outcome and any available review options.

6. Review options

If the person who has made the complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome or the way we handled their complaint, they can contact the regional office to ask for an internal review. A Request for internal review form should be completed and the request should be submitted within 28 days.

There is also an external review option (for example, the Queensland Ombudsman or Queensland Human Rights Commission), which becomes available once the DoE complaints process has been exhausted.

7. Information and resources

Attachment 1: Customer Complaint Checklist.

Attachment 2: Customer Complaints Categorisation Scheme.

Attachment 3: Establishing a complainant as being directly affected.

The following DoE resources contain additional information:

- Customer complaints management framework, policy and procedure.
- Compliments, suggestions and customer complaints website.
- Making a customer complaint: Information for parents and carers.

8. Endorsement



Mark Rickard
Principal



Dr Harry Kanasa
School Council President

Effective date: January 2020

Review date: January 2023

Checklist: What is a customer complaint?

Strategy and Performance
Analysis. Evidence. Insight.

Customer complaint

Customer complaint is defined in section 219A(4) of the *Public Service Act 2008* (Qld) as an expression of dissatisfaction about the service or action of the department or its staff, by a person who is directly affected by the service or action, and includes complaints related to:

- a decision made, or a failure to make a decision, by a public service employee of the department
- an act, or failure to act, by the department
- the formulation of a proposal or intention by the department
- the making of a recommendation by the department
- the customer service provided by a public service employee of the department.

Checklist

The definition above can be broken into the following five elements. If all elements are present, the matter is a customer complaint.

	Element	Things to think about
1	<p>Dissatisfaction</p> <p><i>The customer must be dissatisfied.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissatisfaction can be implicit or explicit – for example, the customer does not need to be visibly angry or upset to be dissatisfied. • Examples of a lack of dissatisfaction might be a person bringing something to our attention – for example, someone notices school windows have been left open during school holidays.
2	<p>About the Department of Education</p> <p><i>The dissatisfaction must relate to a service or action of the department or its staff.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the dissatisfaction concerns something that is not the department's responsibility, it will not be a customer complaint – for example, fees set by the Commonwealth. • 'Staff' can include people acting on behalf of the department – for example, a specialist examiner contracted to conduct music exams, or a religious instruction provider the department has authorised to deliver services at a school. The Volunteers and other third party factsheet contains more information.



Checklist: What is a customer complaint?

Strategy and Performance
Analysis. Evidence. Insight.

	Element	Things to think about
3	<p>Directly affected</p> <p><i>The customer must be directly affected by the service or action they are complaining about.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department accepts representative complaints – for example, a disability advocate, community elder, or other support person may make a complaint on the complainant's behalf or assist them with the process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is important to confirm that the representative is authorised to act for the complainant. • Sometimes it is unclear if someone is directly affected. The Directly affected factsheet contains an approach to help determine if the complainant has a sufficient connection to the complaint.
4	<p>Seeking outcome</p> <p><i>A customer must want the department to take some action or deliver some outcome in response to their complaint.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcome the customer seeks could be implicit or explicit. • Sometimes the outcome may be unrealistic or unreasonable (e.g. sacking a senior person), however this does not mean the issue is not a customer complaint. It may just influence how you manage the complaint. • Examples when a customer may not be seeking an outcome include a customer letting us know about something for our information, or providing feedback.
5	<p>No other process</p> <p><i>The complaint must be in scope and must not need to be managed through another process.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some complaints are outside the scope of the customer complaints management framework and must be managed through different processes – for example, employee complaints, corrupt conduct, public interest disclosures, etc. • The <i>Excluded complaints factsheet</i> provides information about these excluded complaints.

Department of Education - Complaints Categorisation Scheme

Category	Explanation	Sub-categories
Assets, infrastructure and information technology	Customer complaints related to the age, quality or performance of Department of Education (DoE) facilities, equipment and systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New schools • Air conditioning • Noise issues (school bells, lights, etc) • Asbestos • Other • IT services and Internet issues • School and grounds maintenance • Laptops and BYO devices • School facilities
Health and safety	Customer complaints that relate to the health and safety of children/students, DoE staff and volunteers who are providing services on behalf of the department.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other • Administration of student medication • School security • Bullying • Student behaviour • Cleanliness of facilities • Student health and wellbeing • Contagious diseases • Workplace hazards or risks • Cyberbullying
Other	Customer complaints not captured under the other categories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other
Policy and procedure	Customer complaints related to the department's application of a DoE policy, procedure or other statement of intent/direction, or a customer complaint about the content of a departmental policy or procedure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Student Program policies and procedures • Other • Prosecutions (including failure to attend and failure to enrol) • Registering with an Early Childhood Development Program • Religious instruction • School disciplinary absence (including exclusions, short and long suspensions) • School transport • Special school enrolment • Student absences/attendance • Student banking • Students with disabilities (including reasonable adjustment) • Student health support needs • Access to records/right to information • Additional semesters/repeating a year level • Bullying (policy or procedure) • Cancellation of enrolment • Customer complaints process • Delayed/Early entry to Prep • Distance education • Dress code / Uniform • Enrolment (including compulsory schooling, compulsory participation and exemptions) • Enrolment Management Plans and catchment areas • Enrolment of visa holders • Family law matters • Home schooling • Hostile persons / Parent behaviour • International students

Category	Explanation	Sub-categories
Privacy	Customer complaints relating to a breach of customer privacy. Complaints may include allegations that DoE has breached its obligations under the <i>Information Privacy Act 2009</i> (Qld).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breach of customer privacy • Other
Procurement, fees and charges	Customer complaints related to procurement processes and decisions and schedules for fees and charges. Complaints may concern perceived unfairness or inequitable charging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining fees and charges • Extracurricular fees (including excursions, formal and sport etc) • Fundraising • International Student Program fees • International Student Program refunds • Other • Student Resource Scheme • Supplier complaints about other suppliers • Suppliers excluded/prevented from offering/providing goods/services • Suppliers unsuccessful in request for quote/offer processes • Voluntary school and P&C contributions
Services	Customer complaints related to the quality or amount of services provided by DoE staff or volunteers. Complaints may relate to dissatisfaction with how a service is provided or the level of service provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative decisions • Class placement • Curriculum and VET • Extra-curricular activities • International Travel (Study Tours) • Other • Pedagogy • School administration • Student reports • Student support • Subject selection
Staff and volunteers	Customer complaints related to the professional behaviour of DoE staff and volunteers providing services on behalf of DoE. This encompasses decisions, behaviours, actions or omissions that occur when the staff member or volunteer is acting in a professional capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct • International Student Program Blue Cards • International Student Program Homestay • International Student Program staff • Other • Parents and Citizens' Association members, staff and volunteers • Principal conduct / leadership • Staff conduct • Volunteer conduct
Third parties	Customer complaints related to parties contracted by DoE to provide services on behalf of the department. Complaints may relate to health and safety, the performance of professional duties, services provided, how issues and decisions are managed, fees and charges, or facilities, equipment and systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External examiners or facilitators (e.g. Australian Music Examination Board, religious instructors) • Other • Outside school hours care • Research applicants • Transport providers

When is a complainant directly affected?

Directly affected

One of the [elements](#) of a customer complaint is that the complainant must be directly affected by the matter they are complaining about, or the complainant must be making a representative complaint on behalf of someone who is directly affected. Usually, it is clear if a person is directly affected (e.g. they are a parent of a school student), however sometimes this element requires greater consideration.

Suggested approach

Consider the following factors to decide if someone is directly affected by the issue they are complaining about:

1. Is the person making the complaint **directly affected** by the particular action/service/conduct raised? Consider:
 - a. Is their interest greater than the concerns of a merely interested bystander who has no direct interest in the outcome?
 - b. Is their interest more than a purely intellectual, academic or emotional concern?
 - c. Is their interest well above that of an ordinary member of the public who may have become aware of the issue through the media?
 - d. Do they have a sufficient connection to, and alleged harm from, the decision or action being challenged which would give them a right to be heard in relation to the issues?
 - e. Are they a person whose rights or interests would be affected if the decision or action stood or continued?
2. Is the person making a **representative complaint** on behalf of another person?
 - a. If the complainant is not directly affected, are they acting on behalf of another individual (e.g. a student)?
 - b. Is the other individual directly affected by the department's action/service/conduct? (see step 1)
 - c. If so, is the complainant authorised to act on behalf of the affected individual? This is important to ensure information is not inappropriately disclosed and privacy is not breached.



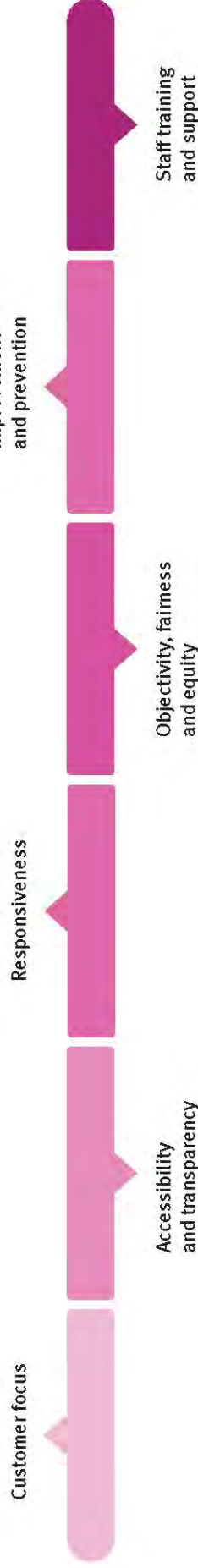
When is a complainant directly affected?

Example scenarios

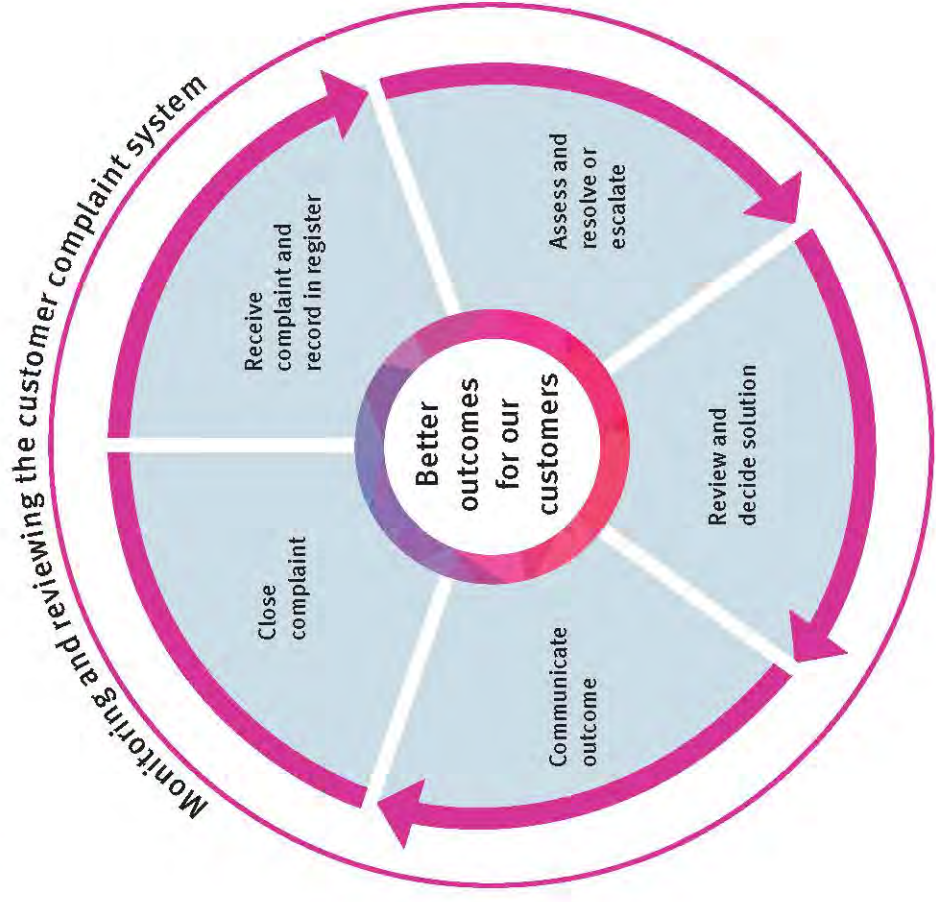
Scenario	Considerations
<p>A. A parent or guardian of a student makes a complaint to the department about a lack of air conditioning at their child's school.</p>	<p>A student's parent is making the complaint about air conditioning. Because the parent or guardian's child is impacted, they are both directly affected and an authorised representative.</p>
<p>B. A grandparent or other relative of a student makes a complaint to the department about a lack of air conditioning at the student's school.</p>	<p>If it is known that the grandparent or relative is the child's guardian or carer, the direct connection is established, and the matter would be assessed as in scenario A.</p> <p>If the department has no information about the familial circumstances, it is not immediately clear if the grandparent or relative is directly affected. The person assessing the complaint should confirm if the grandparent or relative is authorised to make a complaint on behalf of the student.</p>
<p>C. A grandparent or other relative of a student makes a complaint to the department about a lack of air conditioning at the student's school. They advise the department that they are complaining because the parent is not interested in complaining themselves.</p>	<p>It appears the grandparent or other relative is not making a representative complaint on behalf of the student as they do not have the consent of someone directly affected (i.e. the student or their parents). Instead, the grandparent or relative is making their own complaint. As they are not directly affected by the department's action/service, their complaint would not be a customer complaint. This query would be managed through normal correspondence processes.</p>
<p>D. A person contacts the department to generally complain about the lack of air conditioning in state schools in south-east Queensland.</p>	<p>This is not a customer complaint, as the person has not outlined any direct connection to a student and/or how the lack of air conditioning impacts them. Their interest is the same as any other member of the public.</p>

Customer complaints management framework

Principles



Our approach



What is a customer complaint?

An expression of dissatisfaction about the service or action of the department, or its staff, by a person who is directly affected by the service or action, and includes complaints related to:

- a decision made, or a failure to make a decision, by a public service employee of the department
- an act, or failure to act, by the department
- the formulation of a proposal or intention by the department
- the making of a recommendation by the department
- the customer service provided by a public service employee of the department.

Source: section 219A Public Service Act 2008



What is not a customer complaint?

Our customers contact us for many reasons and most of the time our customers do not have a complaint. It is not a complaint when our customers:

- request more information
- request a change in services or request a new service
- make a suggestion for improving our services
- express a concern about a situation
- provide feedback on the department's performance
- are not directly affected by the decision or action of the department
- provide information (e.g. reporting an incident).



Accessibility

Customer complaints can be made by:

- telephone
 - email
 - in person
 - Smart Service Queensland
 - QGov website
 - departmental social media
 - letter.
- When making a customer complaint, complainants:
- can be supported by a friend, an advocate, an interpreter or a community elder
 - can request other reasonable assistance, such as translation services or text telephone services
 - will be provided information about how to make a customer complaint and how complaints will be managed, including any review options available
 - can remain anonymous, although this may limit how we can address your complaint.



Complaint type and response times

The time it takes to resolve a customer complaint depends on a number of factors, including when the complaint was made and the complexity of the complaint. As a guide:

- simple customer complaints may take up to 20 working days*
- customer complaints requiring some inquiry may take up to 45 working days
- customer complaints that require investigation and referral may take up to 90 working days or longer in some cases
- complaints involving human rights issues will take up to 45 business days
- an internal review should take 45 working days, subject to complexity.

* For school-related complaints, working days refers to school days during the school term.



The Department of Education welcomes feedback from its customers.



We use customer complaints data to inform improvements and to meet our complaints reporting obligations under the *Public Service Act 2008* and *Human Rights Act 2019*.

Customer complaints management framework

How we handle customer complaints

We try to resolve customer complaints as quickly as possible at the point where the complaint is received or after it is re-directed to the appropriate business area. If a complainant is dissatisfied, they may be able to ask for a review.

Our approach to handling complaints is based on the Australian/New Zealand Standard on complaints management (AS/NZS 10002:2014).



External review
Dissatisfied customer seeks external review

Requesting an external review

- Complainants can ask an external agency, such as the Queensland Ombudsman or Queensland Human Rights Commission, to review the department's handling of their customer complaint if they are dissatisfied.



Internal review
Dissatisfied customer seeks internal review

Requesting an internal review

- Complainants can request an internal review if dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint and/or the way the department handled the complaint.



Early resolution
Frontline handling and resolution of customer complaints

Resolving at point of receipt

- We always try to manage and resolve customer complaints quickly at the frontline or the point where the complaint is received so we can fix issues locally.



Complaint categories

The department uses set categories to record customer complaints at the organisational level. This helps us analyse customer complaints to identify trends and issues to improve our services. The categories are:

- Health and safety
- Services
- Staff and volunteers
- Policy and procedure
- Third parties
- Assets, infrastructure and information technology
- Procurement, fees and charges
- Privacy
- Other



Excluded complaints

Some complaints are outside the scope of this framework and will be managed through different processes:

- complaints under the *Education and Care Services Act 2013* and the Education and Care Services National Law
- complaints about certain decisions made under legislation
- complaints about decisions made under a contract
- employee complaints about their employment (*Public Service Act 2008* and Public Service Commission Directives)
- complaints involving corrupt conduct (*Crime and Corruption Act 2001*)
- public interest disclosures (*Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*)



Complainant responsibilities

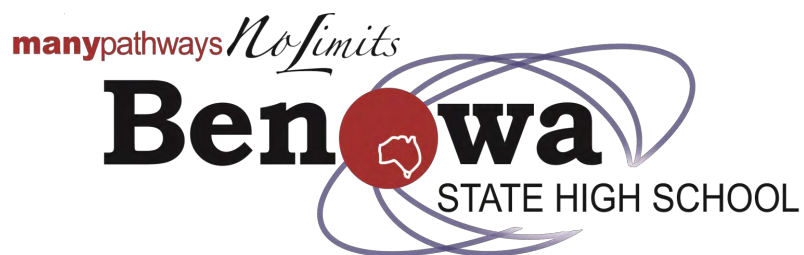
Customers making a complaint are responsible for:

- cooperating respectfully and understanding that unreasonable conduct will not be tolerated, including abusive, aggressive or disrespectful behaviour
- providing a clear idea of the problem and the desired solution
- providing all relevant information when the complaint is made
- understanding that some decisions cannot be overturned or changed under the framework approach
- informing the department of changes affecting the complaint including if help is no longer required.



Resources

- Customer complaints management policy and procedure
- Internal review procedure
- Information sheets
- Excluded complaints factsheet
- Information for parents and carers factsheet
- Compliments and customer complaints website



Contact Us

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