Process for Parents to raise concerns or grievances.

We believe that the education of every child is a partnership between schools, parents and carers and the Department for Education and Child Development. Children are very special to everyone and parents in particular will be very aware and rightly concerned about anything that makes their child unhappy, feel unsafe or unable to learn at their best.

We encourage parents and carers to raise any concerns with the school. Any concern raised with any member of the school staff will be investigated and hopefully resolved. We commit to responding to (but not necessarily resolving) your complaint within 5 working days. In most cases this will be much sooner. The following guidelines give information about the best people to approach to raise any initial concerns.

Concerns about general school matters such as the timing of special events; school policies; facilities; student free days are most appropriately addressed by the governing council, key staff members or by the principal.

Concerns about personal matters such as those about student or child, parent or caregiver or staff relationships should be raised in a confidential manner directly with the relevant teacher first if at all possible and if not resolved then leadership staff members such as the counsellor, the deputy principal or principal.

The staff member to whom you communicate your complaint, will complete a written record, which will be kept at the school.

You have the right to expect that all DECD employees at Nuriootpa Primary School will respect your right to make a complaint and that they will 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.

It is preferable for as many concerns or issues as possible to be resolved at the school level. If this is not possible then parents may choose to contact the Regional Director of the Barossa. Should the issue still be unresolved then the Department has a parent complaint service which can support all parties to work together to resolve issues. The phone number for this service is 1800 677 435.

The last resort for any complaint should be the state ombudsman. They will check that all the other avenues have been used before they will look at any issue.

Any issues related to child abuse can be reported to the Child Abuse Report Line 13 14 78 who are mandated to deal with these issues and will work with the police and education department when necessary.

Parents should never take it on themselves to approach children other than their own about school based issues.

This Policy will be published in the newsletter early in Term 2, 2012 and parents of new students who enrol at the school from April 2012 onward will have copy of it in their enrolment pack. A pamphlet titled “A parent guide to raising a concern or complaint” published by D.E.C.D. is available from the school office.

In subsequent years, the policy will then be reviewed and published annually early in the year and included in the student’s diaries. Staff members will be made aware of it and the necessary procedures at their annual induction at the beginning of the year.

The Policy can also always be viewed on the school’s website www.nurips.sa.edu.au which will also contain links for further information from DECD.