

General Warning

The purpose of this fact sheet is to give general introductory information about the complaints process. It does not contain legal advice.

WARNING: Alternative legal action should be considered before making a complaint. What is included in a complaint may be relevant to any current or future legal proceedings. If you are involved in legal action you should immediately see a lawyer and not proceed with a complaint.

If you (or the complainant, if you are complaining on their behalf) want financial compensation, support or money you should see a lawyer before making a complaint.

General complaint information

Complaints are rarely about just one thing. When you have a problem, it may be that a number of things have gone wrong. Below are some of the common areas where issues may arise that could lead to a complaint.

Discrimination	Disability and NDIS services	Policing, Custody and Detention
Seniors and Aged Care supports and services	Consumer and Business disputes	Phone and Internet services
Banking, Insurance and Superannuation	Energy and Water services	Housing and Real Estate
Health Care services	Employment issues	Education and Training providers
Government Agencies and Departments	Child Safety and Protection	State Fines and Debts
Corruption	Privacy and Access to Information	Media and Publications

There are different complaint bodies to handle different types of complaints. You should consider the different pathways available to decide the most appropriate pathway for your circumstances. One event could lead to multiple complaints. That means you may need to lodge more than one complaint to have all of your concerns addressed.

It is usually quickest and easiest to try to resolve a complaint directly with the person or body you are having a problem with. Many complaint handling bodies will not act on a complaint unless you have tried to resolve your complaint directly. If you do not feel it is safe or appropriate to complain directly, you should contact the relevant complaint body to discuss your situation.

Complaints involving discrimination

There are state and federal complaints bodies that handle complaints about discrimination. If your situation involves discrimination, you should consider making a discrimination complaint in addition to any other complaints. Discrimination may occur when someone is treated less favourably on the basis of: race; sex; gender; disability; age; sexuality;

relationship status; pregnancy; caring responsibilities; or having or being thought to have an infectious disease.

WARNING: The state and federal bodies that handle discrimination complaints have different rules, including time limits. You can make a complaint to both the state and federal complaint bodies, but they may decide not to address your concerns if you have already complained elsewhere. For example, if you have already lodged a discrimination complaint to anti-discrimination NSW, it is likely that Australian Human Rights Commission will decide not to act on your complaint. Please carefully review the discrimination factsheets for information about your options before making a discrimination complaint.

Department of Education Victoria (DOEV)

The Department of Education Victoria (**DOEV**) aims to make sure every student in Victoria can access high-quality public education. It works to improve student wellbeing and experiences, and to support teachers with the resources they need to guide young people.

Parents, carers, and teachers at public schools can raise concerns or complaints about things that happen under the care or supervision of the school. Adult students, advocates, and members of the public can also make complaints if the issue affects the school community.

The goal is to resolve issues in a way that supports the student's wellbeing and helps keep them engaged in their learning.

Legislation and Key Terms

Relevant Legislation:

- [*Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)*](#)

Key terms:

Central Office: The DOEV's central office located at 2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne 3002.

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction where a response or resolution is wanted, expected or required.

Complainant: A person who has made a complaint.

Incident: As described in the Managing and Reporting School Incident Policy in place by the DOEV, means an actual or alleged event or situation that:

- Causes harm or creates a risk of harm being caused to the health, safety or wellbeing of a student either directly or indirectly while under the care or supervision of the school;
- Impacts a student and is brought to the attention of the school (irrespective of where the event occurred) provided it impacts the student or others in the school environment;
- Creates harm or a risk of harm to the health, wellbeing or safety of an employee directly or indirectly in the work environment;
- Affects or risks school operations (including security, property damage or emergencies); and

- Requires police notification or is another form of serious conduct;

Parent Complaint Policy means the school-specific policy governing the parental complaint procedure that should be accessible upon request.

Regional Office means one of the regional offices within the region that the school the complaint relates to is located. The list of regions and regional offices can be found [here](#).

Step 1: What type of Complaints can be made to this body?

The DOEV handles Complaints about Education Services provided by Victorian Government schools	
Sub-category	Example
Bullying or harassment at school	<p>You should make a complaint if your child is being bullied, harassed, or intimidated at a public school and the school hasn't acted appropriately. Bullying can affect a student's learning, confidence, and safety. Schools are expected to take these issues seriously and act quickly to protect students.</p> <p><i>Example: Liam's parents raised concerns after he was repeatedly teased and called names in the schoolyard over several weeks. Although they informed the school, staff did not follow up or put a safety plan in place.</i></p>
Discrimination by school staff or students	<p>You should make a complaint if someone at school is treating your child unfairly based on race, religion, disability, gender, or other personal characteristics. Every child has the right to feel respected and treated fairly, no matter their background. Discrimination goes against DOEV policies and should always be addressed.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Tanveer, a Year 7 student, was discouraged from speaking in class by his teacher, who frequently mocked his accent. His older sister reported that this had affected his confidence, but no changes were made.</i> <i>Emily, a student who uses a mobility aid, was not selected for a group project that involved outdoor work. Her teacher told the class she "wouldn't be able to keep up anyway."</i>
Issues with student wellbeing or mental health support	<p>You should make a complaint if your child's mental health, social, or emotional needs are not being supported by the school. Student wellbeing includes feeling safe, supported, and able to participate. If this support is missing or denied, it's okay to raise a concern.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ava told her teacher that she was having panic attacks before school and asked to see a counsellor. The teacher said she was "just nervous" and did not refer her for support.</i> <i>Oliver returned to school after a family bereavement. His father asked for adjustments to help him settle back in, but the school did not offer any support or check-ins.</i>
Concerns about teaching quality or curriculum delivery	<p>You should make a complaint if you believe teaching is poor or important parts of the curriculum are not being taught. Students are entitled to a structured education. If the teaching isn't consistent or parts of the curriculum are skipped, it can affect your child's learning.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ella's class had multiple relief teachers during Term 2. Her parents were concerned that no structured learning took place and that the students were left to watch movies most days.</i> <i>Lucas's school failed to cover key science topics required under the Victorian curriculum, and his assessments did not match the learning content.</i>
Inadequate or inappropriate educational services	<p>You should make a complaint if school services (like canteen, uniforms, or programs) don't meet student needs. Schools should provide services that support all students. If services are poor, missing, or unfair, they can make school harder for some students.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Charlotte's parents were concerned that the school food service was offering a narrow range of food options, all of which were fast food, and that the school was failing to provide enough healthy food options for students.</i> <i>After-school care at Noah's school regularly ran late and didn't provide the learning support it advertised. His grandmother, who relied on the program, found that staff were frequently absent and activities were disorganised.</i>
Failure to implement an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or support plan	<p>You should make a complaint if the school is not following your child's agreed learning or behaviour support plan. IEPs are legal documents that outline specific supports. If a school isn't following your child's plan, it can impact their learning and wellbeing.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Mary has an individual education plan which recommends the use of a sensory room linked to her specific learning goals. Mary's parents are concerned that the sensory room within the school is not fit for purpose and is not properly maintained.</i> <i>Henry's IEP required that he receive instructions in short, simplified steps. His teacher continued to deliver long verbal explanations without checking his understanding.</i>
Failure to make reasonable adjustments for students with disability	<p>You should make a complaint if your child isn't being supported with the changes they need to learn equally. Schools must support students with disability so they can access learning on the same basis as others. If this doesn't happen, it's a valid complaint.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ethan's psychologist recommended he be given extra time during tests due to a processing disorder. Despite multiple emails from his mother, the school refused to make this adjustment.</i> <i>Jasmine, who is legally blind, was not provided with large print materials and often had to rely on classmates to read out loud to her.</i>
Student safety or supervision concerns	<p>You should make a complaint if the school fails to keep students safe or supervise them properly. Safety is a basic expectation. If a</p>

	<p>school isn't supervising students properly or ignoring safety issues, it puts students at risk.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>During lunch, Caleb fell from an outdoor structure and injured his arm. His parents later found out there had been no staff rostered to supervise that area.</i> • <i>Sienna was accidentally left behind on a school excursion when staff failed to check the attendance roll before departing.</i>
Poor management of student records, privacy, or authorisation	<p>You should make a complaint if personal information or student safety procedures are not properly followed. Schools must keep student information private and make sure only approved people collect children. Any breach of this is serious.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Amara was collected from school by her neighbour, who was not on the approved pick-up list. The school did not call her mother or record the collection.</i> • <i>Luca's personal health records were accidentally sent to another parent via email, breaching his family's privacy.</i>
Unfair discipline, suspension or expulsion	<p>You should make a complaint if your child was disciplined in a way that was unfair or against policy. Discipline must be fair and in line with policy. If your child is suspended or punished in a way that seems extreme or unfair, you can raise this.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Zane was suspended for wearing a culturally significant head covering during sport. His parents were not informed before the suspension was issued.</i> • <i>Anika was expelled from school following a single behavioural incident, even though there was no history of past issues or prior warnings.</i>
Unfair or inappropriate school decision-making	<p>You should make a complaint if the school made a decision about your child that feels unfair or poorly handled. Staff, teachers and administrators are required to make many decisions in relation to school activities, operations and students. These decisions should be made in compliance with any school policies in place and any applicable policy or guidance that has been enacted by the DOEV.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mateo applied to be part of the school's leadership program. Despite meeting all the listed criteria, he was not shortlisted and no feedback was given.</i> • <i>Grace was denied entry to the Year 6 school camp due to a late permission slip, even though other students were allowed to attend under the same circumstances.</i>
Issues with school	<p>You should make a complaint if your child was refused enrolment or was placed inappropriately. Every child is entitled to enrol in their</p>

enrolment or placement	<p>local public school. If your child is denied entry without good reason, it may be worth challenging.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Noah was refused enrolment at his local public school, despite living well within the zone and having a sibling already enrolled.</i> • <i>Maya was placed in a lower maths group after transferring schools, without any assessment or discussion with her previous teacher.</i>
Concerns about school fees or payments	<p>You should make a complaint if your child was treated unfairly for not paying voluntary contributions. Public school fees are mostly voluntary. Your child should never be excluded or treated differently based on whether you've paid.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lila was not allowed to attend an incursion because her parents had not paid the voluntary curriculum contribution.</i> • <i>Daniel was denied a school diary because his family could not afford the "booklist package," even though diaries were required for all students.</i>
Concerns about school practices, policies or procedures	<p>You should make a complaint if the school lacks a proper policy or isn't following DOEV-approved guidance.</p> <p>Victorian Public Schools are expected to adhere to a variety of operational policies and guidance set out by the DOEV. These include policies, amongst others, in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student health, safety, wellbeing and engagement; • School operations and student administration; • Learning, teaching, curriculum and improvement. <p>A complete list of these policies and what they cover can be found in the Policy and Advisory Library.</p> <p>Where you have a concern that the school is failing to comply or adhere to any of these policies, you can raise a complaint accordingly.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cash's parents have become aware that he has not received any financial literacy education at school, which every Victorian government school is required to deliver as part of its curriculum.</i> • <i>Andrew is normally picked up by one of his parents after school. However, last week Andrew was allowed to be collected by his best friend Brendan's parents for a sleepover. This was not authorised by Andrew's parents and no records were kept as to who collected their son.</i>
Problems with school facilities or accessibility	<p>You should make a complaint if the school's buildings or equipment are unsafe or inaccessible. School spaces must be safe and inclusive. Broken, dangerous or inaccessible facilities should be addressed promptly.</p>

	<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tahlia's school had a broken lift for two months, preventing her from accessing the second floor. Her classes were not moved to an accessible location.</i> • <i>A leaky roof in the art room caused several slips and near-misses. Despite repeated reports, it was not fixed for an entire term.</i>
Inappropriate behaviour or misconduct by school staff	<p>You should make a complaint if a staff member is behaving unprofessionally or inappropriately. School staff must behave professionally at all times, where they must meet a satisfactory standard of care or professionalism. This includes complaints about any form of harassment, bullying, discrimination, racism or any other untoward behaviour.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ben's teacher regularly yelled at students during class and used sarcasm when students got answers wrong.</i> • <i>A parent observed a staff member making an inappropriate joke about a student's weight in front of others.</i>
Sexual misconduct or abuse involving school staff	<p>You should make a complaint if a staff member has acted sexually inappropriately toward a student. Sexual misconduct is never acceptable. You can report this to the school, the DOEV, or directly to Police if needed.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A former student reported that their music teacher made repeated inappropriate comments during private lessons and once touched their leg without consent.</i> • <i>Another parent contacted the school after learning that a staff member had sent personal messages to their child via social media outside school hours.</i>
Inadequate response to a previous complaint	<p>You should make a complaint if you already raised concerns with the school, but nothing changed. If you've tried to resolve an issue but nothing has changed, you're allowed to take your complaint further.</p> <p>Victorian public schools are expected to provide students with an environment to learn that is focused on student wellbeing and keeping them engaged in learning. There are also a variety of operational policies in place to ensure that all schools follow proper DOEV procedures to maintain school facilities, ensure proper safety practices are in place and support proper curriculum delivery.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lara's parents reported repeated bullying to the principal and class teacher. Despite multiple follow-ups, the behaviour continued and no action plan was developed.</i> • <i>Michael's family submitted a complaint about curriculum delivery, but never received an acknowledgment or outcome, and the issue remained unresolved.</i>

Exclusions	<p>DOEV will not consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints about a private or independent school • Complaints about a Catholic school • Complaints about universities or higher education institutions • Complaints about school curriculum or NAPLAN • Allegations of teacher misconduct relating to registration • Workplace disputes between staff • Complaints about school buses or public transport • Concerns about school zoning or building programs • Complaints about private early childhood centres • Parenting disputes (e.g. custody, enrolment disagreements) • Complaints seeking legal compensation • Complaints based on general dissatisfaction without a specific breach or issue within DOEV's remit.
Additional information	<p>Allegations of criminal conduct or child sexual abuse: The DOEV can receive complaints about sexual misconduct involving school staff, but any suspected criminal behaviour (e.g. sexual abuse, grooming, physical assault) must also be reported to Victoria Police. The DOEV does not investigate criminal offences.</p>

Step 2: What is the Jurisdiction of the complaints body?

Jurisdiction	Description
State	This complaints body has powers to hear complaints under the law of Victoria.
Geographical Scope	The school or education service must be based in Victoria.
Time Limitations	A complaint must be made no more than 12 months after you first became aware of the alleged non-compliance.
Exclusions ¹	<p>The DOEV will not handle complaints relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out-of-State or international schools • Private and independent schools in Victoria • Catholic schools in Victoria • Non-government early childhood services (refer to DFFH or QARD)

¹ [Make a complaint about your school | vic.gov.au](https://www.vic.gov.au/make-a-complaint-about-your-school)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAFE, university or adult education providers • Complaints involving criminal conduct (e.g. sexual abuse, assault – report to Police) • Teacher registration or professional conduct • School transport services • Zoning or infrastructure decisions – cannot be changed through individual complaints • Family law disputes – DOEV cannot override custody or parenting orders • Alternative education programs not funded by the state • Matters already resolved by court, tribunal or regulator
Exercise of discretion	<p>The DOEV has discretion to not investigate a complaint if the DOEV is of the opinion that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint is trivial, vexatious or without substance; or • before making the complaint, you had not attempted to raise the complaint with the school or parent; or • you had raised the complaint with the school or parent but the school or parent has not been given a reasonable time within which to respond to the complaint; • the school or parent has responded satisfactorily to the complaint; • the complaint can be dealt with, and it is more appropriate that the complaint be dealt with, by another person, body, court or tribunal.

Step 3: Who can you make a complaint against?

Respondent	Description
Teachers or school staff members	<p>Complaints can be made about the behaviour, conduct, decisions, or professionalism of a staff member at a Victorian public school.</p> <p>This includes classroom teachers, principals, education support staff, and other school employees.</p>
Regulation staff	<p>Complaints can be made about staff working in the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division (QARD), or about QARD's handling of an issue relating to early childhood services.</p> <p>This includes dissatisfaction with how QARD staff responded to a report, investigation, or request.</p>
Victorian public early childcare education centres	<p>Complaints can be made against the services, policies, procedures, and actions of a early childcare education centre.</p> <p>This includes complaints about the health, safety, wellbeing, staffing practices, or incidents of abuse in early years settings.</p>

Victorian-funded after hours school care providers	You can complain about the services or conduct of after school or holiday care programs that are funded and operated through a Victorian public school. This includes issues around safety, staffing, inclusiveness, and programming.
Victorian public primary or secondary schools	Complaints can be made against the services, policies, procedures, and actions of a Victorian government school (primary or secondary). Includes issues like learning support, school rules, racism, bullying, discrimination, school fees, privacy breaches, and sexual abuse.
Exclusions	<p>The DOEV will not consider complaints regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic school teachers or schools • Independent school teachers or schools • Schools outside Victoria • Private early learning or childcare centres • TAFEs, universities or adult education providers • Parents, students or community members – unless involving school responsibilities • Third-party providers not regulated by DOEV (e.g. external tutors, contractors) • Other government departments or agencies, such as Victoria Police or DHHS

Step 4: Are you eligible to make a complaint?

Eligibility	Description
Who can make a complaint?	<p>Any member of the public can make a complaint, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents; • Mature minors; • Adult students; • Advocates; and • Concerned members of the community.
Pre-requisite steps	<p>Prior to reaching out to the Central Office of the DOEV, you must attempt to resolve complaints at the local level with the school itself and the Regional Office prior to attempting to contact the Central Office.</p> <p>If you do not feel comfortable speaking to and raising the complaint with the school directly, a relevant regional office of the DOEV can be spoken to first to decide upon option and how best to take the issue forward. You may also choose to reach out to the Regional Office first if the issue relates to DOEV's policies or a matter outside of the school's control.</p>

Can complaints be made on behalf of someone? ²	<p>A complaint will generally be made on your own behalf. However, a support person can be utilised and accompany you at any time. This can be any person, including family member, friend, community member or support worker.</p> <p>The support person can assist various parts of the complaint process, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify issues at hand relating to the complaint; • Raise any challenges of difficulties you are having in relation to the complaint; • Facilitate a positive working relationship between yourself and the school; • Understanding the policies of the DOEV; and • Understanding and coming up with resolutions in relation to the complaint with the school.
Exclusions	<p>You generally cannot make a complaint if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have no direct connection to the issue or school • You are making a complaint without the person's consent • You are not the affected student or legal representative in a historical abuse case • You are an estranged parent without legal rights • You are a young person lodging a complex complaint alone without adequate support • You are a staff member raising an internal HR grievance • You are acting on behalf of a community group without a specific case
Additional information you need to know	<p>Each school will also have a Parent Complaint Policy, which may set out what you must do or steps they have to take in resolving the issue at the local school. If not satisfied by the resolution obtained following this process, you can then pursue the issue with a relevant Regional Office.</p> <p>Complaints may also be referred by the complaints team at the Regional office and/or Central office to the Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution (the Independent Office). If this occurs, the Independent Office will discuss its processes with you and give you the option of working with the Independent Office instead.</p>

Step 5: What remedies are available at this body?

Power	Description
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² [Make a complaint about your school | vic.gov.au](https://www.vic.gov.au/make-a-complaint-about-your-school)

Mediation or Conciliation	Where appropriate, the school can request the Region to assist with engaging a mediator or other conflict resolution service to assist with addressing the issue.
Explanation	<p>The school or DOEV may provide a clear explanation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why a decision was made • Which policy, law or guideline was followed • What factors were considered
Apology	A school or staff member may offer a verbal or written apology where appropriate.
Change or reversal of a decision	Where appropriate, the school may reconsider or reverse a decision that was unfair, inconsistent, or made without proper process.
Change to school practice or procedure	A complaint may result in the school agreeing to change or review its existing practice, process, or routine.
Review or update of school policy	The school may undertake to review or revise its formal school policies (e.g. bullying, uniform, behaviour management), especially if they appear non-compliant with DOEV guidance.
Support for a student or family	<p>The school may offer additional support, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusted learning supports • Counselling referrals • A formal student support plan
Referral to another complaint body or process	<p>If the issue falls outside DOEV's scope, the complainant may be formally referred to a more appropriate body, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VIT (teacher registration) • Victoria Police (criminal matters) • VCAA (curriculum/testing)
Regional Review (internal review by the Department)	<p>The Regional Office may undertake a review of the situation. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the complaint details and evidence • Considering whether the school's actions were appropriate • Recommending outcomes back to the school
Staff guidance or feedback (informal action)	Where appropriate, DOEV or school leadership may provide guidance or professional feedback to staff as a result of a complaint.
Exclusions	<p>The DOEV cannot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay you money or financial compensation

- Suspend, discipline, or fire staff (even if you ask them to)
- Force a school to follow legal orders like a court would
- Investigate criminal matters, these must go to Police

Step 6: Preparing your complaint. What should it include?

Requirement	Description
Format	<p>There are no particular forms that the DOEV has for submitting a complaint to a school or to the Regional or Central offices. Each Regional Office and the Central Office have a phone number and email address which can be used by complainants to get in contact with the DOEV. In person complaints for Regional Offices and Central Offices are not an option. Each individual school will have its own practices and preferences on how to submit a complaint and it would be best to contact the school or refer to the Parent Complaint Policy.</p> <p>If the complainant requires interpretation services in order to proceed with the complaint, these are accessible via the National Translating and Interpreting Service</p>
Personal Details	<p>Complainants should provide their name, contact details (phone number and/or email address and/or postal address), to allow the DOEV to follow up on the complaint and obtain any further information it may require to conduct a more thorough investigation into the issues at hand.</p> <p>Complaints can also be made to DOEV anonymously, however this may limit the ability of the DOEV to effectively look into and respond to a complaint.³</p>
Respondent's Details	<p>The individual, school or service that is the subject of the complaint needs to be identified in sufficient detail to permit the DOEV to properly respond to the complaint.</p>
Relevant Facts	<p>There is no prescribed information which you are required to include in a complaint, however it would be advisable to include details such as the date; place; and time of the incident, the names of the persons involved and any witnesses (as applicable).</p> <p>You should also set out what the desired outcome to the situation is, the impact the problem has had on your child, the community or otherwise, and list what steps have already taken to try to resolve the problem.</p> <p>If you have received or sent any previous correspondence in relation to the issue or incident (eg. communication with the school or persons involved in the incident).</p>
What NOT to include	<p>Refrain from including any misleading or false information relating to the incident.</p>

³ [DOEV Parent Complaint Policy \(page 6\)](#)

	The DOEV also reminds parties to take a collaborative approach to resolving the issue and to refrain from using any language or taking any action intended to be hostile or aggressive. The DOEV stresses the importance of maintaining a positive relationship with the school to ensure the child is best in the position to meet their education goals and needs. ⁴
Additional information you need to know	<p>If possible, speaking to the school should be the first avenue of point in communication when discussing any issue or concern had.</p> <p>As you are required to have spoken to both the school and Regional Office prior to speaking to the Central office, it would be advisable to include any correspondence with these bodies and any outcome reached when escalating the complaint to the Central Office.</p>

Step 7: Lodging your complaint and next steps.

Step	Description
Where to lodge your complaint	<p><u>School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to your school's Parent Complaint Policy to determine where and whom complaint should be lodged. <p><u>Regional Office</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email: enquiries@education.vic.gov.au Post: This will vary depending on the regional office selected. Telephone: 1800 338 663 or ring the closest regional office to you, which can be found on the www.education.vic.gov.au website. <p><u>Central Office</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email: school.complaints@education.vic.gov.au Telephone (message callback service): (03) 8688 7885 Mailing Address: Deputy Secretary, Schools and Regional Services c/o Manager, Complaints and Improvement Unit GPO Box 4367 Melbourne VIC 3001 <p>If the complaint relates to an issue pertaining to religious or racial discrimination and/or abuse experienced in relation to a Victorian public school, Complainants can chose to contact the Report Racism Hotline at report.racism@education.vic.gov.au or 1800 722 476. This can be contacted before or after contacting the relevant school first.</p>

⁴ [Complaints Quick Reference Guide QRG.pdf](#)

Acknowledgement of receipt	The DOEV's parent complaint policy confirms that receipt of a complaint made to a school will be acknowledged within 2 business days. An indicative timeline as to when a response is to be provided to the complaint is also to be provided by the school.
Assessment/ investigation	The complainant will be provided with an explanation from the school on the steps taken to resolve the matter and the rationale for the course of action taken.
Referral to Regional Office	Where the school has attempted to resolve the issue but a satisfactory result cannot be reached between school and complainant, the complaint can be referred to the regional office. The school can also request the Regional Office to assist with engaging a mediator or other conflict resolution service.
Referral to Central Office	Where the Regional Office is unable to resolve a complaint, it may choose to contact the Central Office complaints team. The complaint will be triaged by this team and result in either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaint being referred to the Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution; • Management of the complaint by the Deputy Secretary of the DOEV; or • Provide an opportunity and support for the school or region to reach an agreed resolution.⁵
Additional information you need to know	It is a good idea to keep a copy of the complaint made. You should update the relevant office / department you have submitted your complaint to about any changes that impact on your complaint. You should try to provide all relevant information at the outset. If you drip feed information over time, that can slow your complaint down.

Step 8: Post-complaint – what if you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint?

Avenue	Description
Internal review opportunities	Where the school has attempted to resolve the issue but a satisfactory result cannot be reached between school and complainant, the complaint can be referred to the Regional Office. The school can also request the Regional Office to assist with engaging a mediator or other conflict resolution service. Where a complainant is unhappy with the resolution at a Regional Office level, they can contact the Central Office. The Central Office itself may address your complaint or can chose to forward your complaint on to the Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution. Following this referral, the Independent Office will review their processes with you and give you the option of working with them if you

⁵ [DOEV Parent Complaint Policy \(page 8\)](#)

	would prefer. The DOEV has not appeared to publish any guidance clarifying on what sorts of issues and complaints is a referral made to the Independent Office.
External review/ remedies	If you are unhappy with the outcome, you can ask the Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution to review the matter. You may also complain to the Victorian Ombudsman.

Step 9: Other bodies that handle complaints about Victorian Education system related complaints

Complaint body	Description
Australian Human Rights Commission	<p>The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) can handle complaints about discrimination that occurs in employment, education, the provision of goods and services, accommodation, sport or the administration of Commonwealth laws and services. If you have experienced discrimination, bullying or harassment on the basis of you ex, disability, race, age or sexual preference the AHRC may be able to help.</p> <p>There are also State Government discrimination complaint bodies who may also be able to assist.</p>
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	<p>The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) can handle complaints about the way personal information has been handled by Australian Government agencies and some private organisations. The OAIC can also review freedom of information decisions that are made by Australian Government agencies and ministers.</p> <p>There are also State Government privacy and information complaint bodies who may also be able to assist.</p>
National Anti-Corruption Commission	The National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) handles complaints about serious or systemic corruption in the Australian Government public sector.
The Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC)	<p>IBAC receives complains and notifications of corruption and misconduct in the public sector. Its jurisdiction includes the DOEV and the government schools it oversees. This includes complaints in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial management of school funds; • Staff recruitment and promotion; • Behaviour of staff and their interaction with parents and students. <p>IBAC notes that it receives various complaints in relation to the behaviour of staff which do not meet the threshold of corruption for the purpose of an IBAC investigation.</p>
Victorian Curriculum and	VCAA is the body which responds to complaints relating to the school curriculum, examinations and NAPLAN.

Assessment Authority (VCAA)	
Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)	<p>VRQA will handle and investigate complaints relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student exchange organisations; • Independent schools;
Victorian School Building Authority (VBSA)	<p>Complaints can be made to the VBSA in relation to any matter relating to the building, design or other related infrastructure relating to a Victorian public school. Any complaint of this nature should still first be brought to the relevant school first.</p>
Victorian Catholic Education Authority	<p>The Victorian Catholic Education Authority will handle any complaints relating to issues or incidents relating to or occurring in relation to a Victorian Catholic school.</p>

Need help to preparing or pursuing your complaint?

Below are organisations that may be able to help you to make your complaint, provide support or advocacy during the complaint process or give you more information.

Organisation	Contact Details	How they can help
Parentline	Website: https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/parentline Telephone: 13 22 89	A telephone counselling and support service for Victorian parents and carers of children up until age 18.
Central Office	Email: https://www.vic.gov.au/school-complaints Telephone: 1800 338 663	Central office of the DOEV who can assist once you have spoken to the school and a regional office.
Translating and Interpreter Service	Website: www.tisnational.gov.au Telephone: 131 450	Provide support to people if English is not their first language.
National Relay Service	Website: www.accesshub.gov.au	Provides a range of services to support people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment to communicate.

Self-help tools and additional resources

Resource	How this helps
Call It Out	Online register for racism/discrimination experienced or witnessed towards First Nations Australians. Not an official complaints body.
How to make a complaint	Guidance on how to make a complaint.
Victorian Legal Aid	Guidance for individuals who are uncertain about where to start when seeking legal advice.

Citations here:

"Parent Concerns and Complaints: How to raise a concern or complaint about your child's experience at a Victorian Government school", Victorian State Government, [Complaints Quick Reference Guide QRG.pdf](#).

"Parent Complaint Policy – Victorian Government Schools", Victorian State Government, content.sdp.education.vic.gov.au/docx

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