

# PARENT GUIDE TALKING WITH YOUR CHILDS SCHOOL

## Introduction

### A simple guide to raising an issue, concern or complaint

When something doesn't feel right for your child at school, it's okay to speak up. Most issues can be resolved through calm, respectful conversations.

**Note on language:** When we use the word *parent*, we mean a child's primary caregiver. This includes carers, guardians, kinship carers and other family members.

## Using this guide

This guide is designed to be used **alongside DECYP's Complaints Management process**. It focuses on the first step – speaking directly with the school – and helps you approach that conversation calmly and clearly. If your concern is not resolved, the DECYP process explains the formal next steps.

## What can parents raise with the school?

You do not need special language or to label something as a "complaint" to ask for a conversation.

Parents commonly raise:

- Wellbeing or safety concerns
- Bullying or friendship issues
- Changes in behaviour, engagement or attendance
- Learning progress or support needs
- Communication issues or misunderstandings
- Questions about classroom expectations
- Impacts of an incident on their child.

If you're unsure whether something is an issue or a complaint, it's still okay to ask questions and seek clarity.

Most concerns should start with your child's class teacher. If the issue is more complex, or not resolved, you can ask to speak with the principal or senior staff.

The aim is to work together to support your child's wellbeing and learning.



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### Before the meeting

A little preparation can help the conversation feel calmer and more productive.

### Book a meeting

Ask for a time to meet (in person or by phone) and briefly explain what you would like to discuss.

You might say:

"I'd like to meet to talk about how things are going for my child. Is there a time that works for you?"

### Jot down your key points

What has been happening  
How it is affecting your child  
What you hope will improve

### Consider a support person

You can bring someone you trust, such as a friend, family member, or School Association Committee member. They can also help by taking notes.

### You are not alone

Raising concerns can feel daunting. It's okay to ask for support.

For general guidance, you can contact:

TASSO (Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations)

TASSO can provide information and guidance but does not replace the school's or DECYP's formal complaints process.

### During the meeting

You deserve a conversation that feels respectful and safe.

Helpful tips:

- Speak from your experience: I've noticed...,"My child has been feeling...," I'm worried about.."
- Ask questions if something is unclear
- Take a pause if you feel overwhelmed

You should not feel outnumbered. If multiple staff are present and you feel uncomfortable, you can say:

"I'm not comfortable meeting with a large group. I'd prefer to continue this conversation just with the teacher and principal."

A meeting should never feel like a power imbalance.

### After the meeting

It can help to send a short follow up email to confirm what was discussed. For example: "Thank you for meeting with me today. My understanding is that we agreed to try X and review how things are going in a few weeks. I appreciate your time.

This helps everyone stay clear about what happens next.

