

# How to give feedback to your child's school

## Information for parents and carers

An Easy Read guide



## How to use this guide



A group of people worked together to write this guide.

The group included:



- people with disability



- their families and carers



- Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA).



They wrote this guide for the Australian Government Department of Education (DoE).



When you see the word 'we', it means the people who wrote this guide.



We wrote this guide in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**  
Not bold

We have written some words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of important words we use in this guide on page **6**.

There is a list of other words we use on page **36**.



This Easy Read guide is a summary of another guide.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other guide on our website.

[www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/information-resources-students-disability-and-their-caregivers](http://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/information-resources-students-disability-and-their-caregivers)



You can ask for help to read this guide.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

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## Words we use in this guide



We have some words we always use in this guide.

Knowing what these words mean can help you understand this guide better.

### Disability



A disability can affect your:

- brain
- body
- **senses.**



You use your senses to understand the world around you.



When you have a disability, part of your body doesn't work:

- very well
- how it should.



A disability can affect:

- what you can do
- how much you can do on your own.

A disability can affect how you:



- communicate



- learn



- do things.

## Education



When you get an education, teachers support you to learn:

- new skills
- knowledge.





## Educational institution

An educational institution is somewhere you go to learn.

This could be a:



- pre-school or kindergarten



- primary school



- high school



- university



- training organisation, such as TAFE.





An educational institution might be public – this means it's run by the government.



Or it could be private – this means another organisation owns and runs it.



### **Reasonable adjustment**

When something changes so you can join in, we call it an adjustment.

This is sometimes called an accommodation.



Adjustments can include:

- someone to support you
- doing things in new ways
- changing things.



When something is reasonable, it is:

- fair
- sensible.



Reasonable adjustments are things your educational institution must:

- do
- change.



## Rights

Your rights are rules for how you can expect other people to treat you.

This includes educational institutions.

## Standards

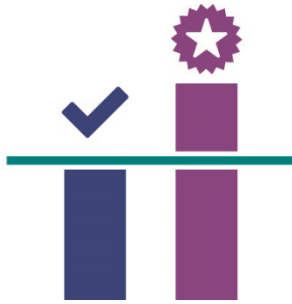
Standards are what we use to measure how well something is done.

We look at:

- what is done
- what the standard is.



Standards help us make sure things work well.



Educational institutions must:

- reach the standard
- try to do better than the standard.



## Students

Students are people who learn with an educational institution.

This includes when they learn:



- in a classroom



- at home



- at work.



Students can be people:

- with disability
- without disability.

## Who this guide is for

This guide is for anyone who supports  
a child with disability in:

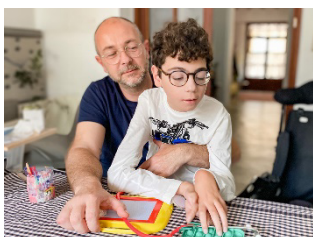


- primary school



- high school.

You might be a:



- parent



- carer



- **guardian** – a person who makes decisions  
for a child.

## What this guide is about



You can give **feedback** to your child's school.

When you give feedback, you tell a school what they can do better to help students.



It's okay to give feedback.

You or your child won't be in trouble.



Your feedback can be a **compliment**.

When you give a compliment, you tell a school what they are doing well.



Your feedback can be a **suggestion**.

When you make a suggestion, you tell a school what they can do better.



Your feedback can be a **complaint**.

When you make a complaint, you tell a school that something:

- has gone wrong
- isn't working well.



You might talk to the school about your child's:

- education
- safety.



This guide explains how to give feedback to the right person at your child's school.



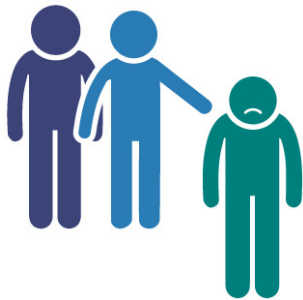
And who you can talk to if your child's school can't solve the issue.



## Laws that protect your child



There are 2 laws that protect students when they go to an educational institution.



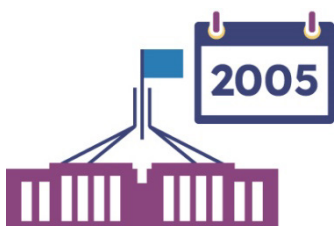
**Discrimination** is when someone is treated unfairly because of something about them they can't change.



In Australia, we have a law called the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)*.



The DDA says it is against the law to treat people with disability unfairly.



In 2005, the Australian Government published the Disability Standards for Education (DSE).



The DSE are standards for the education of students with disability.

The DSE talk about 2 important things:



- the rights of students with disability



- what educational institutions must do.



The DSE and the DDA work together to protect students with disability.

## How educational institutions follow these laws



Educational institutions must follow the DSE to support students with disability.



They must also make reasonable adjustments to support students with disability taking part in their education.



But they don't have to make a change if it creates an **unjustifiable hardship** for them.



An unjustifiable hardship is a change that is too much for an educational institution to make for a student.

For example, a change that costs too much money.

## Before you give feedback

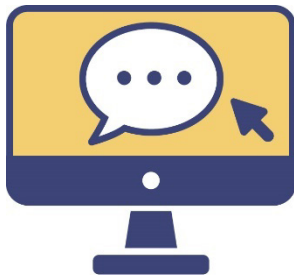


You can talk to your child's school if you:

- have feedback
- think they aren't following the DSE.



You should talk to the school as soon as possible.



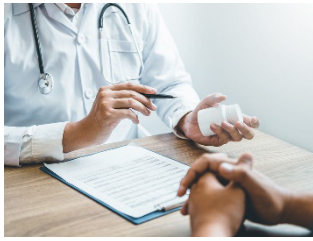
Before you talk to the school about your feedback, you can visit their website to find out:

- how they manage feedback
- who to talk to.



You can ask your child:

- what they think
- what they want to happen
- how they want to take part.



You can collect information you will need.

For example, a letter from your child's doctor that you can give to the school.



You can keep notes about everything that happens.

This can include:

- notes from a meeting or phone call
- emails.



You can learn about the DSE.

For example, it's good to know what a reasonable adjustment is.



You can also ask for support if you need it.

For example, you can bring a friend to the meeting with your school.

## How to give feedback



There are 3 steps you can take to give your child's school feedback.

We explain how to take each step on the following pages.

### Step 1



The first person you should talk about feedback with is your child's teacher.

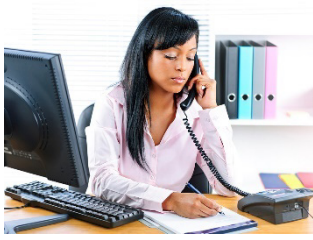


If your feedback is a complaint, they might be able to solve the issue straight away.



You can send them an email.





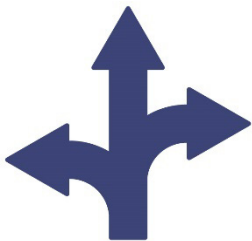
You can also call the front office.

And tell the person on the phone that you want to speak to the teacher.

You might need to:



- talk to them more than once before they can solve the issue



- try different things to find out what works.



Every decision that's made should be about the wellbeing of your child.

## Step 2



If you need to make a complaint, you might need to tell a senior person at your child's school if their teacher can't solve the issue.

This might be:



- a year level coordinator – the person who manages your child's year level



- the head of learning support – the person who manages learning at your child's school.



For example, a year level coordinator might be able to:

- change your child's learning plan
- send a message to your child's teachers
- have a meeting with other students.

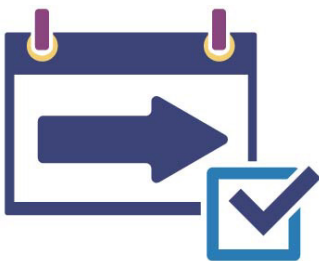


If you need to make a complaint with a senior person, you should tell them as much information as you can about what's happened.



When you talk to them, you should also agree on a plan about:

- what will happen next
- who will do it
- when it will happen.



It's important to follow up with the person after the meeting to make sure everyone is working towards the steps in the plan.

## Step 3



If you need to make a complaint, you should tell the school principal if it involves:

- other staff members at the school
- another student or family.



You should also make a complaint to the school principal if the school needs to make changes.

For example, changes to the school buildings or grounds.

# What to do if your child's school can't solve the issue

There are 2 steps you can take if:



- you can't agree with your child's school about how to solve the issue



- your child's school takes too long to solve the issue



- you're not happy with how your child's school solved the issue.



We explain each step on the following pages.

## Step 1



You can make a complaint to the group or organisation that runs your child's school.



This might be the education department in your state or territory.



This might be your child's school **board**.

A board is a group of people who make decisions for an organisation.



This might also be the group of churches that manage your child's school.





You can ask them to **review** the decision your child's school made about your complaint.



When the group or organisation review the decision, they check:

- how your child's school made the decision
- if they need to change the decision.



Your child's school can give you information about how to make a complaint to the group or organisation that runs the school.

## Step 2



You can make a complaint with a person or organisation outside of your child's school.

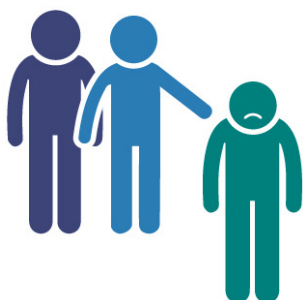
You might do this if you couldn't solve the issue by talking to:



- your child's school



- the person or organisation who runs your child's school.



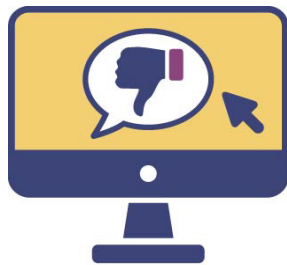
You might also do this if you think your child has experienced discrimination.



For example, you can make a complaint to the **Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)**.

The AHRC is an organisation that makes sure people treat others:

- fairly
- equally.



You can visit their website to find out how to make a complaint to them.

<https://humanrights.gov.au>



You can call them.

**1300 656 419**



You can also send them an email.

[infoservice@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:infoservice@humanrights.gov.au)



You can also make a complaint with the Human Rights Commission in your state or territory.



If your child goes to a public school, you can make a complaint with your state or territory **Ombudsman**.

An Ombudsman helps people with complaints.

They check to see if a school managed a complaint well.



An Ombudsman can't:

- manage your complaint
- change the decision your child's school made.

# Getting ready to make a complaint

## Before you make a complaint



You need to tell the person that you want to have a meeting with them.



It's a good idea to make a list of things you want to talk about in the meeting.



You can ask someone you trust to come to the meeting with you.

For example, a friend or family member.

## Making a complaint



When you are in the meeting, you should tell the person:

- about your complaint
- how your child feels
- any ideas you have to help solve the issue.



You should also tell them how you feel about what's happened.



It can help if you take notes during the meeting.



## After you make a complaint



It's a good idea to send an email to everyone who went to the meeting.



Your email can include information about what happened in the meeting.



It's important to follow up with the person after the meeting to make sure everyone is working towards the steps in the plan.



It's a good idea to keep a note of how long it's been since you:

- asked them for a meeting
- had the meeting.



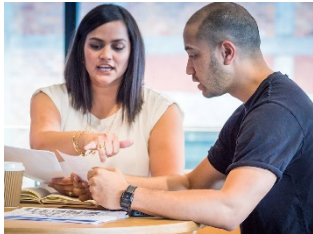
It's also a good idea to agree on how long it will take to solve the issue.

## Where to find support and information



You don't have to do everything by yourself.

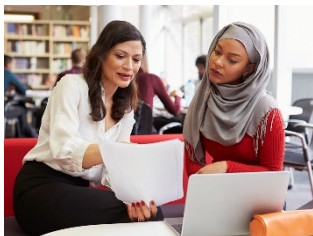
You can ask someone to help you:



- collect information
- fill out forms
- go with you to a meeting about your complaint.

This might be a friend or support person.

You can ask **advocacy services** to help you.



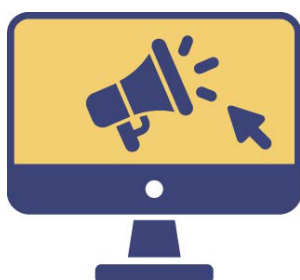
Advocacy services:

- support you
- help you have your say
- give you information and advice.



You can visit the Disability Gateway website.

[www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/legal/advocacy](http://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/legal/advocacy)



You can visit the Disability Advocacy Network Australia website.

[www.dana.org.au/find-an-advocate](http://www.dana.org.au/find-an-advocate)

## Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this guide mean.

### **Advocacy services**



Advocacy services:

- support you
- help you have your say
- give you information and advice.

### **Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)**



The AHRC is an organisation that makes sure people treat others:

- fairly
- equally.



### **Board**

A board is a group of people who make decisions for an organisation.



## **Complaint**

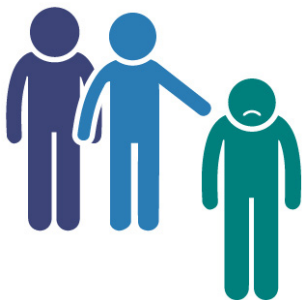
When you make a complaint, you tell a school that something:

- has gone wrong
- isn't working well.



## **Compliment**

When you give a compliment, you tell a school what they are doing well.



## **Discrimination**

Discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly because of something about them they can't change.



### **Feedback**

When you give feedback, you tell a school what they can do better to help students.



### **Guardian**

A person who makes decisions for a child.



### **Ombudsman**

An Ombudsman helps people with complaints.

They check to see if a school managed a complaint well.



## Review

When the group or organisation that runs your child's school reviews the decision, they check:

- how your child's school made the decision
- if they need to change the decision.



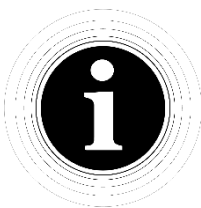
## Suggestion

When you make a suggestion, you tell a school what they can do better.



## Unjustifiable hardship

An unjustifiable hardship is a change that is too much for an educational institution to make for a student.



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