

# Guidance on managing complaints

## Roles and responsibilities in meetings

### Purpose:

This resource is designed for all participants in a meeting about a complaint managed under the [Staff complaint procedures](#) or [Community complaint procedures](#). It can be provided as a handout with the meeting agenda for clarity on each participant's role and/or responsibility. This resource complements the complaints meeting plans, which can be used by complaint managers to prepare for meetings.

### Meeting chair or facilitator

**A person, nominated by a manager, who is responsible for clarifying a complaint, asking questions, assessing available information and deciding what needs to happen to address the concerns and finalise a complaint.**

#### Responsibilities:

##### Before a meeting

- organise the meeting time, location and agenda, and invite participants
- let participants know who will attend the meeting and their roles and responsibilities
- identify and organise the cultural supports or reasonable adjustments participants need
- provide relevant handouts.

##### During a meeting

- chair the meeting
- introduce participants and their roles and responsibilities
- confirm the meeting purpose and objectives
- provide information about acceptable behaviour
- keep discussions on the meeting goals/objectives and ensure all parties have an opportunity to be heard
- manage unreasonable or unacceptable behaviour and pause or end a meeting if necessary
- determine and record the actions and outcomes agreed in the meeting.

##### After a meeting

- provide the meeting outcomes and other relevant information to participants.

### Participant

**A person invited to participate in the meeting. This can include a person raising or responding to concerns, a person who has information about the situation, a support person or an advocate.**

#### Responsibilities:

- participate in the meeting with a focus on resolution
- cooperate and treat others, including the chair, with respect
- comply with the expectations set out in the Staff complaint procedures and Code of ethics and conduct (employees) or the Community complaint procedures and School community charter (non-employees)
- provide information that is clear, concise and without delay or unrelated or unnecessary detail
- maintain confidentiality and only share information with those who have a direct role or legitimate need to know to participate in the complaint process
- ask for help, support or further information as needed.

**Record keeper**

**A person who takes notes of the meeting, including agreed actions or outcomes, for the chair to distribute.**

**Responsibilities:**

- maintain confidentiality.

**Support person**

**Someone 18 yrs or older who attends a meeting to provide a complainant emotional, practical, cultural or informational support, depending on the person's requests, such as:**

- seeking clarification of the process, if required
- assisting the person requiring support to focus on the meeting purpose and objectives
- requesting a break if required
- helping the person requiring support to provide information in a meeting.

**A support person is not an advocate and cannot speak on behalf of a complainant.**

**Advocate**

**Someone 18 yrs or older who is authorised to represent another person to help resolve the complaint.**

- In addition to providing the same assistance as a support person, an advocate can also negotiate and make decisions on the person's behalf, including agreeing to action being taken or not taken.

**Subject matter expert**

**A person recognised by qualification or professional role who provides specialist information or advice by:**

- contributing to discussions relating to the complaint
- providing advice and information to assist in resolving the concerns or reaching an outcome.

**A subject matter expert is generally nominated by the department and is a department representative.**

## Expected behaviour by participants during a meeting

**During meetings:**

- Behaviour must align with the expectations in the [Staff complaint procedures](#) and the [Code of ethics and conduct](#) (employees) or the [Community complaint procedures](#) and the [School community charter](#) (non-employees).
- Anyone can politely raise concerns about someone's behaviour and others are expected to respond to these concerns respectfully and cooperatively.
- If unreasonable behaviour persists and the meeting is not productive, or a participant expresses they feel unsafe, any participant can pause or end the meeting.
- If the meeting chair needs to end the meeting, or ask a participant to leave, they will explain why and what will happen next.

**After meetings:**

- All participants are to maintain confidentiality and only share information with those who have a direct role or legitimate need to know, such as those involved in the complaint process or in completing actions arising from the meeting.

**The [Staff complaint procedures](#) and [Community complaint procedures](#) provide additional guidance about what is expected from people when raising and addressing concerns.**

## Companion resources

- [Your Feedback](#)
- [Support persons and advocates – staff complaints](#) (staff only)
- [Support persons and advocates – community complaints](#)
- [Meeting plan - staff complaints](#) (staff only)
- [Know your options – complaints compliments and suggestions](#) -information for Aboriginal communities