

HOW ARE COMPLAINTS AND OTHER DISCIPLINARY MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE BOARD?

Complaints and other disciplinary matters are received from a number of sources:

- Written complaints received from parents or other teachers;
- Employers (section 67A of the Act);
- Teachers (section 67B of the Act);
- NT Police (section 75(2) of the Act);
- Notifications from other teacher registration authorities; or
- Declarations by teachers when applying for or renewing their registration.

ANY QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions or require assistance, please contact:

Professional Conduct Staff on **08 8944 9381**
or email at trbcomplaints.det@nt.gov.au

Complaints may be received via email.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR NORTHERN TERRITORY TEACHERS

Teaching is a profession in which practitioners have to make ethical decisions daily.

The development and maintenance of a code of ethics by the profession provides a means of clearly identifying and communicating the core values that underpin the professional standards for teaching.

The core values of our profession:

- ✚ Integrity
- ✚ Respect
- ✚ Justice
- ✚ Empathy
- ✚ Dignity

THE PURPOSE OF OUR CODE OF ETHICS

- ✚ Inspire the quality of behaviour that reflects the honour and dignity of the profession
- ✚ Identify the core values and ethical responsibilities of the profession
- ✚ Guide ethical decisions and actions of the teaching profession
- ✚ Promote public confidence in the profession.

TEACHERS' ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

A teacher has an ethical responsibility to themselves, the students, parents and carers, colleagues and members of the wider community.

As teacher in the Northern Territory, it is your ethical responsibility to:

- ✚ create learning experiences which engage, inspire, motivate, delight, affirm and challenge your learners
- ✚ understand your unique position of trust and influence by acting with professionalism and integrity
- ✚ be truthful, honest and trustworthy
- ✚ recognize your shared humanity by acting with care, compassion and empathy
- ✚ uphold the rights and responsibilities of self and others
- ✚ demonstrate dignity and relationships with others
- ✚ respect the uniqueness and diversity of your community
- ✚ develop by example the principles of social justice and equity.

Teacher Registration Board
of the Northern Territory
GPO Box 1675
Darwin NT 0801
Telephone 1800 110 302
Facsimile 08 8999 4195
Website www.trb.nt.gov.au
Email trb@nt.gov.au

Making a complaint about a Teacher?

TRB TEACHER
REGISTRATION
BOARD
of the Northern Territory



HOW DO I LODGE A COMPLAINT?

To lodge a complaint against a registered teacher in the Northern Territory, you will need to provide to the Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory ('the Board') the information in relation to the complaint. You should provide the Board with enough information to decide if a preliminary investigation or inquiry is warranted. Complaints must be in writing.

WHAT CAN I COMPLAIN ABOUT?

Essentially, the Board may investigate complaints about the professional conduct of a teacher or authorised person acting in their capacity as a teacher (an authorised person is someone who is unregistered but can be employed to teach). If your complaint does not relate to the professional conduct of the teacher, we may not be able to assist you. For example, the Board cannot investigate workplace disputes or managerial decisions such as access to leave or promotions. These are employer related issues.

In addition to complaints that relate to the professional conduct of a teacher, the Board can also inquire into conduct which does not meet the standard of behaviour reasonably expected of a teacher; or is not in accordance with the code of professional ethics developed and maintained by the Board; or conduct that shows that the teacher is not of good character.

WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF THE ACT?

The objective of the *Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act* ('the Act') is to ensure that only persons who are fit and proper, appropriately qualified and competent to teach, are employed as teachers in the Territory.

CAN I GET INTO TROUBLE FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT?

No. Section 76A of the Act states that a person cannot be civilly or criminally liable for giving information to the Board IF that person is acting in good faith.

CAN THE BOARD DISMISS MY COMPLAINT?

Yes. The Board may dismiss a complaint without taking further action if it considers the complaint frivolous or vexatious or does not relate to the professional conduct of a teacher.

A frivolous complaint is one which cannot possibly be substantiated, is manifestly groundless, or one that relates to a paltry or trifling matter. A vexatious complaint is one which is made only for the purpose of annoying or embarrassing the person against whom it is made or some other collateral purpose, or is obviously unsound or groundless.

If your complaint refers to an employee of the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training, the Northern Territory Christian Schools Association, the Association of Independent Schools of the Northern Territory or the Northern Territory Catholic Education Office and who is not a teacher, the Board is unlikely to assist you.

WHAT DO I NEED TO PROVIDE WHEN LODGING MY COMPLAINT?

Your complaint needs to be in writing. You should also provide any supporting documentation or evidence you believe is relevant to your complaint. A 'complaints form' can be located on the Teacher Registration Board website at: www.trb.nt.gov.au

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THE BOARD RECEIVES MY LETTER OF COMPLAINT?

1. You will receive a letter of acknowledgement once your complaint is received by the Board.
2. The Board will determine how to progress the complaint. The Board may dismiss the complaint if it is of the view that the issue complained about does not relate to the professional conduct of a teacher or it may commence a preliminary investigation or inquiry.

WHAT IS A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION?

A preliminary investigation is undertaken to gather further information and statements from relevant parties. This information is then provided to the Board for its consideration. The Board can decide to take further action in relation to the teacher or authorised person without first holding an inquiry or to hold an inquiry in relation to the teacher or authorised person.

WHAT IS AN INQUIRY?

An inquiry is a type of hearing but is far more informal than a regular court. The Board must appoint a committee to conduct the inquiry comprising of a chairperson who is a legal practitioner with at least five years experience and two Board members. The person who is the subject of the inquiry will be served with a notice of the proposed inquiry and has the right to engage legal representation. Once the hearing is complete, the committee of inquiry will report its findings and recommendations to the Board. The Board may decide to do any of the following as a result of an inquiry:

- (a) impose a condition on, or vary a condition imposed on the registration of the teacher or authorisation relating to the authorised person;
- (b) suspend the registration or authorisation for a specified period;
- (c) cancel the registration;
- (d) disqualify the teacher from registration, or authorised person from teaching for a specified period; or
- (e) take no further action.

WILL MY COMPLAINT BE RELEASED TO THE TEACHER?

Yes. The information will be provided to the teacher and the teacher will be offered the opportunity to admit to, or refute, any or all of the information in the complaint.