

About The Children's Advocate

The Children's Advocate in the office of the Ombudsman provides a free and open complaint service which is available to all. Complaints can be made by and on behalf of children. Complaints to the Children's Advocate can be made directly by children or by parents, family members, adults working with children or any adult who is concerned with the violations of a child's rights. You can complain about schools, hospitals, residential child care facilities, places of safety, places of care, early childhood development centres, shelters, children's homes, child detention centres, public bodies and private authorities. Please try to solve your complaints with the relevant institution/organisation you are unhappy with before contacting the Children's Advocate.

In order to make a complaint, any person can:

- (i) call the office of the Ombudsman on 061 207-3111 Mondays to Fridays from 08:00 to 17:00;
- (ii) contact an investigator by telephone;
- (iii) download a complaint form from the Ombudsman's website, fill it in and send it to the Children's Advocate via post to Office of the Ombudsman Private Bag 13211 Windhoek, Namibia.; or email it to office@ombudsman.org.na
- (iv) write a complaint letter/email addressed to the Children's Advocate.
- (v) send an sms to 20401
- (vi) visit our Facebook page and send us a message

2.2.1 When you come to the office of the Ombudsman

- You have to report at the Reception desk, fill in your name in the visitor's register.
- An investigator will record your complaint. If the problem is not within our mandate, the investigator will give you information on referral to the appropriate service.
- Depending on the complexity of your complaint, we will try to give you feedback at the earliest within a week or at latest within 3 months.

2.2.2 When you call the office of the Ombudsman

- Our staff will be courteous to you and will identify themselves by their names.
- Depending upon your queries, you will be directed to an investigator.
- An investigator will record your complaint. If the problem does not fall under our mandate, the investigator will give you information on referral to the appropriate service.
- You may be requested to come in person to give more information.
- Depending on the complexity of the complaint, we will try to give you feedback at the earliest within a week or at latest within 3 months.

2.2.3 When you write a letter or send an email to us

- Our office will acknowledge receipt of your correspondence.
- An investigator will contact you for additional information if required or will request you to come into the office.
- Actions will be taken within 1-2 weeks.
- Depending on the complexity of the complaint, we will try to give you feedback at the earliest within 2 weeks or at latest within 3 months.

2.3. What actions/steps do we take during investigations?

The Ombudsman may for the purposes of an investigation by the Children's Advocate:

- request any person, to provide particulars and information concerning a child whose rights have been, are being or are threatened to be violated;
- enter any building or premises where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the moral and physical safety of a child may be in danger;
- record the statement of any person in connection with an investigation;
- subpoena witnesses and examine them on oath; and/or
- compel a person to produce a document
- make enquiries into and extracts from, or copies of any document in connection with an investigation
- seize and retain anything necessary in connection with an investigation

2.4. What actions/steps do we take following an investigation?

- The Children's Advocate will notify the person who laid the complaint of the outcome
- The Children's Advocate may carry out negotiation, conciliation or mediation to facilitate negotiation/compromise between the concerned parties to resolve any dispute relating to the rights of the child.
- The Children's Advocate will make a report to people and authorities involved as she considers appropriate;
- The Children's Advocate may refer the matter to another institution where appropriate;
- The Children's Advocate may bring proceedings in a court of competent jurisdiction as contemplated in section 5(1)(a)(ii)(dd) of the Ombudsman Act, 1990 (Act 7 of 1990)
- The children's advocate may appear on behalf of a child or children in general in proceedings before the Children's court
- The Children's Advocate may join proceedings before the Children's court as a party
- The Children's Advocate may make recommendations of a general nature to the authorities concerned, including the Minister responsible for the protection of children, on any matter which may arise in the course of the investigation.

Anybody who is not satisfied with our investigation procedures can write an official complaint letter to the Ombudsman.