



Complaints Procedure

May 2020

These procedures provide staff members, parents/caregivers, and the wider school community with clear guidelines for raising and resolving concerns and complaints.

- treat all people fairly, transparently, and with dignity and respect
- resolve matters of concern early, if possible
- respond to feedback and concerns constructively
- deal with complaints fairly, effectively, and in a timely manner
- maintain confidentiality

Guidelines for Parents/Whanau Raising Concerns

- Contact your child's class teacher first to discuss concerns about your own child or another student. If you are not satisfied or have your concern not adequately resolved then contact the principal.
- Under no circumstances are parents/whanau allowed to approach another student directly
- For concerns about the school's procedures or programme please call to arrange a time to discuss it with the principal.
- If you have a **particular concern about a staff member or a school activity**, contact the staff member involved to arrange a time to discuss the matter privately.
- If you have a concern about another **parent, caregiver, or member of the school community** on a school related matter, raise this with the principal.
- If the matter concerns the **principal** and you have not first resolved it by discussion, or you feel uncomfortable directly approaching the principal, contact the board chair.
- If the matter concerns a **board member**, contact the board chair, or deputy chair if it concerns the board chair.

If you approach a board member with your concerns you will be asked to follow the guidelines above, and the board member will inform the principal and board chair.

If your concerns have not been resolved to your satisfaction, or for more serious matters, you can make a formal complaint.

Formal complaint procedure

All formal complaints should be specific and received in writing at least 4 days before the next BOT meeting including as much information, facts and details as possible. Dates, times, events and prior steps taken to resolve the matter should be included.

The letter or email should be sent to:

- the principal, if the complaint is about a staff member, student, parent or caregiver, or other member of the school community
- the board chair, if it is about the principal
- the deputy chair, if it is about the chair.

Contact details for the principal, board chair, and deputy chair are available at the school office and on the school website.

Acknowledgement of your concern will be replied to in writing by the Board of Trustees within a week or sooner of receiving it.

The principal, board chair and relevant board members will undertake a preliminary assessment of the complaint

The principal (if the complaint is about a staff member, student, parent or caregiver, or other member of the school community) will:

- take appropriate advice from advisors such as NZSTA
- inform the board chair of any complaints about staff members, students, parents take steps to resolve the complaint in accordance with their delegated authority and the relevant school policies, including undertaking a preliminary assessment of the complaint:
 - More general complaints or those which are unlikely to lead to disciplinary action against a staff member will be resolved informally.
 - more serious complaints which could lead to disciplinary action against a staff member will be referred to the board for consideration in-committee, with a view to determining the required level of board or chair involvement.
- take appropriate advice from advisors such as NZSTA
- report to the board in accordance with school policy.

Inform the staff member involved that an investigation is planned in person and in writing. Include the name of the chief and if need be an independent investigator. Ensure they are made aware they are entitled to seek union or legal advice and representation and bring a support person to any meeting. Continue to ensure they are kept informed of the progress of investigation but without disclosing information or findings

Staff members who are involved in a complaint process will be treated with respect and privacy. They will be sent a formal letter outlining the specific concerns, attaching all the relevant

information. They are free to seek advice of their right to seek support and representation before responding to complaints, and giving them a reasonable opportunity to take that advice.

The board chair (if the complaint is about the principal) will:

- undertake a preliminary assessment of any complaints about the principal
 - **General complaints** or those which are unlikely to lead to the board taking action against the principal will be promptly discussed with the principal at an informal meeting with all parties concerned and the Board chair, usually held within a week of receipt of the complaint, where the potential resolution can be considered.
 - The process for **managing complaints which appear more serious** and could lead to the board taking action against the principal will be determined by the board at an in-committee meeting usually held within two weeks of receipt of the complaint. If necessary a sub-committee can be formed to deal with the complaint at this stage and report to the rest of the Board with a recommendation. The complaint will then be promptly disclosed to the principal together with an indication of the proposed process for managing the complaint.

The deputy chair (if the complaint is about the chair) will:

- call an in-committee board meeting to discuss any complaints about the chair and determine an appropriate process for resolution
- take appropriate advice from advisors such as NZSTA.

Your concern will be acknowledged in writing within a week and inform you of how it will proceed. Consultation will occur if need be. Otherwise we will provide you with written confirmation when the matter is concluded.

Relevant collective employment agreement provisions for dealing with complaints about staff members must be observed, including protecting the staff member's dignity and mana, advising them of their right to seek support and representation before responding to complaints, and giving them a reasonable opportunity to take that advice.

Investigation process

Your views are important to us, and all complaints are taken seriously. However not all complaints will require a formal investigation. In determining whether a formal investigation may be required, the principal, board chair, and/or board may consider seeking advice from external sources in strict confidentiality.

Other processes which can more constructively address general concerns, opinions, and views about the school may happen.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the preliminary steps may include:

- No board member with a conflict of interest will participate in the investigation and conclusion of a complaint.
- You may be asked for more details about your concerns so that they can be properly investigated
- referring you back to the person or people you have complained about to explore options for informal resolution
- referring the matter to the board for consideration at an in-committee meeting,
- NZ School Trustees Association (NZSTA) will be notified and contacted for advice regarding the proceeding of the investigation