

Complaints

Rationale:

This procedure aims to ensure that complaints from parents, or members of the public, are received and dealt with appropriately and in a timely manner. School Management and the Board of Trustees will work to ensure objectivity and fairness are paramount, and confidentiality is maintained. Appropriate steps will be taken to achieve the best possible resolution for the complainant and the school.

Guidelines and Procedures:

CLASS TEACHER/STAFF MEMBER DIRECTLY INVOLVED

- Parents/Caregivers are welcome to discuss concerns or problems about their child's progress or welfare at any time. The initial approach should be made to the class teacher. Approaching the classroom teacher first will promote transparency and fairness.
- As a general rule, where the matter may take some time to discuss, parents are requested to arrange an interview with the staff member concerned. This ensures the appropriate records are on hand, and adequate time is available for the matter to be appropriately addressed.
- If the staff member considers a verbal complaint or concern serious they shall inform the relevant syndicate leader and/or management of the complaint or concern and their intended action.

SYNDICATE LEADER/AP/DP

- If, after speaking with the class teacher, the parent/caregiver considers that the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved, the Syndicate Leader, Deputy Principal or Assistant Principal should be approached. The outcome of all such issues shall be reported to the Principal.

PRINCIPAL

- Should the above approaches not be considered satisfactory, the parent/caregiver should contact the Principal. However the Principal has the right to redirect parents back to the appropriate person if they feel that the contact to them has been premature.
- The parent maybe requested to provide a written and signed complaint at this stage. A timeframe will be worked out for action and resolution to take place. Resolution of any complaint should not be rushed.
- It is implicit in these procedures, the Principal has a level of delegated responsibility to deal with complaints against stage members under his/her authority.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Where the issue is unresolved, and the Principal is also unable to resolve the complaint or concern, the complainant or staff member involved may refer the matter to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees in writing.
- The Board of Trustees may act only on signed complaints. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.
- The Board of Trustees should initially simply acknowledge the complaint (in writing, within five working days) and resolve that it be put to the staff member concerned (in writing).
- The staff member shall be given a copy of the written complaint or concern for response and shall be given a reasonable timeframe in which to respond. If the complaint is too general the Board should seek more detail. Detail should be sufficient for the staff member to identify the particular incident or issue.

- If a written response is not forthcoming within the time allowed, the Board of Trustees should request an immediate response pointing out that without a response the Board would be forced to consider the complaint without the benefit of the staff member's response.
- The Board of Trustees should investigate to establish the true facts. The fact that an investigation occurred and the nature of it should be recorded in writing. The Board must consider the established facts, any recommendation made and determine what if any disciplinary action is appropriate.
- If it is found that there is a case to answer, the staff member must be reminded of the right to representation and given the right to respond to the findings. The staff member has the right to be heard by the Board of Trustees.
- A detailed written record of all proceedings should be kept by Senior Management staff or the Board of Trustees.
- In dealing with a complaint the Board of Trustees may seek guidance from NZSTA, and also be guided by the Employees Collective Agreement, the school insurer and NZEI.
- There may, on occasion be complaints which, because of their particular nature, will be referred to the police. As employer, there is clearly an obligation upon the Board to deal with the matter on an industrial level, as distinct from any criminal proceedings. Some cases will be clear cut in terms of the appropriateness of external involvement, but many will require the Board's to exercise discretion and judgement after careful examination of all factors.

March 2014