



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

RATIONALE:

To provide a systematic procedure to consider complaints about the school operations, its policies/procedures, practices, personnel and Board members.

In any school community there will be occasions when an individual or group wishes to complain about the actions of another individual or group. So that these complaints can be handled in the most satisfactory manner for all concerned, a clear set of guidelines needs to be in place and followed.

PURPOSE:

To ensure that there are appropriate procedures in place to deal with general concerns and complaints appropriately and in a way that complies with the requirements of:

1. Natural justice to all parties.
2. Respective employment MOE agreed contracts.
3. To acknowledge that every person in the community has the right to express their concerns and feelings in a confidential and appropriate way.
4. To accept that everybody in the school community has the right to be protected from irrational, unfounded or misdirected allegations.
5. To ensure that the good name of the school and all those associated with it are protected at all times.
6. To work towards conflict resolution.

GUIDELINES:

General:

- There will be consistency and fairness in the manner to which complaints are attended to and a time frame given.
- There will be opportunities offered for the concern/complaint to be resolved.
- Every endeavour will be made to ensure the concern/complaint does not have a negative effect on the School.
- A focus will be made on the issues not the personalities.
- The procedure will maintain the dignity and privacy of those involved.
- It is not advised to enter into an "email trail" but to refer the complainant to the correct procedure required.
- The school will recognise the guidelines laid out in the NZSTA Trustee Handbook and the NZEI publication "Complaints/Disciplinary Action/competency procedures".
- Each year, in the newsletter, parents will be informed of the correct procedures should parents wish to complain. Parents of new enrolments will be informed via the school Information Booklet.

GUIDELINES:**Specific:**

- 1 When dealing with complaints, the concept of natural justice is important, i.e. considering both sides of the story, establishing the facts, and reaching a fair decision in confidence.
- 2 A complaint should, in the first instance be directed to the person who is responsible for the area in which the problem has occurred (Matthew 15-17).
- 3 All complaints are to be recorded and the Principal notified in the first instance.
 - If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved then it should be directed to the Principal **in writing**.
 - If still not resolved then the complaint needs to be directed to the Board of Trustees Chairperson **in writing**.
 - **Verbal or emailed complaints will not be accepted.**
- 4 All serious complaints either written or verbal will be directed to the school Principal and they will be recorded on a Complaints Record sheet.
- 5 The outcomes of any serious complaints will be reported to the Board of Trustees.
- 6 Concerns/complaints about the Principal will be directed **in writing** to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
- 7 Privacy and confidentiality will be maintained at all times.
- 8 A mutually acceptable third person may be involved at any stage to facilitate resolution.
- 9 Staff may enlist a union advocate at any stage.
- 10 Any complaints against the Board of Trustees en masse, or against individual Board members, should be addressed to the Chairperson in the first instance in writing.
- 11 Where there is a case of a complaint by the school staff against a member of the community, the complaint will be considered by the Principal and the Chairperson to decide on an appropriate course of action.
- 12 The Board of Trustees must abide by the provisions of the relevant employment contracts, legislation, and the goals of the School Charter.

CONCLUSION:

- The relationship between members of the school community and within the school itself is strengthened when concerns/complaints are given serious and fair consideration.
- The School is always open to the possibility of positive change and attending to concerns and complaints provides this opportunity. Complaints that are dealt with urgently, along an understood set of guidelines, with the aim of being fair to all concerned, will enhance the probability of a resolution of the conflict.

Review Responsibility: *Board Chairperson, Principal, DP & Staff Rep.*

Date Confirmed: 9 November 2020

Principal: *Karla Mitchell*



COMPLAINTS PROCESS for PARENTS

- Parents/caregivers first port of call is the classroom teacher. The teacher should be approached, when not teaching, and asked if the matter can be discussed at an agreed time. If it is not convenient, a suitable appointment time should be arranged as soon as possible.
- If the matter is not resolved, a complaint should be made **in writing** to the Principal who shall deal with it as a matter of priority. The Principal shall advise the parent/caregiver of any investigation, the results of the inquiries and the proposed course of action.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the work done by the Principal, they will be advised, by the Principal, to record their complaint to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees **in writing**.
- The Chairperson shall deal with a complaint as a matter of priority. In consultation with the Principal the Chairperson shall inform the complainant of the process of the investigation and the result of the inquiries. The Chairperson shall report the complaint and any response to a meeting of the Board.
- If the complaint is against the Board Chairperson, the complaint will be directed to the Principal who will direct it to an experienced member of the Board who then will implement the above process in consultation with the Principal and an NZSTA adviser.



COMPLAINTS PROCESS

TEACHERS

- If concerned about any aspect of your professional practice or interpersonal relationships your first port of call is your team leader and/or DP. Where together you can't resolve a difficulty or concern, the teacher and/or team leader will involve the Principal in an endeavour to reach a resolution.
- If a staff member has a concern about a pupil, your first port of call is to your team leader and/or DP.
- Before contact is made with parents/caregivers to discuss serious concerns, the team leader/DP needs to be fully informed, so that they can provide the necessary advice and guidance regarding an appropriate approach to the matter.
- The Principal needs to be briefed, informed and asked for guidance during this process.

STUDENTS

- Some students do have concerns, at times unrelated to their schooling, – but nonetheless affecting it.
- The students need to be taught that if they are upset or worried about something that they can readily approach their teacher (or any teacher) for help.
- They also need to know that they can seek to see the Deputy Principal at any time for support, guidance and counselling on issues.
- **“Running away” from school for students experiencing concerns or upsets is not an option.**
- If something happens during the school day for a student that is of such upsetting magnitude they are told to go to the office to seek help. The office staff will quickly locate a senior teacher to take charge of the situation.
