

Parent/Caregiver Complaints Process

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.

Guidelines and Procedures:

INITIAL APPROACH

- The initial approach should be made to the staff member/class teacher directly involved, unless the complainant has been directed otherwise by the Principal or Board of Trustees.

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 unless requested otherwise by the Principal or Board of Trustees. Approaching the staff member/classroom teacher first will promote transparency and fairness.
- As a general rule, where the matter may take some time to discuss, parents/caregivers 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 to be serious, they will 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, they should approach the Syndicate Leader, Deputy Principal or Assistant Principal.
- The Syndicate Leader/DP/AP may choose to inform the Principal of the complaint or concern and their intended action.

PRINCIPAL

- If the outcome of the above approach is not considered satisfactory, the parent/caregiver should contact the Principal. However, the Principal has the right to redirect parents/caregivers back to the appropriate person if they feel that the contact with them has been premature.
- The parent/caregiver may be requested to provide a written and signed complaint at this stage.
- Resolution of any complaint will be timely. An estimated timeframe will be communicated to the parent/caregiver.
- The Principal has delegated responsibility to deal with complaints against staff members under his/her authority.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- If the Principal is unable to resolve the complaint or concern, any involved party may refer the matter to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
- The Board of Trustees will only act on signed, written complaints. Anonymous or verbal complaints will not be accepted. The complaint should contain enough detail to identify the particular incident or issue.
- The Board of Trustees will acknowledge the complaint in writing within five working days, advising that the complaint will be put to the staff member concerned for response. If the complaint is too general the Board will seek more detail.
- The staff member will be given a copy of the written complaint for response and will be given a reasonable timeframe in which to respond to the Board in writing. The staff member will be reminded of their right to representation and their right to be heard by the Board of Trustees. The complaint will be considered without their response if it is not forthcoming.
- The Board of Trustees will ensure that a thorough investigation takes place. This may be led by the Board or by an independent party at the Board's discretion. The nature of the investigation will be recorded in writing and relevant parties will be notified of the process and relevant timeframes.
- A detailed written record of all proceedings will be kept.
- A report of the investigation will record the agreed facts, facts which remain in dispute and any findings made. It may also contain recommendations for further action.
- The Board will use the report to determine what, if any, further action will be taken.
- All parties involved will be notified of the outcome in writing.
- The Board of Trustees may seek guidance from NZSTA and also be guided by the employee's collective agreement, the insurer and NZEI throughout the process.
- There may on occasion be complaints which, because of their particular nature, will be referred to the police. The Board will continue to deal with the matter as the employer, separately from any criminal proceedings.
- Once the Board has determined the outcome and any actions to take, the matter will be considered closed.
- If the complainant would like to take further action once the matter has been closed, they may wish to approach the Ministry of Education for advice.

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