



## Concerns and Complaints Policy

### **Rational**

It is important that the concerns and complaints of students, staff, parents/caregivers/whānau and members of the community and wider public are recognised and, where possible, resolved. It is important to the Board of Trustees that any concerns or complaints are dealt with as quickly as possible in accordance with procedures that are equitable, fair and sensitive to all parties.

It is recognised that most **concerns** will be able to be resolved by discussion between the person with the concern and the teacher and/or principal, without a need to take the matter further. The principal and staff member shall, wherever appropriate, seek to resolve a concern in this manner, in the first instance. In the event that a resolution cannot be reached, then the value of discussion with mediation from an independent third party is recognised. The principal has a major responsibility in receiving concerns. It is recognised that individual members of the board may, from time to time, be approached by members of the community with concerns regarding school employees or the day-to-day operations of the school. In such cases they must immediately inform the parent/caregiver to personally approach the principal. In the event that a **concern** can not be resolved, then the parent/caregiver may decide to formalise their concern by presenting a **complaint**.

A complaint is deemed to be of a serious nature and the parent/caregiver must put their **complaint in writing**, stating that they are making a complaint, and then outlining the allegations. A complaint may be the result of actions or speech or deed, construed by parents or a member of the community to be detrimental to the child or children and/or staff at the school.

The Principal will maintain a secure file for formal complaints.

### **Purpose**

- To ensure all complaints are handled in a fair and just manner.
- To ensure a reliable process for raising and dealing with concerns and complaints is in place.
- To deal with concerns and complaints in line with set procedures.
- To ensure that corrective action is put in place as required.

### **Guidelines for Principal and Board** (*Refer to Concerns and Complaints Procedure*)

- Ideally a concern by a parent/caregiver will be resolved after initial discussion with the staff member involved.
- If this can not be resolved, it is passed onto the Principal for resolution.
- If the complaint is of a serious nature and can not be dealt with through the staff member involved, a written complaint is to be made to the Principal, who (alongside the Complaints Committee) will work to resolve the situation.

- When a formal letter of complaint is sent to the school, the Board of Trustees must be notified within 12 hours. The Presiding Member will acknowledge receipt of the letter of complaint, attaching a copy of the school's complaints policy and procedures, within the following 2 working days of receiving the complaint.
- Should the letter of complaint be firstly directed to the Presiding Member, a copy of the letter must be redirected to the Principal, who will follow the matter through and take it back to the Board of Trustees with a recommendation/s, within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.
- If legal or further action is to be taken, School Trustees Association (NZSTA), should be notified and their advice adhered to. In the event that any circumstances is realised which may result in a personal grievance claim, the Board's professional indemnity insurer will be notified immediately.
- The staff member concerned is entitled to Union/other representation. The employee shall have the right to request representation at any stage, and shall be advised of such at the beginning of any investigation.
- The teacher/member of staff must have the opportunity to respond and be heard.
- No contact will be made with the public or the media, except through the Board of Trustees member designated to do this (Presiding Member).
- Should the complaint be about the Principal, the complaint must be referred, in writing, to the Presiding Member of the Board of Trustees.
- Should the nature of the alleged conduct be deemed sufficiently serious, the Principal and the Board may decide to either suspend, (with or without pay), or transfer temporarily to other duties, having regarded to the provisions set out in the relevant Employment Agreement. In the case of instant dismissal, legal advice must be sought prior to this action.
- The school Board will, IN-COMMITTEE, receive a report from the Complaints Committee, stating the complaint, process and procedures in dealing with the complaint, and recommendation for closure; The Board will then reach and act on the decision of the Board.
- The Board's decision/response to the complaint, is communicated to the parties.

### **References/Related Documents**

- NZEI Principals Kit
- NZSTA Handbook
- Primary Principals Collective Agreement
- Primary Teachers (including Deputy and Assistant Principals and other unit holders) Collective Agreement
- Support Staff in Schools Collective Agreement
- Caretakers and Cleaners Collective Agreement
- Any relevant Individual Employment Agreement
- Teachers Council/Professional Standards

Principal: Judith Gribble \_\_\_\_\_

Presiding Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Date: May 2024