

PROCEDURE - DEALING WITH PARENT CONCERNS / COMPLAINTS

All concerns and complaints need to be dealt with promptly and fairly. This procedure outlines processes for dealing with concerns or complaints. All employees have a right to be informed of any concerns or complaints raised against them, and have the right to respond.

Definition

- A concern is usually raised through informal channels such as email and conversation, including appointments made to discuss concerns.
- A complaint is usually more formal and is expressed in a formal letter to the Principal and/or Board of Trustees.

Procedures - Concerns

1. Parents are encouraged to contact the child's teacher immediately if a concern arises and arrange a time to discuss the matter.
2. Following an arranged meeting to discuss a concern, the child's teacher will email the parent to summarise the discussion and any agreed actions, including whether any further follow-up was required. This will be done within 48 hours of the meeting taking place.
3. As necessary, the parent will be informed of any follow-up action taken, by a mutually agreed date.
4. If the concern raised relates to another member of staff, the child's teacher will refer the concern to a member of the Leadership Team for further follow-up in accordance with steps 7 to 10 below.
5. If the concern does not include the classroom teacher, or is of a sensitive nature and the parent prefers to talk first to the Learning Hub Leader, Associate Principal, Deputy Principal or Principal, an appointment should be made at the first opportunity. Contact details for the principal, office and Board Chairperson are available on the school website.
6. Should a parent express a concern to a Board member directly, they will be advised to address this through the Principal for matters around school operations, and the Board Chairperson for governance matters.
7. After discussing the matter with the parent (and the Principal if a different member of the Leadership Team received the concern), the Leadership Team will obtain further information from the staff member concerned as appropriate, and attempt to resolve any problem. It may be felt necessary to arrange a meeting between both parties to bring about a resolution.
8. If it is considered not appropriate to involve the classroom teacher at this stage, or the matter is of a general school nature, the Principal will take whatever action is required to meet the concern and/or resolve the issue.
9. The Principal (or member of the Leadership Team who dealt with the concern) will email the parent to summarise the discussion and any agreed actions, including whether any further follow-up was required.
10. As necessary, the parent will be informed (via email) of any follow-up action taken, by a mutually agreed date.
11. In cases of concerns raised about children, the Principal has discretion as to the process involved in dealing with this. The privacy of families and children is to be maintained as appropriate.

Procedures - Complaints

1. If a concern remains unresolved, the parent may decide to make a complaint, either to the Principal or to the Board of Trustees, following the steps outlined below.
2. After discussion of the matter by the Board in committee, a written report will be made to the parent, detailing the nature of the concern, steps taken to investigate the concern and any decisions made or actions taken.

Steps for Making a Formal Complaint

1. Write down your complaint giving details of the issue, including details of efforts that have been made to resolve the matter. Include your name, email address and contact phone number.
2. Address your written complaint to the Principal or to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. Ask for assistance at the school office if you are unsure how to go about delivering your complaint.
3. Complaints will be acknowledged immediately upon receipt or, if that is not possible, within 48 hours, giving assurance to the complainant that the issue will be investigated.
4. When a complaint is received, the Principal and another person (the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees or Deputy Principal) or if the complaint is about the Principal, the Chairperson and another Trustee, will discuss the matter with you before deciding what further action should be taken. You may have a support person with you when you discuss the complaint, if you wish. This meeting will be documented.
5. Your complaint will generally be treated in confidence. However, in the interests of natural justice any persons included in a complaint must have the opportunity to hear all details about the complaint and reply to it. A copy of the complaint will be given to the person about whom the complaint has been made, together with a copy of the school's complaints procedure.
6. The complaint will be investigated by talking to the person about whom the complaint has been made, who may be accompanied by a support person if they wish, and interviewing anybody else who may have had a part to play in the incident. Written statements will be taken.
7. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the matter may be referred to the Board of Trustees for consideration and action.
8. The Principal or BOT will decide what steps will be taken as a result of the investigation and will ensure that a record of the process is kept.
9. You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.
10. In dealing with complaints, employers must act in accordance with conditions of relevant employment agreements and current legislation.
11. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint you may write to the Board of Trustees for a review of the complaint. A review should be completed by the Board within 28 days of the referral.
12. Parents may complain to the Ministry of Education if they are not satisfied with this complaints process. In this situation, the school will liaise with the New Zealand School Trustees Association.
13. Complaints about the Board of Trustees (not individual trustees) may be directed to the Office of the Ombudsman.

This procedure has been reviewed in accordance with self-review guidelines.

Signed: _____ Principal

Date: _____