



COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Board is committed to having and enacting a fair and transparent process to effectively handle complaints. The policy and process enable complaints from students, employees, whanau, family, community members and other stakeholders to be able to be dealt with effectively.

The complaints policy should be read in conjunction with both the RAS Concerns Process and the RAS Complaints Process. The complaints process describes how the policy is enacted and is made readily available to the school community along with the Board policy.

The Board distinguishes between a concern and a complaint as:

CONCERN: a minor issue that may be resolved informally directly between the parties involved. Both parties must be clear when there has been clear intention to meet, discuss and seek to resolve the concern. Concerns are not expected to have disciplinary, legal or industrial consequences.

COMPLAINT: A complaint is an issue of a serious nature and may involve the Principal or Board of Trustees. An unresolved or repeated concern might be escalated to a complaint.

The Board's policy and procedures on Vulnerable Children (Vulnerable Children's Act 2016) may be enacted would the complaint indicate that it is required,

Key aspects to the Board's complaints processes are:

1. Complaints must be made in writing, addressed to the Chairperson of the Board, and have the complainants name and contacts available.
2. All complaints will be received 'in-committee'.
3. The Board will endeavour to expedite the complaints process as much as is reasonably possible. Issues which demand immediate attention (e.g. allegations of Physical abuse) may require a special meeting of the Board.
4. The Board and/or its committee will refrain from any discussion relating to resolution or dismissal of the complaint until all information is at hand for the committee.
5. A copy of the complaint should be given to the employee and Principal as soon as possible.
6. The Board will reasonably endeavour to keep the complainant informed of Board process.
7. Contact with NZSTA will be made by the Board if there are possible legal and or employment risks identified.
8. Principles of natural justice are inherent in the process.
9. All employment agreements and employment law are adhered to.
10. The teacher, member of staff, trustee must have opportunity to respond and be heard.
11. Any employee shall have the right to request representation at any stage and shall be advised of such at the beginning of any investigation.
12. The Board will form a committee of 3 trustees to work through the complaints process and/or elect to engage an independent reviewer to assist in this process.
13. The Board will delegate authority to the committee to work through the complaints process and may also include the ability to make decisions on further actions on behalf of the Board.
14. Conflicts of interest and bias are discussed within the Board so that Board members who do have conflict of interest are not involved in decisions making.
15. If there are not three trustees available due to conflict of interest or bias, then the Board may seek to co-opt other people for the purpose of the committee work and duration. A confidentiality agreement would need to be signed by any co-opted person.

16. All documentation and knowledge will remain confidential to the parties involved and the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982 and the Privacy Act 1993 will be adhered to. The complaints committee is deemed to be in-committee at all times through the process of dealing with a complaint.
17. If an independent reviewer is used, then the committee and/or full Board are still required to make final decisions as to how to resolve the complaint. An independent reviewer will receive clear delegations from the Board which include clear terms of reference and scope.
18. The Board may hold a reconsideration process if requested and if there has been new information revealed which at the time would have been relevant to the Board's deliberations.
19. The Board recognises that not all complainants will be satisfied with the outcome of the complaint. Should the complaint not be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, then he/she may refer the matter to the Office of the Ombudsman.
20. Employees may make a protected disclosure if required and if the nature of the complaint is in line with s5 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2000.