

PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS

It is incumbent on all Board members to keep all confidential matters of a complaint in strict confidentiality, in compliance with the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

Procedure for complaint concerning a Child's schooling or a Child's Teacher (by Parent or Guardian)

1. If a parent or guardian of a pupil has a concern about his/her child's schooling or teacher, or an action which occurred at school, then s/he should follow this procedure. The parent/guardian may choose to have a support person or people with them at any stage of the procedure. If the charge is considered serious, see point 2 of this procedure.
 - Book a time to meet with the teacher. Remember that the class teacher has demands on his/her time, often for preparation before school and meetings after school. Please avoid speaking your concerns where children can hear.
 - When an approach made to a staff member does not achieve a satisfactory outcome, the parent/guardian should bring the matter to the Principal, either in writing or personally.
 - If a satisfactory understanding cannot be arrived at with the Principal, a written complaint may be submitted to the Board of Trustees Chairperson. The Chairperson shall clarify the matter with the principal.
 - If the Principal cannot achieve conciliation, the chairperson will meet with the parent and principal, (or seek assistance of a suitable facilitator (e.g. STANZEI Field Officer)). The teacher concerned may also be present at this meeting.
 - The Chairperson will advise the board of such action at the next board meeting. A member of the Board of Trustees having personal interest in a complaint shall not take part in the discussions.
 - If the matter cannot be resolved the parent/caregiver may approach the Ministry of Education.
2. Where allegations are made against teachers are of a serious nature, the allegations shall be forwarded to the Board in writing for action in accordance with Primary Teachers Award.

Procedure for a complaint against a Principal (by Parent or Guardian)

When a parent or guardian of a pupil desires to make a complaint against the Principal, then the following procedure should be followed.

- The complaint must be made in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees who shall use the best endeavors to reconcile the differences involved.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Chairperson of the Board, the matter will be referred to the full Board.
- If the matter cannot be resolved, the complainant may approach the Ministry of Education.

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Procedure for a complaint against a Principal or Staff Member (by Board Members)

If a Board of Trustees member has a complaint to make against the principal about an action or comment which does not involve their child (therefore not complaining in a parent capacity) s/he should make the complaint to the chairperson.

- The chairperson shall discuss the matter with the Principal, and report back to the Board member.
- If the complainant requests it, the matter will be presented to the full Board.

A complaint against a staff member shall be referred to the Principal who shall refer it to the teacher concerned for any explanation.

Any decisions in the form of Disciplinary procedures must be considered carefully, and should only be instigated after advice is taken from the STA and NZEI

Procedure for a complaint against a Staff Member (by another Staff Member)

When a staff member feels aggrieved about the behaviour of another staff member then the following procedure should be followed.

- The complainant should first discuss the issue with the other staff member. However, in an instant where the complainant feels unable to do this s/he should discuss the concern with a senior teacher first.

The senior teacher and complainant may choose to:

- Proceed with the complainant speaking to the other staff member.
- Jointly take the matter up with the other staff member. In this instance, it is important that it is made clear that the Senior Teacher is there as intermediary, not to address the complaint.
- Discuss the issue with the deputy principal or principal.

If the issue is unresolved after discussion between the complainant and other staff member, the two people should seek the assistance of the deputy principal or principal, for mediation assistance.

If the complainant or the other staff member, feels dissatisfied at this point, then :

- The principal will be advised.
- Each of the people in dispute should be advised of the right to have a support person at subsequent meetings.

- The principal will either meet with the people concerned, to try to reach a conciliatory outcome, or seek the assistance of a suitably qualified mediator.
- The Principal may consider use of union resource personnel to be appropriate.

Procedure for a complaint against a Staff Member (by another Staff Member which has not directly affected the complainant)

Where one staff member feels serious misconduct has occurred by another staff member, then the following procedure should be followed :

- The matter should be discussed with the Principal or Deputy Principal
- The Principal / Deputy will require the complainant to make a written statement, which will be given to the Principal.
- The Principal will discuss the concern with the person (whom the complaint is about).
- If the person disputes the complaint, and the Principal considers there to be sufficient ground for concern, s/he will discuss the complaint with the Board Chairperson.
- When a complaint is advised to the Chairperson by the Principal, advice should be sought from a body such as the School Trustees Association. The Chairperson & Principal should also consider the use of the NZEI procedure. Care is required to avoid potential grievances.

If the Principal feels the complaint is unwarranted, s/he will advise the complainant of that judgement.

If the person making the complaint is not satisfied, then :

- S/he may take the concern to the Board Chairperson.
- The Chairperson may also inform other Board members that the issue exists, but should not discuss details.
- Subsequent action will follow the advice of Union and STA.