

## Concerns and Complaints Policy

### Rationale

Kahurangi School believes that education is a partnership between parents and whānau, the staff and the students. In order for the partnership to support student achievement effectively there needs to be good communication and clear processes for addressing and resolving concerns and complaints. This policy governs concerns and complaints received whether they come from students, staff, parents and caregivers or the school community.

### Purpose

1. To support good communication and positive relationships
2. To ensure that all concerns are acknowledged and responded to promptly and at the appropriate level
3. To ensure that complaints are addressed fairly and transparently, using agreed systems and processes
4. To ensure that systems for resolving concerns and complaints are documented

### Responsibilities

This policy outlines the Board's commitment to ensuring that it recognises that it is important that students, staff, whānau and the community are able to raise concerns and complaints with the school, and to have those concerns and complaints responded to and dealt with appropriately and through a transparent process. The Board encourages all those involved with the school to raise any concerns that arise at the earliest opportunity.

Although ultimate responsibility sits with the Board, the Board endorses the Principal to operate under this policy to encourage concerns being addressed promptly and at the lowest level, and to ensure that the complaints procedure is implemented when appropriate.

The Principal must ensure all staff know of this Policy, and make it readily available to staff to access. The Principal should also ensure this Policy is readily accessible and available to whānau and the school community. This includes having a copy at the school that can be provided on request. Where a student raises a concern or makes a complaint staff, whānau or the Principal (as appropriate) should assist and support them in understanding the policy.

### Guidelines

1. Where there is a concern, it should be raised either directly with the staff member concerned, or a staff member in the school who the person feels comfortable talking to (for example, another teacher in the same team/Waka, an independent staff member, an Assistant Principal or the Principal).
2. A concern/complaint can be initially raised either in writing or verbally.
3. Concerns and complaints will be handled at the lowest possible level. If a complaint cannot be resolved by the person to whom the complaint has been made it will be referred to the Principal (unless it is about the Principal, in which case the person wishing to raise a complaint can either raise it directly with the Principal in the first instance, or to the Board using the formal complaints procedure).
4. Concerns or complaints referred to the Principal may require investigation. Anyone who is the subject of a concern or complaint must be given the opportunity to give their view of the situation. An investigation may be necessary to establish what has occurred. In such a case the investigation will seek the views of all relevant parties for the purpose of establishing those facts.
5. When concerns are raised which cannot be readily resolved the person raising the concern must be advised of the complaints policy and process.

6. If not satisfied with the response to the concern or complaint, then the person raising the concern or complaint may choose to initiate the formal complaints procedure.
7. Records of formal complaints, and their resolution, are to be kept in a confidential file maintained by the Principal. All complaints, whether written or verbal, made by students about the behaviour of teachers or other adults are to be recorded. If the child's complaint raises concerns about abuse or neglect the *Child Protection* policy and procedures must be followed.
8. The Principal will report to the Board once a year on the number of complaints and the general nature of the complaints.

## Procedures for Children raising concerns

### a) Children

Children are encouraged to talk directly to their teachers whenever a problem arises. They should approach the teacher at a suitable time (e.g. at the end of the lesson) or during a break time. Issues dealt with as soon as they occur are usually straightforward to solve. However if the concern is not resolved, children should talk to another teacher, the Principal or their parent/caregiver.

## Procedures for Parents/Whānau raising concerns

### b) Parents/whānau

#### *Classroom Issues*

1. If you have a concern about a classroom matter you should firstly try to contact the class teacher and discuss the matter with her/him. Do this by contacting the school office or the teacher concerned directly. Teachers are unlikely to be available during the day, since they will normally be teaching. A message can be left with the school office asking the teacher to contact you.
2. Teachers will, wherever possible return calls by the end of the next school day. You should ensure that you leave information with the school office about how and when to contact you. Contact phone numbers should also be included if the concern has been made in writing. The school will try to respond to written concerns within three working days.
3. If the response provided by the school does not fully address your concerns, you may wish to take the matter further by making a formal complaint using the process outlined below.

#### *Other Concerns*

If you have a concern about a matter which you do not feel able to discuss with the teacher directly or which does not involve a particular teacher, you may speak or write to the Principal.

## Complaints Procedures

### **Making a *formal* complaint**

If you are not satisfied with the school's response to your concern or complaint and you wish to make a *formal complaint*, the following process will apply:

1. Write down your formal complaint giving details of what it is you are complaining about. Include details of efforts that have been made to resolve the matter. Include your name and contact phone number. Address your written complaint to the Principal.
2. If you would prefer to discuss your formal complaint rather than to write it down please make this clear to the office manager and ask for an appointment with the Principal. You are welcome to bring support to this meeting.
3. When the Principal receives a formal complaint, she/he will discuss the matter with you before deciding what further action should be taken. You are welcome to bring support to this meeting.

4. The formal complaint will be investigated. Normally, by talking to the person about whom the complaint has been made and interviewing anybody else who may have had a part to play in the incident. A record will be kept of the investigation.
5. The Principal will decide what steps will be taken as a result of the investigation.
6. You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.
7. Depending on the nature of the formal complaint, the matter may be referred to the Board of Trustees for consideration and action.
8. Your formal complaint will generally be treated in confidence. However, in the interests of natural justice anybody included in a formal complaint must have the opportunity to hear all details about the complaint and reply to it. They too may be accompanied by a support person during discussion of the complaint if they wish.
9. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint you may write to the Board of Trustees for a review of the formal complaint. This will be conducted using the process outlined in the Board's complaints procedure below.

### **Board of Trustees' Complaints Procedure**

1. All formal complaints to the Board must be in writing.
2. Unless the formal complaint is about the Principal or the Board itself, the Board will normally refer the matter back to the Principal to ensure that the Principal has had the opportunity to investigate and resolve the complaint before it takes any action.
3. The Chairperson will acknowledge the letter of complaint within 7 days of it being received and advise the complainant of the timeframe within which it will be addressed.
4. The letter of complaint becomes a matter that is dealt with at the 'public excluded' (in-committee) part of the next Board meeting.
5. The Board must decide how to deal with the complaint. This will normally require some level of investigation of the complaint. A decision about who will undertake the investigation and the process to be used must be established.
6. A letter will be sent to the complainant advising them of the process and the timeline.
7. The investigation will be conducted by those given responsibility to do so. External advice (EG NZSTA Industrial Advisor, legal advice etc.) will be sought if needed.
8. The person or people making the investigation will report back to the 'public excluded' section of the next Board meeting. The Board must consider the evidence and come to a decision or recommendation. The Board must pass a resolution about its decision and what action, if any, is to be taken.
9. The outcome of the investigation will be communicated to the complainant in writing and to the extent that it is able, taking into account the privacy of those involved. This should occur within 7 days of the Board meeting at which the decision is made.

### **Documentation**

The following documentation must be available in the school:

- Formal complaints process/procedures/investigation notes/outcomes
- A *formal complaints* file (which will be treated confidentially and the contents only disclosed where appropriate)

Date approved by the Board | 23 May 2018



Cathryn Curran-Tietjens | Board Chairperson