

WINCHESTER SCHOOL

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

School Guidelines

1. The School will make a genuine effort to resolve all concerns and complaints.
2. Anyone with a concern is encouraged to discuss the matter directly with the staff member involved as soon as possible, to prevent issues escalating.
3. Concerns will be dealt with by the school using the process set out in the Procedure for Concerns.
4. If the concern is not resolved through this process, a formal complaint may be made. This must be done in writing to either the Principal or the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. The process set out in the Formal Complaints Procedure will be followed once a complaint has been received. It is helpful for the complaint to include as many details as possible, including details of efforts to resolve the issue.
5. Formal complaints against any staff member will be dealt with using the Complaints Procedure against Teaching and Support Staff.
6. For any other complaint, when the Principal or Chairperson receives the complaint, they will contact the person who has sent it to discuss further action.
7. The Board of Trustees will be notified of all formal complaints.
8. All complaints will be treated in confidence, however, any person included in a complaint must be informed of the details of the complaint and be given an opportunity to address the complaint.
9. If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may appeal to the Board of Trustees or the Ministry of Education.

A. Procedure for Concerns

Classroom Issues

1. If you have a concern about a classroom matter you should first discuss the matter with the class teacher, and if not satisfied with the outcome, then the Principal, and finally the Board of Trustees.
2. 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 (see Formal Complaints Procedure)

Other Concerns

1. 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 contact the Principal.

In all cases, if a concern is not resolved, a formal complaint may be laid.

B. Procedure for a Formal Complaint

In some cases, such as when your concern cannot be resolved, you may wish to make 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 and contact phone number.
2. Address your written complaint to the Principal, or if the complaint is about the Principal, to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. Ask for assistance at the school office if you are unsure of 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 the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (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 Board of Trustees 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, the Principal and Board of Trustees 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. You may complain to the Ministry of Education if you are not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint. The local Ministry of Education office can be contacted on 06 350 9850. 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.

Complaints against teaching or support staff

- All complaints against a Teacher shall be referred in the first instance to the Principal who will have a key role in facilitating a resolution.
- All complaints against the Principal shall be referred in the first instance to the Board of Trustees Chairperson. These should be in writing and signed by the complainant.
- While formal procedures are available as a last resort, every effort should be made by all concerned to resolve the matter informally.

Complaints - Teacher

- A copy of the complaint should be given to the teacher for a written response.

Complaints - Principal

- A copy of the complaint should be given to the principal for a written response.
- The Board will consider the written response and after considering all information, make a decision.
- The Board will acknowledge the complaint and inform the complainant in writing of any actions taken in resolution.
- Where the Board considers a resolution is reasonable and effective, the complainant and the Teacher/Principal should be informed by the Board that no further action is intended.
- If the Board is not satisfied, the full Board or a committee of the Board may discuss the complaint and recommend actions to the teacher/principal. The Teacher/Principal should be invited to respond to the Board's recommendations.
- In the case of allegations which have disciplinary implications, the Board should convene a committee to investigate and report only on the substance of the complaint. Such a committee will include a professional or union representative nominated by the Teacher/ Principal as well as a professional or STA advisor selected by the Board.

- The committee should report in writing to the Board detailing all parties consulted and the content of any written submissions. The committee may offer a recommendation to the Board.
- The Teacher/Principal should be invited to respond to the report.
- In discussion at a Board meeting of the Teacher's/Principal's response, the Teacher/Principal may make a statement, answer questions, but not be present during the discussion on action on the complaint.
- The Teacher/Principal may be represented at all meetings with the Board, or sub-committee of the Board by a professional or union advocate of his/her choice.
- All business concerning the complaint and action resulting from it will be held "in committee" and recorded as such.
- Any member of the Board who is personally involved in the complaint shall take no part in the discussion about it but may submit a statement on the matter.
- Anyone with any personal involvement in the complaint shall not be a member of any committee of inquiry.
- If the complainant is not satisfied, the Board Chairperson should advise the complainant of further avenues, e.g. Human Rights Commission, Ombudsman, etc.

Reviewed: May 2019

Note: Upload to the school website when reviewed.

Chairperson Date