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## **COMPLAINTS & CONCERNS POLICY**

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### **RATIONALE**

Managing complaints appropriately, using fair and consistent practice is an important part of our school operations, with the aim of achieving a speedy and satisfactory resolution which can lead to improvements in our school practices and provision for students.

### **PURPOSE**

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The purpose of these procedures is to provide the best possible care and protection of our students. There may be occasions when practices do not meet certain standards or expectations, and a parent or others may need to make a complaint or raise concerns they have about students, staff, the principal, the board, policies or events at or involving the school. Complaints will vary from minor to major, and may escalate rapidly from one to the other if they are not managed in a manner that is both timely and appropriate.

### **COMPLAINTS TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

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1. The Board is the employer of school staff and responsible for the school operating within the law.
2. The Board of Trustees are committed to making our school the best learning environment possible for our students and parents have the right to have their concerns listened to and addressed.
3. All Complaints to the board of trustees should be in writing and addressed to the chairperson of the board.
4. If a complaint has been managed by the Tumuaki and parents are not happy with the outcome, then parents can submit their complaint to the board of trustees.
5. If the Tumuaki is the subject of the complaint, then the Board Chair will assume responsibility of the complaint. Should it be necessary, the Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing a Complaints Sub-Committee to investigate and resolve the matter.

## **COMPLAINTS TO THE TUMUAKI**

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1. The Tumuaki is responsible for the day-to-day management of our school and student discipline.
2. A parent may ask to meet with the Tumuaki to make a complaint about a staff member, another student, an incident that occurred or a school event.
3. The Tumuaki is to treat all complaints seriously and make time to meet with parents.
4. The Tumuaki is to take notes of key points discussed and record a course of action and/or any agreed outcome. The parent is to be given a copy of these notes at the end of the meeting and a copy retained by the school.
5. The Tumuaki will decide the next steps after an investigation and interview have been completed.

### **INFORMAL STAGE**

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- a. Most complaints/issues can be resolved informally and quickly by discussion with a member of staff concerned or the Tumuaki. Alternatively parents/carers can write to the member of staff or the Tumuaki outlining the issue clearly.
- b. Any complaint/issue that is put in writing should be written clearly outlining all the issues and what it is hoped that the preferred outcome should be. All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 3 – 5 working days.
- c. Parent/carers should make an appointment to discuss their concerns with a member of staff who knows about the issue or incident. If the complaint relates to a pupil, ideally the member of staff concerned should be directly involved with the pupil, for example, class teacher.
- d. The member of staff will usually write notes during the meeting. Parents/carers can ask for a copy of these notes.

### **FORMAL STAGE**

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- a. There are three formal stages.

#### **Stage 1**

- a. If a parent/carer is still dissatisfied after the informal stage, they, or the member of staff can refer the matter to the Tumuaki. This can be done in writing, as this will often make the situation clear to all involved parties.
- b. The Tumuaki will offer a meeting with the parent/carer or other complainant at a mutually convenient time. At the meeting, and through discussion, the Tumuaki will clarify what the issues are. The hopes of what the parent/carer is trying to achieve will also be discussed.

Together all parties will agree an acceptable outcome. This should be to the satisfaction of all parties involved. These should be written down and agreed by all parties so there is no misunderstanding. Again parents/carers should be given a copy of this.

- c. If the issue is complex the Tumuaki may need to speak to other staff and pupils to investigate the concerns. This should happen within 10 school days. If this timescale cannot be met the Tumuaki is to inform the parent/carers that this matter will take longer and explain the reasons for this. Also give a timescale for when the investigation will be completed.

## **Stage 2**

- a. After meeting with the Tumuaki, if the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carers' satisfaction, the complaint can be referred to the Board. This can either be in writing to the Chair at the school address, or alternatively the school can ask the Board to contact the parent/carers direct. The Tumuaki can also refer the complaint to the Board.
- b. If the Tumuaki is the subject of the complaint, the complaint should go straight to the Board and miss out Stage 1. The Board may ask for the complaint to be put in writing (if this has not already happened).
- c. The Board will offer to meet with the parent/carers or other complainant, at a mutually convenient time.
- d. The Board has 15 school days to investigate the complaint. If it cannot be resolved within this time, the Chair will inform the complainant and explain why it is taking longer.
- e. Reasons for this may be that the complaint is complex and needs more time or someone involved is absent through sickness or holidays. The Board should give a realistic timescale for when the complaint should be resolved. The chair should inform the complainant of when it is expected that the investigation should be completed.

## **Stage 3**

- a. If the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carers' satisfaction, or Chair of Governors feels that it is necessary, s/he can set up a complaints committee to consider the complaint. The Board will decide if this is appropriate.
- b. If the Board can resolve the complaint there is no need to hold a Complaints Committee meeting. As far as possible it is recommended that Complaints Committees are a last resort.
- c. The Board can appoint an investigating officer to gather evidence and conduct preliminary interviews on the chair's behalf. The investigating officer will provide a detailed report of his/her investigation of the complaint. Parents/carers should be given a copy of this report. It is important that the investigating officer is seen as impartial. So whilst the investigating officer is another governor, s/he cannot be a member of the associated complaints committee.
- d. The Complaints Committee is made up of three members of Te Kura o te Whakarewarewa Governing Body. Sometimes Governors need to be brought in from other schools' governing

bodies because the school's governors are 'tainted' because they have prior knowledge of the complaint.

- e. The Complaints Committee should meet at a time convenient to all parties. The complainant, the Tumuaki, the Board and any member of staff the complaint is about will be invited to the meeting. Any person invited can bring a friend or supporter if they wish.
- f. The Complaints Committee will consider any written material, and also give the person making the complaint and the Tumuaki, Board and staff an opportunity to state their case and to question others present. The committee will ensure that all present are treated fairly. The meeting will be minuted and everyone present will be given a copy of the minutes.
- g. The committee will give its decision, in writing, within five school days after the meeting, along with the reasons for their decision.
- h. If after this process, the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, they should write to the Secretary of State, (add address) if it is a general complaint, or to the Local Authority if the complaint is about the curriculum and is a curriculum related matter.
- i. If a complaint is not from a parent/carer of a pupil of the school (an example being a member of the public) these should be made directly to the Tumuaki, preferably in writing.
- j. All complaints will be recorded formally by the school in a central log.
- k. It should be noted that the kura do not need to consider complaints made more than one year after the incident/situation.
- l. If a complaint is made about an issue that is over a year old the school will write to the complainant explaining why this is the case.

## PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FLOW CHART

