

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS POLICY

**MATIPO
SCHOOL**



This policy is to be made known to all employees. It is to be brought to the notice of any prospective employee at the time of making any offer of employment. It is then accepted as part of their terms of employment.

Rationale

To maintain good relationships among staff and between the school and parents, caregivers, and whanau through resolving issues that may arise from time to time.

Purpose

To provide procedures that:

- Promote good communication and relationships.
- Ensure fairness, accuracy and balanced input among those involved.
- Give priority to achieving solutions as soon as possible.

Guidelines

1. Complaints are best settled as quickly and as informally as possible. The school has an Open Door Policy to encourage open lines of communication, and it is therefore expected that, in most instances, this will happen.
2. Where the concern or complaint involves your child, parents and caregivers are encouraged to raise the issue with the class teacher in the first instance, or if the concern relates to curriculum or school management, with the Deputy Principal or Associate Principal of the appropriate Year Group in the first instance.
3. All formal complaints need to be in writing, signed by the complainant/s, and must be submitted to the Principal. In the event of a complaint against the Principal, the complaint must be submitted to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
4. All formal complaints will be acknowledged in writing. If possible, an acknowledgment will be within one day of receipt.
5. All complaints will be investigated according to the procedures in this Policy.

Procedures for Investigating Informal Complaints

Complaints are best settled as quickly and as informally as possible, and it is therefore expected that in most instances, this will happen.

1. It is expected that people will, as much as possible, endeavor to address concerns and complaints privately and informally. If this is not possible, then senior staff members will facilitate meetings in an effort to address concerns.
2. The Principal and School Leaders (Deputy Principals, Associate Principal, and Team Leaders) are charged with investigating complaints and facilitating as swift and amicable settlement of disputes as possible. This is best achieved face to face meetings between the parties involved, with a facilitated and fair discussion in order to seek resolution and understanding.
3. Our school uses a process in keeping with 'Restorative Practices' to facilitate these meetings, and all school leaders are expected to undertake and implement the training provided managing restorative processes.
4. Our school has an 'Open Door Policy' with our wider school community in an effort to encourage open lines of communication. Students and their whanau are encouraged to contact staff and discuss concerns with a view to working towards positive outcomes.
5. Staff members may ask for the support of another person; to attend meetings, to discuss complaints, and in the process of laying complaints. The role of the support person is to listen and provide 'moral' support (not to participate) throughout the process. If a support person is attending, it is expected that all people attending the meeting will be notified prior to the start of the meeting.
6. The complaint process is a confidential process and should always seek to preserve the 'mana' of everyone involved; the complaint and the person against whom the complaint is laid along with the person charged with addressing concerns.

Procedures for Investigating Formal Complaints

If the complaint is provided under the request for protected disclosure all steps must be taken to accordance with the Protected Disclosure Policy.

If a complaint is of a serious nature (pertaining to staff or student safety, involving possible illegal or ethical issues) the person against whom the complaint is made may be requested to undertake alternative duties and may be asked to undertake those duties away from our school site or at home.

1. All formal complaints will be in writing (including email), signed by the complainants, and must be submitted to the Principal. If a complaint is in the nature of protected disclosure, the person taking the complaint will keep dated, extensive and accurate notes.
2. In the event of a complaint against the Principal, the complaint will be submitted to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
3. All formal complaints will be acknowledged initially in person and later in writing (including email). Ideally, an acknowledgment will be within one day of receipt.
4. The receipt of a formal complaint will be noted on the Complaints Record Sheet.
5. The person/s against who the complaint is laid will be told of the complaint and informed of the process.
6. The complaint will be investigated. The Principal will ensure that a fair and unbiased process is established to investigate the complaint.
7. If necessary, a sub-committee will be established to investigate the complaint. The sub-committee will be appointed by the Board Chair and may include a staff member.
8. The person against whom the complaint is laid will be provided with a copy of the complaint or a clear representation of the complaint if it is a confidential process, with outcomes of the investigation and asked for their response.
9. All relevant information will be gathered to ensure both sides' views are heard. Both sides will be informed of the process and outcomes.
10. Ideally, a Restorative Meeting will be held - to ensure that all parties can 'feel heard' address harm and restore relationships. The restorative process does not necessarily replace any required disciplinary

processes. If a restorative process is agreed by both parties it will be run formally by both parties, it will be run formally by an impartial facilitator who is agreed to by both parties.

11. If it is decided a disciplinary process is to be considered, the person the complaint was made against will be notified in writing, provided all relevant information and date suggested. They will be encouraged to seek support and to have support at a meeting to discuss their concerns. No decisions will be made regarding disciplinary processes prior to this meeting. See 'Disciplinary Actions - Code of Conduct'.
12. All parties will be informed of the result of the investigation in person and in writing of any further action that will be taken (if any).
13. If the complaint involves a staff member, a record will be kept on the staff member's personal file, if appropriate.
14. All possible steps must be taken to maintain confidentiality by all concerned parties (the complaint, the person/s against whom a complaint is made, and investigators/receivers of complaints) throughout the complaints process.

