

Complaints

2.6

Rationale

1. The College recognises that differences can occur in all systems and organisations. The right of the individual to have his/her voice heard is endorsed. The College is committed to resolving complaints fairly, equitably and as promptly as possible.
2. Most complaints will be handled in-house by the College administration. Complaints will be acknowledged by the appropriate person as soon as possible. Complaints shall be as specific as possible – in writing if necessary, to establish the facts. Procedures for both making and handling different kinds of complaints shall be made clear.

Requirements

1. Persons making oral complaints to trustees will be directed to e-mail or write to the principal or ultimately the Chairperson.
2. Complaints made via social media (Facebook) or the school website will be replied to with instructions to e-mail the principal
3. All complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days of being received. This applies to staff, Deans, SLT, Principal and Board Chairperson.
4. Complaints made by members of the public will be reported in-committee with the following details only: date received, name of complainant, date of acknowledgement.
5. The principal has the discretion to escalate actual complaints details to a Board level investigation. This should be done with advice from STA
6. The Board will observe the processes set out in its Advice to Parents/Advice to Students documents below.
7. The person about whom the complaint is made will be informed as soon as practicable and given reasonable time to respond.
8. Requests for confidentiality as to identity of complainant will be respected unless natural justice demands otherwise.
9. Issues of a serious nature, e.g. allegations of physical abuse, may require a special meeting of the board to be called.
10. Resolution or dismissal of the complaint must not be discussed before all information is to hand.
11. Conflict of interest will be determined on a number of issues, including whether the complaint involves the actions of any trustee.

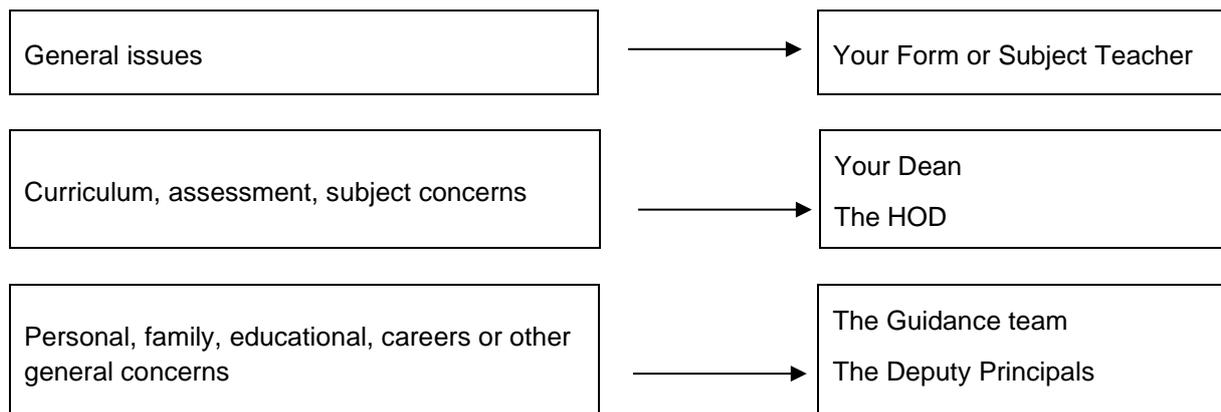
12. The Board must exercise caution when dealing with complaints regarding staff, particularly in relation to confidentiality and process to ensure principles of natural justice are met. It is advisable to contact the Regional New Zealand School Trustees Association (STA) personnel/industrial adviser in such cases. The Board will need to consider the relevant staff disciplinary policies, employment contracts and expert advice from the STA adviser.
13. The Board recognises that not all complainants will be satisfied with the outcome of a complaint. Once reconsidered, if the Board is confident of its decision. It will refuse to enter into any further discussion or correspondence. In making such a decision the STA Helpdesk can assist by giving an objective assessment of the Board's process in dealing with a complaint.
14. A complaint regarding lack of compliance in relation to an agreed complaint resolution will be treated as a serious matter and actioned with urgency as a new complaint rather than a reconsideration of a previous issue.
15. Digital records of complaints and information gathered in relation to complaints, must be kept for a minimum of 36 months in an online complaints folder by the person dealing with the complaint. The Board chairperson keeps information related to complaints about the Principal.
16. All complaints must be tabled within 90 days of the complainant being aware of the issue.

Procedures to Follow for Concerns or Complaints

STUDENTS

Problems are always best dealt with quickly and directly.

So... talk to the teacher concerned, explain your concern reasonably and try to resolve it. You might have to listen too!



Choose someone who you trust.

If your concern is of a bullying or sexual harassment, you should go to any of the above, or speak to a PSSP (Peer Sexuality Support Person).

If you're not happy with the resolution of your complaint you may make a written formal complaint addressed to the Principal. He will discuss it with you and anyone else concerned, probably taking details in writing before resolving the complaint with you.

TEACHERS

Concerns could be directed in the first instance to your Head of Department or the Deputy Principal responsible for the teachers learning area. For support staff, go to the Business Manager.

A formal written complaint about a teacher should be made in writing and directed to the Principal (see formal complaints process below).

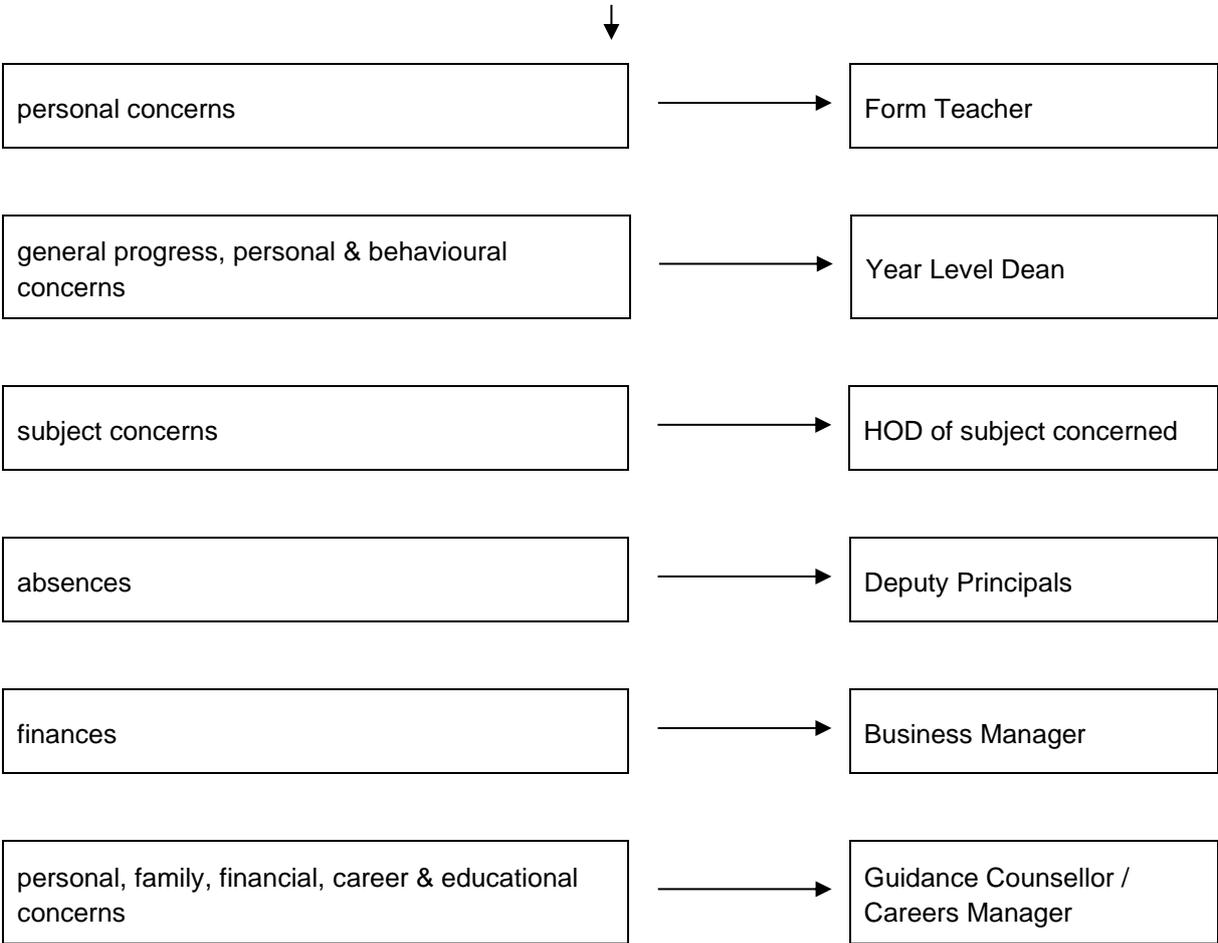
Complaints about the Principal should be directed to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

PARENTS

If you have a concern:



About a more general issue, or if you don't want to contact a specific teacher



OR

Senior Leadership Team – Principal and Deputy Principals
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Please either e-mail/write directly to or telephone the staff member through the school office. You may need to leave a message with a contact telephone number, and times when you can be contacted. The staff member will reply to you as soon as possible.

PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your concern, you can make a Formal Written Complaint to the Principal, or in their absence to the Acting Principal.

1. You should make this in writing or by e-mail and include all relevant details, including details of efforts you have already made to resolve the matter. Include your name and contact phone number.
2. Send your written complaint to the Principal or Acting Principal if the Principal is absent. Ask for assistance at the school office if you are unsure how to go about delivering your complaint.
3. The Principal will discuss the issue with you before deciding what action to take. You are welcome to have someone with you for support if you wish.
4. The Principal will talk to the person about whom the complaint has been made as well as interviewing anybody else who may have had a part to play in the incident, or who may have seen that happened. Written statements will usually be taken.
5. Whilst your complaint will be treated in confidence, any other people concerned will have the opportunity to hear all the relevant details and to reply to them.
6. The Principal will decide what steps to take as part of the investigation.
7. You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.
8. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the matter may be referred to the Board of Trustees for consideration and action.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint to the Principal or if the complaint is in respect of the Principal and is unsatisfactorily resolved after contact, you can make a complaint in writing to the Board of Trustees.

The school office can forward letters to the Board of Trustees for you.

Written complaints received by the Board of Trustees

1. Any complaint in writing must be received before the Friday preceding the monthly Board meeting for it will be held over to the next Board meeting. Any letter of concern will be tabled at the full Board meeting.
2. On receiving a written complaint, the Board will decide what further action is required on a case-by-case basis. Before the Board decide to deal with a complaint it must check that the procedures outlined above have been followed. If not, it will normally return any letter of complaint to the writer and ask that they follow these first.
3. All letters addressed to the Chairperson of the Board are for the whole Board. The Chairperson cannot act independently as to what action will be taken.
 - (a) The Chair acknowledges the letter of complaint within a fortnight of receipt and the complainant is advised of the next steps in the Board process. The letter becomes part of the correspondence that will be dealt with by the Board at the next meeting while the public is excluded.
 - (b) (At 'public excluded' meetings) The letter of complaint is tabled at the Board meeting and referred to relevant parties for reporting back to the Board. The Board decides whether to deal with the matter as a whole or appoint a committee to investigate and recommend to the Board.
 - (c) (At 'public excluded' meetings) At the meeting of the Board/committee, the reports are received and the parties may be invited to speak to their complaint or answer questions. The Board/committee considers the evidence and/or information and comes to a decision or recommendation.
 - (d) (At 'public excluded' meetings) Depending on the powers of the committee, either they or the Board as a whole come to a resolution as to how the Board will respond and what action will be taken.
4. The Board's response is communicated to the parties to the complaint in writing.
5. Any of the parties may request the Board to reconsider their decision. However, normally for such reconsideration to take place, new information that would have been relevant to the Board's deliberations must be produced.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees: April 2018