

Auckland Girls' Grammar School Concerns and Complaints Process

CONCERNS and COMPLAINTS POLICY

RATIONALE:

To provide a structure, so that a complaint against any member of Auckland Girls' Grammar School Staff, (permanent or relieving) by other staff, parents, students or other persons, is attended to promptly, respectfully and professionally, and to seek to bring effective resolution to all parties concerned.

PURPOSE:

In order to maintain a safe and comfortable environment for all students, staff and visitors; an accessible procedure for handling concerns, complaints and grievances is in place and maintained to provide an open and fair way of resolving issues and will comply with relevant legislation.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DELIVERY

The Board of Trustees delegates full responsibility of ensuring processes are in place and operating effectively and adequately to the Principal. Except where the complaint or grievance is concerning the Principal, whereby the complaint or grievance shall be addressed to the Board of Trustees.

GUIDELINES:

1. Protect the rights of staff by:-
 - a. Establishing whether the complaint is formal or informal. For example: Formal complaints are received in writing and are signed. Informal complaints are by their nature concerns.
 - b. Ensuring that formal complaints are properly investigated, and that decisions are made on the basis of sound, properly evaluated evidence. Informal complaints/concerns are generally discussed with the staff member involved and resolved. Otherwise, to be pursued they need to be formalised.
 - c. Respecting the two main laws of natural justice –
 - i. that the people conducting the investigation and making any subsequent decisions be free of any actual or apparent bias toward either the complainant or the respondent.
 - ii. that both complainant and respondent be told, in specific terms the nature of the complaint and the full details of the investigation and be given a reasonable opportunity to respond.
2. To protect the rights of complainants by:-
 - a. Acting promptly to resolve the grievance
 - b. Ensuring that they are not further harassed for having laid a complaint

BOUNDARIES/LIMITATIONS

In complying with the policy the Principal shall not fail to:

- Implement and maintain robust procedures to meet the policy requirements
- ensure that the process for complaints or grievances is clearly communicated
- Report to the Board of Trustees as below

REPORTING AND MONITORING

The Principal shall maintain a register of complaints and resolutions and shall report to the Board of Trustees at least quarterly per annum outlining the number of complaints, resolution success figures and any areas of concern for Board deliberation.

PROCEDURES:

1.
 - a) Staff, students and parents will be informed about the complaints policy and procedures on an annual basis. All staff will receive a copy of this policy in the staff handbook.
 - b) Staff new to the school, will receive information about this policy as part of their induction training by the Business Manager.
 - c) Students and Parents will be informed about the policy during the enrolment process.
 - d) The Policy and Procedure for dealing with Concerns and Complaints at the school will be clearly shown on the school website both as a flow chart and as a Policy document.
2. All complaints will be handled confidentially.
3. Complaints received from Parents or Students:
 - Curriculum based **concerns**, either about content or delivery should be directed in the first instance to the teacher concerned. If the issue is not successfully resolved then the matter should be discussed with the Faculty Co-

- ordinator of that teacher/subject. If not resolved then Concerns and Formal Complaints need to be directed to the Deputy Principal (Curriculum)
- Behaviour based concerns and formal complaints should be directed to the Deputy Principal.
 - 4. General concerns may be discussed with the Dean or Counsellor in the case of pastoral matters, or the relevant Faculty Co-ordinator, should the concern involve a subject or subject teacher, or they may be discussed with a Deputy Principal or Principal.
 - 5. Staff members receiving written or emailed letters of complaint will pass these directly onto the appropriate Senior Management Team member.
 - 6. Complaints received from Staff:
Staff members should discuss their informal complaints/*concerns* with a member of the Senior Management Team to resolve the concern. Otherwise if the staff member wants the matter to be investigated further they will need to provide the Principal with a formal, written complaint.
 - 7. Any complaint that cannot be resolved must be referred to the Principal.
 - 8. The Principal will act to resolve the complaint as is appropriate and with consideration to contractual obligations. Complainants have the right to appeal to the Board of Trustees. The Board will only consider formal, written complaints.
 - 9. Complaints against the Principal should be made to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

Once a letter of complaint has been received the Board Chairperson should ensure the following process is followed:

- Ensure process has been followed as outlined in the Concerns and Complaints Procedure OR is a genuine complaint against the Principal or the Board.
- Verify with the Principal that any staff (or others) identified in the complaint are aware of the situation and that there has been discussion and attempts to reconcile.
- Acknowledge within 7 days and advise Board process. OR redirect complainant to the Principal, member of the Senior leadership team, Faculty Head or teacher as appropriate. Report to board without any names or details at next meeting.
- Once confirmed as complaint forward confidentially to all trustees for consideration.
- Board requests Principal to present full written report outlining all actions taken, advice received, meetings held and justified decisions made.
- Board determines whether the above fully satisfies them of full and fair process; if so supports the Principal and advises the complainant; if not ..
- Board meets and discusses "in-committee" whether to formally meet the complainant, and delegates responsibility to trustee(s) as deemed appropriate.
- Board delegate(s) meet with complainant and discusses more fully, verifies, investigates, clarifies. Support persons should be confirmed as welcome to attend. Repeat meeting as required.
- Board delegate(s) report back to full board and recommend actions/decisions.
- Board takes appropriate actions, records and formally minutes decisions. If the complaint or action is employment related, or has potential industrial relations implications, Board Chair shall alert insurers and NZSTA personnel/industrial advisor.
- Board advises complainant in writing of its decision and factors considered in reaching [its decision] within 21 days of complaint.

