

## **Complaints Policy**

### Rationale

There will invariably, at some time, be complaints against a teacher, ancillary staff member, principal or board member. Parents and teachers must be aware of the procedures to follow when making or receiving a complaint.

### Resources available to the Board

The Board may engage the use of NZSTA to help resolve any issues if they feel it is necessary.

### Guidelines

#### 1) Complaint against a teacher

The complainant should make an appointment to meet with the teacher concerned. Complainants are encouraged to come to such a meeting with an open mind as most problems can be settled with discussion. When making an appointment let the teacher know the nature of the complaint so that the teacher can prepare for the interview.

Teachers must inform the Principal if complaints are made against them.

If the complainant is not satisfied after meeting with the teacher then they should make an appointment to meet with the Principal. When making the appointment the complainant should briefly state the nature of the complaint so that the Principal can prepare for the meeting.

Every effort must be made by the Principal to reconcile the difference between the parent/caregiver and the teacher.

Complainants who are still not satisfied may write to the Chairperson outlining their concern.

Upon receiving a complaint the Chairperson must notify the Principal and work with him/her to try to resolve the problem. The remainder of the Board at this stage need not be further involved. The Board can just be told that a complaint has been laid against a teacher and that the Chairperson and Principal are dealing with the situation.

If the complainant is still dissatisfied after liaison with the Chairperson and the Principal, the Chairperson should refer the matter to the whole Board.

The teacher concerned must be notified of the rights for representation and encouraged to see advice from an NZEI counsellor and/or lawyer if the matter cannot be resolved.

If the issue is still not resolved the complainant can seek help from an outside agency.

#### 2) Complaint against the Principal

Complainants are encouraged to first make an appointment to see the Principal, letting him/her know the nature of the complaint. The complaint may then be discussed at the appointment. The complainant may take a support person if they wish.

If the problem cannot be resolved then the complainant must make their complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Board.

Upon receiving a complaint the Chairperson must give the Principal a copy of the complaint and give him/her the opportunity to reply.

The Chairperson and Principal must work together to resolve the problem. The complainant must be kept informed of any action being taken. Both parties could be brought together to help resolve the problem.

If the Chairperson considers that the Principal is at fault then he/she must inform the Board.

The Principal at this stage must be encouraged to seek legal advice.

The Principal must be given the opportunity to state his/her case to the Board.

The Board may consult with NZSTA when complaints cannot be resolved.

### 3) Complaint against Ancillary Staff

Complainants should deliver any complaints to the Principal.

Through discussions with the complainant and the staff member, the Principal must make every effort to resolve the problem.

The Principal must consult the appropriate award if complaints are lodged against ancillary staff.

### 4) Complaint against Board members

Complainants at first should discuss the complaint with the Board member.

If the complainant is still dissatisfied after such a meeting, then he/she should discuss the matter with the Chairperson.

The Chairperson must make every effort to resolve the problem.

If the problem is unresolved, refer the matter to the Board.

If the Chairperson, in consultation with the Board, considers that the Board member is at fault, and considers the matter serious, then he/she may ask for the member's resignation.

### Recommendations

A case sheet record is to be kept by the Principal of all meetings with teachers and parents/caregivers. All parties have access through the Official information Act 1982 to copies of all written material.

Throughout the procedure, the Principal, teacher, Board member and Complainant must observe the rules of confidentiality regarding information and documents.

Before any action is taken, refer to the Privacy Policy.

