

## **Concerns and Complaints Process**



Complaints can come from students, staff, parents and even members of the public. They might be about students, staff, the Principal, the Board, West End School policies or events at or involving the school. Complainants can question the operations of West End School and can request information to be provided. If a child or parent requests additional information about a stand-down or suspension decision, the Board must carefully consider it.

West End School is obliged to provide information under the Official Information Act 1982 and the Privacy Act 1993. Under both Acts, a full answer must be provided to the requester within a specified timeframe.

### **Concerns & Complaints Process**

As parents we all have times when we need to share our concern, and it is often best to do so before they escalate into something larger. It is important for the school to know parents worries as we value the partnership between home and school. To help parents know who to talk to about any issues the process is outlined below. There are a number of options available to you.

- If it is in relation to something that is happening in the classroom, the first point of contact must be the classroom teacher.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you should talk to the relevant Team Leader. They, along with the Principal, make up the Senior Leadership Team of the school.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome after talking to the Team Leader or it is a more generic issue you should talk to the Principal.
- If it is a generic issue, or you are still not satisfied after talking to the Principal, you should contact the Board by sending a letter outlining your concerns for consideration and discussion. Your letter should be addressed to the Board of Trustees, c/o the Chairperson, labelled 'In Confidence', and either posted or handed to office staff who will pass it on unopened.

It is important to remember that we all have the children's best interests at heart.

### **Formal Complaints Process**

#### **Complaints to the Principal:**

The Principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school and students discipline.

Parents may ask to meet with the Principal to make a complaint about a staff member, another student, an incident that occurred or a school event.

- The Principal will treat all complaints seriously and make time to meet with parents, if possible.
- Where possible another person other than the Principal, attend a complaint meeting.
- Notes should be taken of the key points discussed and record a course of action and/or any agreed outcomes.
- A copy of these notes can be given to the parent at the end of the meeting. A copy should also be retained by the school as it may be needed at a later time.

#### **Complaints to the Board:**

If the Principal has managed a complaint and parents are not happy with the outcome, parents are entitled to complain to the Board of Trustees.

Complaints to the Board of Trustees should be in writing and addressed to the Chairperson of the Board. A discussion with the Board Chairperson or a Board member is NOT a formal complaint

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 Concerns and Complaints Procedure OR is a genuine complaint.
- Verify with the Principal that any staff (or others) identified in the complaint are aware of situation and that there has been discussion and attempts to reconcile.
- Acknowledge letter within 7 days and advise board process, OR redirect complainant to Principal, Team Leader or staff member as appropriate. Report to board without names or detail 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, and meetings held and justified decisions made.
- Board determined whether the above fully satisfies them of full and fair process; if so supports the Principal and advises the complainants; if not ...
- Board meets and discusses "in committee", determines whether to formally meet complainant, and delegate's responsibility to trustee(s) as deemed appropriate.
- Board delegate(s) meet with complainant and discusses more fully, verifies investigates and 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 minute's decisions. If 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 decisions and factors considered in reaching, within 21 days of complaint receipt, unless otherwise agreed by all par-ties.
- Board endeavours to convene follow-up meeting within 1 month of step 9.

The Board's decision will be final.

Natural Justice can be defined as the obligation to act fairly and reasonably.

A person's explanation must be heard fairly and completely.

Any person directly involved or with a vested interest should not be included in the final determination.