

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Rationale

1. To provide guidelines that are to be followed when dealing with complaints raised about staff members, the Principal or Board of Trustees.
2. To ensure that all members of the school community know the procedure to be taken when a complaint is made.
3. To ensure that employees are notified of complaints about them and that prompt action is taken to ensure that the complaint is dealt with by procedures that are equitable, fair and sensitive to all parties.
4. To ensure that student complaints are considered sympathetically and sensitively and are investigated fairly by the Principal.
5. The Board of Trustees is committed to mediation as the best means of resolving complaints.

Guidelines

6. All complaints (other than those against the Principal) should, in the first instance, be addressed to the Principal who will attempt to resolve these by discussion with the concerned person.
7. Complaints against staff will be dealt with according to the relevant employment contract legal requirements, legislation and the policies of the school. The principles of natural justice will be adhered to in dealing with any complaint. The staff member concerned will be made aware of her/his right to representation.
8. Students can lodge an initial concern with a staff member / peer that they feel comfortable with, including sexual harassment contact people. Referrals should be made to the Student Councillors in the school.
9. A complaint about the Principal should be addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
10. Complaints made verbally or via email will be treated as informal complaints and the Principal will attempt to resolve these by discussion with concerned parties.
11. Where the Principal is unable to resolve the complaint informally then any of the parties may refer the matter in writing to the Board of Trustees.
12. Where an initial concern is considered serious the complainant can lodge a complaint directly in writing to the Principal and / or Board of Trustees. Furthermore, the Principal may request that the concern be submitted in writing.
13. All complaints in writing must be signed. All written complaints must be acknowledged in writing.
14. Except in exceptional circumstances, the Board of Trustees will not accept any complaint unless it is in writing. The Board may decide to form a committee to investigate the complaint or concern

and make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. Where appropriate the Board of Trustees will ask the Principal to report on the complaint.

15. If a staff member is involved a copy of the complaint will be given for response and will be given a reasonable timeframe in which to respond.
16. Complaints against the Principal must be submitted in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and signed by the complainant. A copy of the complaint must be given to the Principal for a written response. The Board of Trustees must acknowledge the complaint in writing. The Board of Trustees will discuss the complaint with the Principal and if it considers it necessary recommend action to the Principal. The Principal will be invited to respond to the Board's recommendations.
17. All complaints will be treated in confidence both by the Board of Trustees and its employees.

Documentation

18. Where complaints / concerns are unable to be resolved at the informal verbal stage, or are made in writing, the Principal will keep minutes of all meetings, agreements made and action taken. The records will be kept in the staff member's personal file until the complaints have been resolved.
19. All written material from the complainant relating to the complaint must be made available to the employee against whom the complaint is made.
20. Information held in personnel files is held in accordance with the Education Act 1989.

Complaints Against Board of Trustees Members

21. Complaints against the Board or a Board member must be submitted to the Chairperson of the Board in writing and those complaining given the opportunity to make personal representation at a constituted meeting of the Board.
22. If the Board is unable to reach a mutually acceptable solution by a discussion with the complainant, an independent party may be appointed by the Board to review the complaint in conjunction with committee nominated by the Board of Trustees.
23. This committee, with the independent person, may recommend a course of action to the Board but will have no authority over the Board.
24. The Board will consider any recommended course of action made to it by the independent reviewer. The Board will then act as deemed appropriate.

Self-Review

25. This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Board's programme of self-review and the review report will be available to members of the school community.

Principal:

Chairperson:

Date: