

Rangiora High School

Board of Trustees



Complaints Policy

Rationale

Rangiora High School Board of Trustees aims to provide a safe physical and emotional environment for all students and staff. The School recognises that in any large organisation involving a number of people, concerns, complaints and allegations are inevitable.

It is, therefore, important that the concerns of students, staff, parents/whānau and members of the wider school community are communicated to the appropriate person and are dealt with fairly, sensitively and appropriately at the earliest opportunity. The School aims to deal with concerns and complaints in a way that respects the mana and dignity of all parties to ensure that all students, and whānau, families and staff members feel safe and supported.

Purpose

To ensure that a clear process exists to enable complaints to be raised and addressed in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

Definitions

Concern: A concern is a matter that causes worry or disquiet that can be resolved collaboratively at the level, or close to the level, where the concern was generated. Therefore, in the first instance anyone with a concern is encouraged to raise the matter with an individual staff member in a reasonable and appropriate manner, to prevent issues escalating.

If a concern is raised with a staff member, that staff member may seek support from a middle or senior leader to address the concern.

If a concern is unresolved, those raising the concern may decide to make a complaint.

Complaint: A complaint is a formal expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service, actions or lack of action by staff, or things directly affecting student achievement / wellbeing or staff wellbeing i.e. is a serious concern that you wish to be investigated and resolved.

A complaint may be made by any person if that person thinks:

- ❑ They have not been treated fairly, respectfully, promptly, to an acceptable standard; and/or
- ❑ Procedures or systems have not been carried out to the expected standard.

Process for making a complaint

1. A written signed complaint should be sent to the Principal. The letter of complaint must:
 - 1.1. State in detail the reason for the complaint;
 - 1.2. Be based on specific and factual information, with all information provided;
 - 1.3. Include the name and contact phone details of the person making the complaint.
2. Complainants seeking confidentiality should consider making a protected disclosure (refer to the [Protected Disclosures Policy](#)).
3. Complaints about staff, students or operational matters should be provided to a member of staff with responsibility e.g. a Dean, Head of House, Head of Faculty or Senior Leader.
4. Complaints about the Principal or governance matters should be provided to the Board of Trustees via the Chair who will table the complaint at the following Board Meeting (assuming this meeting is more than three working days after the receipt of the complaint – if a complaint is received less than three working days before a Board Meeting it may not be tabled until the next meeting).
5. Written acknowledgment of the receipt of the complaint can be expected within five working days of the receipt of the complaint.

Process for dealing with a complaint

1. Once a complaint is received the complainant can expect to have receipt acknowledged in writing within five working days, unless exceptional circumstances exist.
2. The Principal will be informed of all complaints about members of staff.
3. An assessment will be made of the best level for the complaint to be addressed, with a view to having the complaint addressed fully, fairly and quickly at the lowest appropriate level.
4. While Board members are available to receive complaints they will then pass on the complaint to the Principal (or Board Chair if concerning the Principal) to deal with.
5. The Board will only address complaints that are about the Principal, governance matters, or where the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of an investigation of

a complaint raised with the Principal i.e. any complaint received by the Board of Trustees, not previously dealt with by the leadership of the School, will be directed to the Principal.

6. The person against whom a complaint has been made will be fully informed of the details of the complaint including the identity of the complainant. There may be some exceptions to this, for example matters relating to fraud or other criminal matters, or matters of safety, and an exception will be applied following legal or police advice.
7. The complainant will be informed as to who will be investigating the complaint, who the decision maker will be, and the likely timeline to undertake the investigation.
8. There can be no predetermined length of time to resolve complaints, however, complainants can be expected to be updated in writing on a likely timeline within 10 days of their complaint being acknowledged, or in the case of complaints being addressed by the Board within 10 working days of the Board meeting at which the complaint was tabled.
9. In all cases, the Board, in dealing with complaints, will act as a good employer. Any investigation that takes place will comply with the relevant employment agreement(s) (where applicable) and legislation.
10. Complainants can expect to be advised in writing of the outcome of their complaint. If they are unsatisfied with the outcome they may then forward their complaint to the Principal, and then if needed, to the Board.
11. The Board will only review a complaint that has already been investigated if they are satisfied that the investigation process was unfair, or where new information is provided by the complainant.
12. A complaint regarding lack of compliance in relation to the process outlined in this policy will be actioned as a new complaint, rather than a reconsideration of the previous issue.
13. The Board recognises that not all complainants will be satisfied with the outcome of the investigation into their complaint. Once reconsidered, if the Board is confident of its decision, it may refuse to enter into any further discussion/correspondence regarding the complaint.
14. Parents may complain to the Ministry of Education if they are not satisfied with the School's complaints procedure.
15. Complaints about the Board of Trustees (not individual trustees) may be directed to the Office of the Ombudsman.

Related Policies and Guidelines

RHS Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Policy

RHS Health and Safety Policy
RHS Protected Disclosures Policy

Documentation

Staff Handbook
School Caretakers' and Cleaners' (including Canteen Workers) Collective Agreements
Secondary and Area School Groundstaff Collective Agreement
Secondary Principals' Collective Agreement
Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement
Support Staff in Schools' Collective Agreement
Education Act 1989
Human Rights Act 1993
NZSTA Guidelines
MoE Guidelines

Date of Review	19 February 2020
Review Cycle	Three yearly
Date of Next Review	February 2023