

# Rangiora High School Board of Trustees



## Sensitive Claims of Abuse in State Schools Procedural Policy

### Rationale

‘Sensitive claims’ are claims made by a person who believes they were abused (physically, sexually, psychologically), mistreated or neglected at a New Zealand state school, and that this experience has harmed them in some way. The Ministry of Education will only respond to claims about residential special schools and primary schools if the claim relates to events occurring before 1989, and to claims about state schools that have closed. All other claims will be responded to by the Board of Trustees.

### Purpose

To ensure that a clear process exists in the event of a sensitive claim being made.

### Guidelines

1. Acknowledge receipt of the claim and outline for the complainant the steps that will be undertaken by the Board in reviewing and responding to their claim (“the Claim”) and the likely timeframe.
2. Request from the complainant any relevant records that they hold in relation to the Claim.
3. Review school records to identify and collate relevant information that relates to the Claim.
4. Contact the Ministry of Education to determine whether they hold any relevant records in relation to the Claim.
5. Create a Board subcommittee to undertake the process of reviewing and responding to the Claim. Unless the Principal is conflicted he / she should generally be included in the subcommittee.
6. Consider whether the Board subcommittee needs to make a mandatory report to the Teaching Council, if the Claim relates to a registered teacher and the mandatory reporting obligations have been triggered.

7. Consider whether the Board subcommittee needs to refer the complainant to the Police, or whether the Board needs to contact the Police directly, if the Claim is about criminal conduct.
8. Compile a list of all of the documents that have been obtained from the complainant, school records, and Ministry of Education (“the Documents”).
9. Provide a copy of the Documents to the complainant (with redactions if necessary), and provide an opportunity for the complainant to submit further relevant information.
10. Board subcommittee to review the Documents and assess the Claim, and determine whether the Claim can be upheld or dismissed based on the information available, or whether further information needs to be obtained and an expert assessor is required.
11. An expert assessor is likely to be required where the Board subcommittee considers that interviewing of the complainant or witnesses is necessary.
12. If the Complaint is upheld, determine whether redress is necessary, such as an apology to the complainant.
13. Advise the complainant of the Board subcommittee decision.

## Related Policies

RHS Complaints Policy

## Relevant Documentation

N/a

Date of Review	March 2021
Date of Next Review	March 2024
Date Adopted by BOT	March 2021