

Hauraki Primary School

Policy Document

Concerns and Complaints

Rationale

This policy provides parents/caregivers/whanau, staff members, and the wider school community with clear guidelines for raising and resolving concerns and complaints.

Purpose

The school will respond appropriately to any concerns about a student's safety and welfare. The school has an open-door policy to encourage open communication and invites you to talk through any issues, so that they can be resolved.

The Hauraki School Board (the Board) have procedures in place to ensure that complaints and concerns are handled appropriately. Our procedures enable us to:

- maintain a safe environment for our students and staff
- treat all people fairly, transparently, and with respect
- resolve matters of concern early, if possible
- respond to feedback and concerns constructively
- deal with complaints fairly, effectively, and in a timely manner
- review formal complaints about student safety and wellbeing.

We believe that most concerns can be resolved informally through discussions with the people concerned, as set out in the guidelines below. However, the school also has a procedure for making a formal complaint if informal discussion does not resolve the issue.

Definitions

Concerns

These are day to day issues that arise regarding classroom or school matters that can best be resolved through discussion.

Formal complaint

If your concerns cannot be resolved through discussion with the appropriate teacher, syndicate leader or principal, or for more serious matters such as immediate safety issues, you can make a formal complaint.

Guidelines for Raising Concerns

Our primary objective is to provide an emotionally and physically safe learning environment for all students. All teachers and the principal have open-door policies and we encourage

open communication at all levels of the school. We will be able to manage and resolve your concerns more effectively if you raise them with us promptly.

If you have a concern:

1. Discuss the concern with the right person:

- If you have a **general concern about the school or its programmes**, discuss it with the person involved or with a syndicate leader or the principal.
- If you have a **particular concern about a staff member or a school activity**, contact the person involved to discuss the matter privately. We ask that you make this direct approach as soon as possible and that you be prepared to make a time to discuss your concern if the person involved is unable to talk with you straight away. Both parties are encouraged to be open to listening to the other side of the story to avoid communication breakdowns.

If you do not wish to approach the person involved, contact the syndicate leader or the principal to discuss your concern. The principal or syndicate leader may communicate with the person involved.

- If you have a **concern about your own child or one of our other students**, contact the student's teacher or the principal to discuss the matter. If your concern relates to another student, you must not approach that student directly.
- If you have a concern about another **parent, caregiver, or member of the school community** on a school related matter, raise this with the principal.
- If the matter concerns the **principal** and you have not first resolved it by discussion, contact the Board presiding member.
- If the matter concerns a **board member**, contact the board chair, or principal if it concerns the board presiding member.

The Board will not become involved in resolving concerns. If you approach a Board member with your concerns, you will be asked to follow the guidelines above in the first instance.

2. Work towards a resolution.

- In most cases, constructive discussion will resolve your concerns.
- If you are unhappy with the outcome of your initial meeting, contact the principal, the syndicate leader, or the Board presiding member to discuss further resolution.

If this process does not resolve your concern, you can make a formal complaint, as set out below.

Formal Complaints

If your concerns have not been resolved, or for more serious matters such as immediate safety issues, you can make a formal complaint.

Formal complaints may be about an employee of the school, a parent or caregiver, a student, or any matter within the school's responsibility.

In the interests of fairness, any formal complaint or serious allegation must be made **in writing** and it will be resolved as quickly as possible given the details and the steps that need to be considered. Complaints about events that occurred more than three months earlier, do not involve you or your children, or which have been made anonymously, will not usually be formally investigated.

All parties should respect confidentiality during this process.

1. To make a complaint

Put your specific complaint(s) **in writing** (email is acceptable) with as many facts and details as possible, including the names of people involved and dates of events, together with any steps you have taken to resolve the matter and your preferred contact details. The letter or email should be marked "confidential" and sent to:

- the principal, if the complaint is about a staff member, student, parent or caregiver, or other member of the school community, or the Board presiding member
- the Board presiding member, if it is about the principal or a Board member

Contact details for the principal are available at the school office or online. The Board presiding member can be contacted via the email address:
boardoftrustees@hauraki.school.nz.

2. When your complaint is received

The principal or Board presiding member will check that your complaint has come to the correct person and then send you an acknowledgement of receipt, usually within a week.

You may be asked for further details about your complaint, to assist in investigating and resolving the complaint.

3. Investigating complaints

All written complaints will be disclosed to the person concerned at the earliest opportunity, together with an explanation of the process for investigating and resolving the complaint.

Relevant collective employment agreement provisions for dealing with complaints about staff members must be observed, including protecting the staff member's dignity and mana, advising them of their right to seek support and representation before responding to complaints, and giving them a reasonable opportunity to take that advice.

4. Resolving complaints

We will keep you informed about the process and the expected timeframe for resolution and provide you with written confirmation once the matter is concluded.

A full documentary record of any formal complaint will be stored confidentially in a secure location.

Board Involvement in Formal Complaints

The Board will not normally be involved in resolving formal complaints about a staff member, student, parent or caregiver, or other member of the school community.

However, potentially sensitive matters or more serious complaints which could lead to disciplinary action against a staff member may be referred to the Board by the principal for consideration in committee, with a view to determining the required level of Board or presiding member involvement.

Board Oversight of Formal Complaints

The principal will keep a complaints log of formal complaints describing the complaint and how it was handled. The log will be useful in identifying problems which may at first appear to be isolated incidents, but become ongoing or recurrent problems, and provide valuable information on areas in which the school can improve.

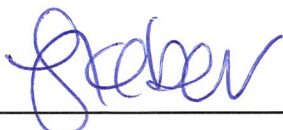
The Board will review the log on a 6 monthly basis to ensure any issues or opportunities to improve processes are identified.

Theft and Fraud

For allegations of theft or fraud, see the Theft and Fraud Prevention policy.

Protected Disclosures

School employees needing to make a protected disclosure should see the Protected Disclosure policy.

Signed: 

Presiding Member of the Board

Date: 4/12/2023

Review Date: Term 4 2026

HAURAKI SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



Hauraki School Complaints Procedure

Starting Point

Your concern or problem involves a classroom matter, or a particular staff member.

Yes

Write a note or phone the staff member concerned to make a suitable time to discuss the issue. Indicate before the discussion what the concern is about.

Talk with the relevant staff member about the issue. Be prepared to listen to their point of view. This may require more than 1 meeting, and/or involve the associate/deputy principal.

Provide feedback to the staff member as to whether you were satisfied or not, to ensure the problem is settled.

Issue Resolved?

Yes

No further action is required

Your concern or problem does not involve a classroom matter or particular staff member, OR has not been resolved by visiting the staff member.

Yes

Write a note, phone or talk to the Principal and make a time to discuss the concern or problem. Indicate before the discussion what the concern is about, and the steps you have taken to remedy it.

Discuss with the Principal, be prepared to listen to their point of view also, and provide feedback to ensure the problem is settled. The concern may be referred back to the staff member(s) particularly where this process has not been followed to date.

Issue Resolved?

Yes

No

Your concern or problem has not been resolved by visiting the staff member or the Principal, OR it involves the Principal or Board of Trustees.

You now have a complaint.

Write to the Board of Trustees, via the chairperson, outlining your problem, concern or complaint in detail, and all actions taken to date. The chairperson will need to ensure the correct process has been followed before the board will consider and may direct you back to the staff member or Principal. Include your name, signature and contact numbers. Your complaint will be acknowledged along with an expected timeframe for resolution.

Except in exceptional circumstances the Board of Trustees will not accept any complaint unless it is in writing and that a reasonable attempt has been made to resolve it through this process. Once the Board has considered and resolved the complaint, the Board will endeavor to convene a follow-up contact within one month.

No