

# Hauraki 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.

We 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 a 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 chair.
- If the matter concerns a **board member**, contact the board chair, or principal if it concerns the board chair.

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 chair 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 chair
- the board chair, 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 chair can be contacted via the office.

### **2. When your complaint is received**

The principal or board chair 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 chair 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.

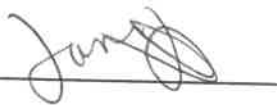
### **Theft and Fraud**

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: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

21/9/2020

Chairperson Board of Trustees

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Term 3, 2023

# HAURAKI SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



## Hauraki School Complaints Procedure

