

HAMILTON BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES POLICIES

POLICY: **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

POLICY NO: **2.14**

Rationale:

- It is important that the concerns of students, staff and parents of Hamilton Boys' High School are recognised and resolved in order to assure the best educational outcomes for students and facilitate confidence in the School's processes.
- To respond to complaints in a fair, consistent manner in accordance with relevant employment contracts, legislation and the school's code of conduct.

Policy:

The policy is to:

1. Ensure consistency when dealing with complaints.
2. Deal with complaints in line with set procedures such as in Collective Agreements.
3. Put in place corrective or disciplinary action where this is deemed appropriate.
4. Safeguard the rights of complainants and of staff involved.

Policy Guidelines

1. The School will make a genuine effort to resolve all concerns and complaints received.
2. Concerns will normally follow the process set out in the Procedure for Concerns (Appendix 1).
3. Judgment about who should deal with a concern will be made when the concern is received and appropriate steps taken.
4. Complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence by the School and all rights respected. Where necessary the School will assist with any language issues or cultural sensitivities. Documentation will be stored in a complaints file which is held by the school in confidential storage.
5. In dealing with any complaint the School will act in accordance with the relevant conditions of the current employment agreement. Where appropriate outside mediation may be sought from organizations such as STA, PPTA, NZEI etc.
6. Formal complaints must be made in writing and may be addressed to the Headmaster.
7. The Headmaster will report all serious complaints to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
8. Complainants have a right of appeal to the Board of Trustees if dissatisfied with the outcome. If the complaints procedure has not been followed the Board will normally return any letter of complaint to the writer and ask that they follow the procedure first. In all cases of complaint the Board will act as a good employer.
9. A copy of the Complaints Policy and procedures is available from the School website and from the School office [2.14 Complaints Policy](#).

APPENDIX 1

Procedure for Concerns by Parents and Students

a) For Students

Students are encouraged to talk directly to their teachers whenever a problem arises. They should approach the teacher at a suitable time (e.g. at the end of the lesson) or make an appointment. Issues dealt with as soon as they occur are usually straightforward to solve. However if the concern is not resolved, students should approach their tutor teacher, the head of department of the subject area or their dean.

b) For Parents/Whanau

Classroom Issues

If you have a concern about a classroom matter you should firstly try to contact the class teacher and discuss the matter with him/her. You may e-mail the teacher to make an appointment.

If the response provided by the teacher does not fully address your concerns or is resolved and then resurfaces, you may wish to take the matter further. The complaint needs to be put in writing and addressed to the Headmaster. (Please see appendix 2)

APPENDIX 2

Procedure for Making a Formal Complaint

1. Write down your complaint giving details of what it is you are complaining about. Include details of efforts that have been made to resolve the matter.
2. Address your written complaint to the Headmaster.
3. When the Headmaster receives a complaint, the matter will be investigated and the Headmaster will decide the next step.
4. You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.
5. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the matter may be referred to the Board of Trustees for consideration and action.
6. Your complaint will generally be treated in confidence. However, in the interests of natural justice any persons included in a complaint must have the opportunity to hear all details about the complaint and reply to it. They may be accompanied by a support person during discussion of the complaint if they wish.
7. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint you may write to the Board of Trustees for a review of the complaint.

8. If the Board of Trustees receives a written complaint they will acknowledge receipt of this complaint within 14 days.

APPENDIX 3

Procedure to be followed by the Board of Trustees

1. All letters addressed to the chair of the board are for 'in committee'. The chair cannot decide independently what action will be taken unless the board has delegated them authority to do so.
2. Resolution or dismissal of the complaint must not be discussed before all the information is to hand.
3. Conflict of interest will be determined on a number of issues, including whether the complaint involves the actions of any trustee.
4. The board must exercise caution when dealing with complaints regarding staff, particularly in relation to confidentiality and the principles of natural justice. It is advisable to contact the regional NZSTA personnel/industrial adviser in such cases or a Solicitor. The board will need to consider the relevant staff disciplinary policies, employment agreements, and expert advice.
5. The board recognises that not all complainants will be satisfied with the outcome of a complaint. After *one* reconsideration, the board, if it is confident of its decision, will refuse to enter into further discussion or correspondence. A complaint regarding lack of compliance in relation to an agreed complaint resolution will be treated as a serious matter and actioned with urgency as a new complaint rather than as a reconsideration of the previous issue.
6. Trustees need to be clear in their mind of the difference between a complaint they have as a parent (that is, regarding their own child) and a complaint they have as a trustee (for example, obstruction of staff preventing them carrying out board work). In the first instance they are required to follow the normal procedures and are excluded from decision making due to conflict of interest. The latter case is dealt with as an agenda item for the whole board (possibly with the public excluded).

DATE OF REVIEW/APPROVAL: AUGUST 2023