

Stratford Primary School: Policies

300 Complaints Policy

The Stratford Board of Trustees expect that staff will always listen and respect parents views when they come forward with a concern about their child. Teachers should treat all concerns as genuine and follow up with parents as soon as practically possible. This reinforces the school values of manaakitanga and working in partnership with parents and whanau. If parents bring any genuine safety concerns to teachers, the Leadership Team needs to be notified as soon as possible. The Principal also needs to check whether this could involve any mandatory reporting to the Education Council and/or Child, Youth and Family.

Guiding Principles:

Design: The design of a school's complaints handling process should have:

- Clear procedures for both staff and parents to follow
- Be accessible, with advice available to parents about the complaints system and how to access it
- *Allow for a resolution at the lowest level possible, including the ability for the child's teacher to resolve complaints where appropriate with parents/caregivers/whānau*
- Provide for referral of a complaint to senior staff where necessary, and an ability for a staff member not previously involved in the matter to consider the complaint
- Include regular oversight by the Principal and BoT, with reports provided on complaints received and their outcome, and the information used to improve the services provided by the school generally.

Progress: When a complaint is received by a school, steps should be taken to make sure it is progressed by:

- Acknowledging to the person that the complaint has been received
- Deciding who will deal with the complaint, what priority it will be given, and when it should be completed
- If the matter cannot be resolved immediately, determining what action needs to be taken to consider the complaint and who needs to be consulted
- Explaining the outcome to the person making the complaint, and providing reasons for any decisions made or remedies offered
- Recording the complaint and its outcome, and reporting to the Principal and BoT as appropriate.

Fairness: A complaints procedure should allow:

- All complaints to be judged fairly on their merits
- Confidentiality to be protected, with the complaint considered in private and information only disclosed if necessary to properly review the matter of concern
- Anyone to comment on any proposed finding that is adverse to them before that finding is confirmed.

Board involvement in complaints:

1. If a complaint in writing is received by the Principal, the Board Chair will be informed as soon as practically possible. The Principal will then follow the 303 - Niggles (Complaints) Process.
2. If the complaint is against the Principal, it will be directed to the Board Chair to follow the Complaints Policy Guidelines listed below.

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3. If a complaint has not been resolved through the Principal's management procedure)303 - Niggles (Complaints) Process), the Principal will inform the Board Chair, who will then follow the Board's Complaint Policy Guidelines listed below.

Board Complaints Policy Guidelines:

Board Chair receives letter of complaint about the Principal:

Chair advises the Principal and Board members of the complaint. The Chair arranges for the Board to meet, as soon as possible, and forwards a copy of the letter to the Principal, keeping the original letter for Board use. The Chair guides the Board through the process below.

Board Chair receives a letter of complaint:

The Board Chair checks with the Principal to see whether the Niggles Process has been followed.

- If the answer is **No**, the complaint is referred back to the Principal. If the answer is **Yes**, the Chair guides the Board through the process below.

- 1. Board Chair acknowledges complaint and the complainant advised in writing.** They are advised of the next steps in the Boards process attaching a copy of the school's relevant policy and procedures.
- 2. Board of Trustees forms a Complaints Sub-Committee to investigate complaint; this may include:-**
 - Written report from principal
 - Written report from teacher
 - Interview teacher and/or members of staff
 - Interview with complainant
 - Review of relevant documentation
 - Referral to school policies and procedures
 - Referral to another agency; eg STA, Police, Education Council.Complaints Committee to keep all parties to the complaint well informed throughout the process.
- 3. Board of Trustees meets, 'In-Committee', public excluded, to Complaints Committee Report, including recommendations.** The Board resolves how the Board will respond and what action will be taken.
- 4. Complaint Resolved:** The Board's response is communicated to the parties to the complaint. This may be publicly or confidentially depending on the case. Actions implemented as agreed. Board monitors and evaluates outcomes.
- 5. Not Resolved:** Any of the parties may request the Board to reconsider its decision within 28 days from date of decision, however normally for such a reconsideration to take place, new information that would have been relevant to the Board's deliberations must be provided.
- 6. Administrative Points:**
 - Complaint and reports held on 'confidential' Board file.
 - Nothing stated above prevents the School Board from taking additional or alternative action, considered reasonable and appropriate by the Board.
 - The Board will maintain a Complaints Register.

Review schedule: Triennially.