

Stratford Primary School: Policies

300 Complaints Policy

The Stratford Primary School Board expects that staff will always listen and respect whānau views when they come forward with a concern about their child. Teachers should treat all concerns as genuine and follow up with whānau as soon as practically possible. This reinforces the school values of manaakitanga and working in partnership with whānau. If whānau 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 Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand and/or Oranga Tamariki.

Guiding Principles:

1. Board involvement in complaints:

- a. 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 312 - Complaints Process (School Based Level).
- b. If the complaint is against the Principal, it will be directed to the Board Chair to follow the Complaints Policy Guidelines listed below.
- c. If a complaint has not been resolved through the Principal's management procedure 312 - Complaints Process (School Based Level), the Principal will inform the Board Chair, who will then follow the Board's Complaint Policy Guidelines listed below.

2. The design of a school's complaints handling process should:

- a. Be accessible, with advice available to whānau about the complaints process at the school level.
- b. Allow for a resolution at the lowest level possible. This is the ability for the child's teacher to resolve complaints where appropriate with whānau/caregivers. Refer to [312 - Complaints Process \(School Based Level\)](#) in the first instance.
- c. Include regular monitoring by the Principal and Board, with reports provided on complaints received and their outcome, and the information used to improve the services provided by the school generally.

3. Progress: When a complaint is received by the Board, steps should be taken to make sure it is progressed by:

- a. The Presiding Member acknowledges to the person that the complaint has been received. This is in writing within five working days.
- b. The Presiding Member then ensures the following is completed:
 - i. Informing the Ministry of Education advisor that a complaint has been received.
 - ii. Lodging a claim with the schools insurance provider.
 - iii. Seeking advice from NZSTA.
 - iv. Seeking strategic advice from the Ombudsman.
- c. The Board, facilitated by the Presiding Member, decides who will deal with the complaint, what priority it will be given, and when it should be completed. The Board or Board Sub Committee meets within 5-7 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. If the matter cannot be resolved immediately, determining

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what action needs to be taken to consider the complaint and who needs to be consulted.

- d. Board Decision Making: The Board writes to the complainant, explaining the outcome and providing reasons for any decisions made or remedies offered.
- e. Complaints Log: The Board then records the complaint outcome. School level complaints are also recorded on this log by the Principal.

4. **A complaints process should allow:**

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

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Board Complaints Policy Guidelines:

Presiding Member receives letter of complaint about the Principal:

They advise the Principal and Board members of the complaint. The Presiding Member 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. They then guide the Board through the process below.

Presiding Member receives a letter of complaint:

They check with the Principal to see whether the School Complaints Process has been followed.

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

1. **Presiding Member 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. This is completed within five working days.
2. **The Board 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..
3. **The Board Complaints Committee, meets 'In Committee' with the public excluded.** They review the complaint and decide on an appropriate outcome. 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. The Board monitors and evaluates outcomes.
5. **Not Resolved:** The complainant will have the right to seek further advice from the Ombudsman if they are unsatisfied with the outcome of the complaint.
6. **Administrative Points:**
 - All complaints and reports held on a '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.