



## **CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY**

(NAG 5)

This policy provides all involved with Manawaru School clear guidelines for raising and resolving concerns and complaints.

We encourage respectful open communication, recognising that resolutions are most effectively found by dealing with those involved, rather than in the wider community.

We have procedures in place to ensure concerns and complaints are dealt with appropriately. Our procedures enable us to

- maintain a safe environment for all.
- treat all people fairly, transparently, with dignity and respect, observing the laws of natural justice.
- resolve matters of concern as early as possible.
- deal with complaints fairly and effectively.
- take into account individual circumstances.
- maintain confidentiality.
- preserve and enhance school and community relationships.
- monitor and record complaints and concerns about student safety and wellbeing.

Most concerns can be resolved informally through discussions with the persons concerned following the following process

### If the matter involves the classroom programme or a teacher

- Contact the teacher through one of the school platforms, to make a time to discuss your concern, and indicate what the concern is about. This will enable all parties to focus most effectively on the matter.
- Talk to the teacher, recognising they may have a different perspective that needs to be recognised.
- Provide feedback to the teacher, so they are aware if the problem is settled.

### If the matter is unresolved or concerns a more general matter

- Make a time to see the principal. At this time indicate what will be discussed, to ensure maximum information can be brought to the meeting. At the meeting provide details of your complaint, and the steps taken so far.
- The issue will usually be dealt with by the Principal. In some instances it may be referred to teachers, or the BOT.
- If the issue remains unresolved then the complaint can be written down and sent to the BOT. Management issues will be referred to the Principal.

### If the matter relates to the Principal or BOT

- Write to the Chairperson of the BOT, outlining your concerns in detail, including your contact details

### **USEFUL TIPS**

- Problems should not be discussed in front of children- either at school or home
- The first person you should see regarding your concern is the person closest to the problem
- There are two sides to a story
- If you have concerns about the school behaviour of another child you must approach the school, not the child.
- Unless we know of a concern if you tell us.

## **FORMAL COMPLAINTS**

For more serious matters, 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 resolved as quickly as possible given the details and the steps that need to be considered.

All parties should respect confidentiality, including avoiding the use of social media to promote a point of view.

### **To make a complaint:**

Put your specific complaint(s) in writing 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
- The Board Chairperson, if it is about the Principal
- The Deputy Chairperson, if it is about the Chairperson

Contact details for the Principal and Board Chairperson are available at the School Office or online.

### **When your complaint is received:**

The Principal and Board Chairperson will check that your complaint has come to the correct person and send you an acknowledgement of receipt, usually within a week. You may be asked for further details about your complaint, to assist in determining the appropriate investigation process.

**The Principal** (if the complaint is about a staff member, student, parent or caregiver, or other member of the school community) will:

- Inform the Board Chairperson of any complaints about staff members, students, parents or caregivers, or other members of the school community
- Take steps to resolve the complaint in accordance with their delegated authority and the relevant school policies, including undertaking a preliminary assessment of the complaint:
  - More general complaints or those which are unlikely to lead to disciplinary action against a staff member will be resolved informally
  - Potentially sensitive matters or more serious complaints which could lead to disciplinary action against a staff member may be referred to the Board for consideration In-committee, with a view to determining the required level of Board or Chairperson involvement
- Take appropriate advice from advisors such as NZSTA
- Report to the Board in accordance with School Policy

**The Board Chairperson** (if the complaint is about the Principal) will:

- Undertake a preliminary assessment of any complaints about the Principal
  - More general complaints or those which are unlikely to lead to the Board taking action against the Principal will be promptly discussed with the Principal at an informal meeting, usually held within a week of receipt of the complaint, where the potential resolution can be considered
  - The process for managing complaints which appear more serious and could lead to the Board taking action against the Principal will be determined by the Board at an In-committee meeting usually held within a week of receipt of the complaint. The complaint will then be promptly disclosed to the Principal together with an indication of the proposed process for managing the complaint
- Take appropriate advice from advisors such as NZSTA

Subject to the privacy of the person or people concerned, we will keep you informed about the process and the expected time frame for any investigation, and will provide you with written confirmation when the matter is concluded.

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.

### **Investigation Process**

Your views are important to us, and all complaints are taken seriously. However, not all complaints will require a formal investigation. In determining whether a formal investigation may be required, the Principal, Board Chairperson, and/or Board may consider any preliminary response from the person the complaint is about, and any action the school has taken previously, including meetings and correspondence. There may be other processes which can more constructively address general concerns, opinions and views about the school.

Processes will be followed, observing the legalities of the relevant employment contracts and natural justice.

Other policies may need to be considered in conjunction

- BOT policy Framework
- Theft and Fraud Prevention Policy
- Recording of suspected or actual abuse procedures

*20 February 2023*

*B.O.T. Chairperson:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Principal:* \_\_\_\_\_