



Complaints Policy

Policy Statement

All concerns and complaints are dealt with fairly and effectively, in the interests of all parties concerned and in line with the school's values and beliefs.

Staff members who wish to report incidents of serious wrongdoing within the school and wish to be protected should follow the Greymouth High School protected disclosures procedure.

Procedures for Complaints

These procedures cover the way the school treats any concern or complaint.

All staff members need to be made aware of the Complaints Procedure.

All concerns must be treated with respect and the person raising the concern listened to actively. The complaints procedure should be outlined to the complainant.

At all times attempts will be made to resolve complaints informally by the complainant, where appropriate, communicating initially with the person whose actions have given rise to the complaint. If the complainant is not satisfied then the complaint should be made, preferably in writing, to the Principal.

Complaints will be treated in confidence, however in the interest of natural justice the person (or persons) the complaint is about must have the opportunity to hear all details of the complaint and formulate a reply.

The Principal will discuss all complaints with the Board Chairperson to determine the level of the complaint.

Examples of serious complaints:

- By school staff against parents/caregivers/students
- By parents against teachers or other staff regarding treatment of children
- Alleging any criminal conduct or unlawful contact
- Alleging sexual harassment
- Against the Principal
- Against a Board member or the Board.

Principal's duties on receipt of a complaint

The Principal will deal with a complaint by:

- ensuring the issue is heard (by the Principal or designated staff member) to the satisfaction of all parties or the Principal is able to adjudicate on the complaint;
Or by
- referring the complaint to the Board providing a written report with all relevant information affecting the complaint.

- noting the complaint in the complaints register.

Where parents/caregivers are dissatisfied with the Principal's actions or decisions concerning any complaint they should place their concerns in writing to the Board of Trustees chairperson. The Board Chairperson cannot decide independently as to what action will be taken and must refer all complaints to the whole Board.

Board's duties on receipt of a complaint

Any complaint received by the Chairperson shall in the first instance be referred to the Principal, except for complaints against the Principal or the Board (see below), and then be dealt with in the Public Excluded session by the whole Board and will be:

- considered on the information presented in writing.
- either concluded with no further action, referred back to the Principal with or without recommendations, or referred to a Complaints Committee of no less than three people.
- based on the principles of natural justice which require that all parties have the opportunity to present their views in writing and/or orally.
- answered by the Board by writing to the complainant with appropriate information as to how the complaint was resolved or what action is to be taken next.
- referred back to the Principal for further information or mediation as appropriate.

The Board recognises that not all complainants will be satisfied with the outcome of a complaint. If a complainant is not satisfied with the Board's decision then the chairperson should advise the complainant of other avenues e.g. Ombudsman.

Complaints Committee

Should it be necessary to establish a complaints committee, the Board has the authority to include personnel from outside the Board who have appropriate expertise.

The Complaints Committee will have the responsibility of deciding whether a complaint has been established. No one with a personal interest or predetermined view will become a member of the Complaints Committee or take part in any Board deliberations.

The Complaints Committee will:

- consider all relevant information.
- entitle any party to have a supporter, lay advocate or legal representation. The Board will not be liable for any expenses incurred by the other parties.

After a hearing the Complaints Committee may:

1. Find the complaint not established.
2. Find the complaint established and make recommendations on a course of action to the Board.

Complaints against the teaching or support staff

In addition to the preceding procedures the Board shall have regard to the following principles when addressing complaints (either serious or otherwise) against staff:

- All complaints against staff shall be dealt with in accordance with the relevant Employment Agreement.

- All complaints against staff are to be referred in the first instance to the Principal who should consult NZSTA.
- Copies of the letter of complaint should be given to the staff member for a written response.
- The staff member should be advised that they can seek representation from a professional and/or union representative.
- In the case of allegations that may have disciplinary implications beyond the Principal's delegation, the Board should initially seek advice from NZSTA then consider convening the Complaints Committee to investigate and report on the substance of the complaint. This committee could hear submissions from the staff member's designated support person.

Complaints against the Board

Complaints against the Board alleging misconduct and/or dereliction of duty should be notified to the Ministry of Education and may be referred to a panel (appointed by an independent advisor) comprising three or more people and may include:

1. A Principal of a local school
2. A NZSTA representative
3. Any other suitable person.

It is recognised that the Board has no power of discipline over individual Board members under any Act of Parliament.

Complaints against the Principal

Complaints against the Principal shall be in writing and referred to the Board chairperson who will inform the Board and, following advice from NZSTA, where appropriate initiate mediation.

All complaints against the Principal will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant employment agreement and the procedures for complaints against staff members.

Complaints against Students

Complaints against or about students will be dealt with under the student behaviour management procedures.

Administration

- All complaints are recorded in the complaints register.
- All letters of complaint responded to within 3 days.
- Where possible all complainants are advised of process and timeline.
- Regular updates are given if the process is longer than one month.
- A formal closure letter will be sent when the complaints process has been concluded.
- Any employee who has material placed on their personnel file as a result of a complaint will be advised.
- Complaints material will be filed and held confidentially to prevent unauthorised access to this data.

Signed (Board Chair)	
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Dated	December 2017
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