

Taita College Board of Trustees

Complaints Policy and Procedures

Rationale

Taita College believes that education is a partnership between parents and caregivers, the staff and the students. In order for the partnership to support student achievement effectively there needs to be good communication and clear processes for addressing and resolving concerns and complaints.

This policy governs all complaints received whether they come from students, staff, parents and caregivers or the school community.

Purpose

1. To support good communication and positive relationships.
2. To ensure that all concerns are acknowledged and complaints are addressed promptly.
3. To ensure that complaints are addressed fairly and transparently, in a manner consistent with natural justice and in line with relevant collective agreements, legislation and codes of conduct.
4. To ensure that systems for resolving concerns and complaints are documented.

Definitions

A concern This is an issue that can be resolved between the parties involved and is unlikely to involve the consideration of disciplinary, legal or employment consequences.

A complaint A complaint is likely to involve the consideration of disciplinary, legal or employment consequences. An unresolved or repeated concern might be escalated to a complaint. A complaint must be made in writing to either the Principal or the Board of Trustees.

Guidelines

When concerns are raised which cannot be readily resolved the person raising the concern must be advised of the complaints policy and process.

1. All complaints, whether written or verbal, from parents/caregivers or staff are to be recorded in a complaints file.
2. All complaints, whether written or verbal, made by students about the behaviour of teachers or other adults are to be recorded. If the child's complaint raises concerns about abuse or neglect the *Suspected Abuse and Neglect* policy and procedures must be followed
3. Complaints will be addressed promptly. Serious complaints will be investigated on the day they are received. All complaints will be acknowledged within 7 days. Written complaints will receive a written response at the conclusion of any investigation of the complaint.

4. Complaints will be handled initially at the lowest possible level. If a complaint cannot be resolved by the person to whom the complaint has been made it will be referred to the Principal.
5. A complaint that cannot be resolved by the Principal will be referred to the Board of Trustees. Complaints referred to the Board must be referred in writing.
6. Unless the complaint is about the Principal or the Board itself, the Board will ensure that the Principal has had the opportunity to investigate and resolve the complaint before it takes any action. When it is satisfied that the Board should hear the complaint it will follow the procedure in this policy.
7. Anyone who is the subject of a complaint must be given the opportunity to give their view of the complaint. Any investigation of a complaint must seek the views of all parties involved.
8. Any staff discipline procedures enacted will be in accordance with the appropriate Collective Agreements. Before enacting such procedures advice is to be sought from NZSTA. The Board of Trustees will be kept informed.
9. Records of complaints and their resolution are to be kept in a confidential file maintained by the Principal. The Principal will report to the Board once a year on the number of complaints and the general nature of the complaints.

Documentation

The following documentation must be available in the school:

- complaints process/procedures
- record of complaints
- complaints files

Approved by the Board February 2018

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Helena Balmuk". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Commissioner

Board of Trustees' Complaints Procedure

1. All complaints to the Board must be in writing.
2. Unless the complaint is about the Principal or the Board itself, the Board will normally refer the matter back to the Principal to ensure that the Principal has had the opportunity to investigate and resolve the complaint before it takes any action.
3. The Chair will acknowledge the letter of complaint within 7 days of it being received and advise the complainant of the timeframe within which it will be addressed and refer or attach a copy of the complaints procedures.
4. The letter of complaint becomes a matter that is dealt with at the 'public excluded' (in-committee) part of the next Board meeting.
5. The Board must decide how to deal with the complaint. This will normally require some level of investigation of the complaint. A decision about who will undertake the investigation and the process to be used must be established. The process will normally include:
 - Agreeing and documenting the investigation process to be used (terms of reference)
 - Meeting and talking with the complainant to ensure full understanding of the issues.
 - Providing the complaint to the person who is the subject of the complaint.
 - Interviewing all parties.
 - Keeping a written record of conversations/interviews
 - Keeping a written record of findings.
6. A letter will be sent to the complainant advising them of the process and the timeline. (EG. "A committee of the Board will investigate your complaint and report back to the next Board meeting in . . . We will let you know the outcome of that investigation.")
7. The investigation will be conducted by those given responsibility to do so. External advice (EG NZSTA Industrial Advisor, legal advice etc) will be sought if needed.
8. The person or people making the investigation will report back to the 'public excluded' section of the next Board meeting. The Board must consider the evidence and come to a decision or recommendation. The Board must pass a resolution about its decision and what action, if any, is to be taken.
9. The Board decision will be communicated to the complainant in writing within 7 days of the Board meeting at which the decision is made.

Approved by the Board

Commissioner

Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints at Taita College

