

BAYFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Purpose and Interpretation

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidance to all members of the school community who wish to lodge a concern or complaint about the school.
- 1.2 A 'concern' is a minor issue that may be resolved informally and directly between the parties involved. Concerns are not expected to have disciplinary, legal, or industrial consequences. However, a concern on examination, might transition into a complaint.
- 1.3 A 'complaint' is:
 - any written statement about a school practice or policy that in the opinion of the complainant is deemed to be of a serious nature that disadvantages them and/or the school community.
 - any written statement of a serious nature that indicates a member of the school community has acted illegally, unprofessionally, or in any manner which is harmful to another of the school community.
- 1.4 A complainant can be a parent, caregiver, whānau, staff member, student, member of the community.

2. Concerns and Complaints

- 2.1 The Board recognises the importance of managing concerns and complaints in a fair, consistent, equitable and timely manner.
- 2.2 The Board seeks to ensure that concerns do not escalate to complaints.
- 2.3 The standard process for dealing with concerns / complaints is summarised in the concerns / complaints flowchart.
 - 2.3.1. Concerns / complaints should, in the first instance and whenever possible, be raised directly with the staff member concerned.
 - 2.3.2 If the concern / complaint remains unresolved after five working days (or a longer period by mutual agreement), or if the complainant has reason to believe that a direct approach to the staff member concerned will not result in a satisfactory resolution, it should be put in writing and sent to the Principal.
 - 2.3.3 Upon receipt of a concern / complaint, the Principal will invite the complainant to a meeting to discuss the matters of concern. Any complaint will be formally acknowledged by the Principal within two days.
 - 2.3.4 The Principal will conduct an initial investigation, and seek to reach a solution acceptable to all parties. Legal or other advice may be sought at any stage.

- 2.3.5 The Principal will keep the complainant informed regularly during the investigation. The aim will be to complete any investigation within five working days. However, where there are employment issues or the right to representation this might result in this time frame being extended.
- 2.3.6 The school aims to resolve concerns and complaints within 60 calendar days from the time they were first raised with the school and to keep the complainant informed of progress during any investigation. However, serious matters may take longer to finalise.
- 2.4 Concerns and formal complaints against a staff member which are unable to be resolved through the processes envisaged in 2.3 above, will be dealt with as below:
- 2.4.1 The staff member will be given full details of the concern / complaint and asked to respond in writing.
- 2.4.2 The matter will be dealt with in a manner consistent with the applicable employment agreement and with employment law generally. Support / guidance, as appropriate, will be offered.
- 2.4.3 If the allegation involves serious misconduct (e.g. assault, sexual misconduct, misuse of drugs), the staff member may be suspended on full pay while the matter is investigated.
- 2.5 The Principal is responsible for investigating all formal complaints, unless he/she is the subject of the complaint. The Board Chair will be kept informed on a “no surprises” basis, and will advise the rest of the Board if the complaint is considered serious. If the investigation reveals that a criminal offence has been committed, the appropriate agencies may be approached.
- 2.6 Concerns / complaints against the Principal which have not been able to be resolved should be addressed in writing to the Board Chair, who will convene a subcommittee of two Board members to investigate the matter. The subcommittee will report back to the rest of the Board with their recommendations.
- 2.7 In the case of a concern / complaint against the Board or a member of the Board, or concerning a policy or act of the Board, the Board will be informed and the matter investigated jointly by the Principal and Board Chair. Should the Principal and/or Board Chair be the subject/s of the concern / complaint, other members of the Board will undertake the investigation.
- 2.8 Legal or other advice may be sought at any stage at the discretion of the Principal or Board Chair. A mediation process may be followed if this is considered appropriate.
- 2.9 All parties to a concern / complaint will be advised of the outcome. If any party is not satisfied with the outcome, they can appeal in writing to the Board within 14 days of being informed of the outcome, giving full reasons why the outcome is not acceptable to them. However, for such a reconsideration to take place, either:
- new information must be produced that would have been relevant to the Board’s initial deliberations; or
 - the complainant has concerns about the process followed by the Board.
- The decision of the Board following an appeal will be final.

BAYFIELD HIGH SCHOOL Concerns/Complaints Flow Chart

*Concerns about safety,
staff conduct or other
serious matters*

*Complaint
about
Principal*

If you have a concern about your son's / daughter's education you are encouraged to discuss this with their teacher, Dean or a member of Senior Leadership

*If the concern is
unresolved*

All formal complaints other than complaints about the Principal should be made to the Principal. The complaint should be made in writing.

*Complaints
about the
Principal are
referred to the
BOT*

Complaints about the Principal should be made to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Such complaints should be made in writing.

*Complaints will be acknowledged
within two days of their receipt by
the addressee*

The Principal will notify any involved parties to the complaint of the nature and detail of the complaint

*Notification
phase*

The Board Chair will notify the Principal and any other involved parties to the complaint of the nature and detail of the complaint

The Principal will investigate the complaint which may involve the collection of submissions / statements from all parties involved

*Investigation
Phase
(completed where
possible within five
days of complaint
acknowledgement)*

The Board Chair will investigate the complaint which may involve the collection of submissions / statements from all parties involved

Further investigation finds a case to answer. Disciplinary processes are invoked in accordance with the employee's contract.

In a complaint against a member of staff the Principal will notify any staff member of any initial findings and will require a written response.

Further investigation finds no case to answer

Further investigation finds a case to answer. Disciplinary processes are invoked in accordance with the employee's contract.

The Board Chair will notify the Principal of any initial findings and will require a written response.

Further investigation finds no case to answer

The complainant will be notified of the outcome of the investigation and of any resultant actions.

Next triennial review date	November 2023
Policy area	NAG 6 (Legislation and Administration)
Related legislation	N/A
Linked policies	N/A
Linked documentation	N/A