

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

## RATIONALE

To provide a means for the handling of complaints with the aim of achieving resolution of any conflict, in a way that is fair to all parties.

## PURPOSE

To make clear to all associated with Oratia District School what the avenues are for lodging complaints.

## PROCEDURES

1. Any complaints of a serious nature, including complaints against staff members made by members of the public, parents or caregivers to any trustee or other staff member, must immediately be referred to the principal as the professional leader and manager of the school. The trustee or staff member must not engage in any further discussion with the complainant.
  2. The principal in the first instance, wherever appropriate, will seek to resolve the matter by discussion with the people concerned. If resolution is achieved, there will be no need to take the matter any further. If unresolved, a meeting of relevant parties with support persons if desired, may be instigated to resolve the issues.
  3. Whenever a serious complaint is made, a concerns sheet needs to be completed.
  4. The principal has a responsibility to ensure that teachers are aware of sections within the Teachers Collective Agreements or the Code of Ethics pertaining to complaints and acceptable practice and report to the board annually.
- (A) **Complaints to staff members about their own practices, by caregivers.**
1. If the individual staff member is unable to resolve the matter they should refer it to the principal, deputy principal, assistant principal or syndicate leader.
  2. For more serious caregiver concerns, an appointment should be made with the principal or deputy principal.
  3. After due consideration, if the concern is unable to be resolved, then the complainant will be informed of his/her right to put the complaint in writing to the chairperson of the board of trustees.
  4. The outcome of the meeting will be conveyed in writing to all parties concerned. The final resolution will be conveyed by the board to all parties.
- (B) **Complaints Against Staff Members**
1. Discussions between the complainant(s), and the principal (employees where appropriate) may resolve matters of concern. Where this is not the case further action can only be taken if those matters become formal complaints.
  2. The complainant is informed of his/her right to make a formal complaint in writing to the principal, as the agent of the board of trustees. (The matter must now be referred to the board of trustees).
  3. A meeting of relevant parties with support persons if desired, may be instigated to resolve the matter.
  4. Any such formal complaints received by principal / board of trustees will be dealt with according to procedures as set out in relevant contracts i.e.
    - (a) Primary teachers' collective employment contract.
    - (b) Deputy and assistant principals' collective employment contract.
    - (c) Principal's individual employment contract.
    - (d) School caretakers and cleaners' collective employment contract.
    - (e) Support staff in schools' collective contract.
  5. Any member of the board of trustees who is personally involved in a complaint shall take no part in the discussion, but may submit a statement on the matter.
  6. Complaints made against the principal must be in writing and directed to the chairperson of the board of trustees.

7. Where the complainant is a fellow staff member, the action which initiated the complaint should be recorded.

**(C) Complaints by staff about school systems, procedures and practices**

1. Discussions between the complainant(s), and the principal, (or other employees where appropriate) may resolve matters of concern.
2. If a complaint is made about a system, procedure, or practice then reference must be made to the relevant school policies to see if there are grounds for complaint.
3. Where this is not the case, further action can only be taken if those matters become formal complaints.
4. The complainant is informed of his/her right to make a formal complaint in writing to the board of trustees. The complainant is informed of their right to seek assistance from a union representative.
5. Any such formal complaints received by principal / board of trustees will be dealt with according to procedures as set out in relevant contracts i.e.
  - a. Primary teachers' collective employment contract.
  - b. Deputy and assistant principals' collective employment contract.
  - c. Principal's individual employment contract.
  - d. School caretakers and cleaners' collective employment contract.
  - e. Support staff in schools' collective contract.

**(D) General Complaints**

- not specific to staff
  - e.g. property
  - stolen lunches
  - behaviour of children

To be dealt with by relevant staff member. To be brought to attention of principal or syndicate leaders if complainant seems dissatisfied.

**Conclusion**

See also Sexual Harassment Policy, Protected Disclosures Policy, Racial Harassment Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Appointments Policy and any other related policies.

Initiated: June 1998

Ratified: February 2005

Reviewed: May 2001  
February 2005  
May 2008