

# Long Bay Primary School

## Complaints Policy

Nag 3



Long Bay Primary School  
WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION

### Rationale

To provide a policy that enables Long Bay Primary School to respond to concerns and complaints in a fair, timely and consistent manner, and provides members of the school community with procedures to follow.

### Guidelines

1. Complaints are to be handled with integrity, sincerity and understanding, following up and reporting back where necessary.
2. All parties involved will be informed of the nature of the complaint as soon as possible.
3. Objective discussion will be encouraged to achieve early resolution, if possible.  
All parties to a complaint may bring a support person to any meeting where the issue is to be discussed.
4. The school insurer is to be notified if a complaint is serious.
5. In responding to complaints, employers must act in accordance with conditions of the relevant employment agreements and current legislation
6. Complaints which require a follow-up will be recorded by the Principal.
7. Outside agencies will be contacted for advice in any situation where the Board of Trustees is unsure how to resolve the issue.
8. On a termly basis the Principal will report to the Board on community generated complaints received.

See NAG 3 Personnel Policy and NAG 5 Policy regarding a complaint against a staff member involving Sexual, Physical or Verbal abuse

### Complaints Procedure

1. Complaints will be responded to according to the attached Complaints Procedure (which is to be available for viewing on the school website).
2. If the complaints procedure has not been followed, the Board will normally return any letter of complaint to the writer and ask that they follow the procedure first.
3. Complaints should be referred directly to the staff member/person concerned in the first instance.
4. If it is a classroom/teacher concern, the teacher should be first approached; then if unresolved: the Team Leader or Associate Principal, then the Principal.
5. Where the Principal is unable to resolve the complaint after discussion with the complainant and the staff member/person concerned then any of these parties may refer the matter in writing to the Board of Trustees.
6. Where an initial concern is considered of a very serious nature, the complainant may lodge a complaint directly in writing to the Board, or the Principal requesting the concern be submitted in to the Board.
7. Except in exceptional circumstances the Board of Trustees will not accept any complaint unless it is in writing and a reasonable attempt has been made to resolve it with the Principal and staff member/person concerned. All complaints to the Board should be directed to the Board Chairperson or in their absence to any other Board Member.
8. The Board of Trustees acknowledge the complaint and undertake to investigate it. Once investigated the Board replies to the complainant informing them of the outcome or including a recommendation for action.

### Approval

When the Board approved this Policy it agreed that no variations of this Policy or amendments to it can be made except with the approval of the Board. A copy of this policy is to be included in the School Policy Manual, a copy of which shall be available to all staff, and to students and parents at their request.

<b>DATE:</b>	2019	<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	
<b>Next Review:</b>	2022	<b>PRINCIPAL</b> L. Barton	<b>BOT CHAIRPERSON</b> K Jackson-Cox

# Procedure for dealing with General Concerns and Complaints

*Early communication can save difficult situations from developing.  
If you have a concern please contact the school sooner rather than later.*

## What is the nature of your concern?

**Is the concern about student learning or welfare, procedures or structure?**



★ **Approach the class teacher**

*Arrange a time to meet, discuss the concern.  
The Team Leader may also attend the meeting to assist with resolving the concern*



Is the matter resolved?

Yes

Closed

No

★ **Approach the Team Leader or Associate Principal**



Is the matter resolved?

Yes

Closed

No

★ **Approach the Principal**



Is the matter resolved?

Yes

Closed

No

**Is the concern about a member of staff?**



★ **Approach the person concerned (as appropriate)**



Is the matter resolved?

Yes

Closed

No

★ **Approach the Principal**

Principal investigates complaint.  
Principal and complainant discuss the issues and outcomes.

(n.b. If the Principal is the concern and complainant has already met them, approach the Board Chair)



Is the matter resolved?

Yes

Closed

No

**Make a formal written complaint addressed to the Principal and Board of Trustees Chairperson  
Include detail and the desired outcome**

If the complainant writes to the Board of Trustees, the Board will:

Acknowledge the complaint at the Board meeting (in committee) and undertake to investigate it.

The Board decides whether to deal with the matter as a whole group or set up a subcommittee to investigate and make a recommendation to the Board.

The information is considered and the Board comes to a decision or recommendation.

The letter of complaint, all Board discussion and records will be 'in committee' (a section of the meeting attended by Board members only)

Once investigated the Board replies in writing to the complainant, informing them of the outcome or including a recommendation for action

★ Please ensure you make an appointment at each of these stages and indicate the nature of your concern. Feel free to bring a support person.

# Long Bay Primary School

## Complaints Procedures

Nag 3



Long Bay Primary School

### Responding to a formal letter of complaint at Board of Trustee level

**Note:** the letter and all discussion is 'in committee' (a section of the meeting where the public are excluded and Board members only attend).

In Committee minutes are also kept separate from usual Board meeting minutes

1. Letter of complaint is acknowledged by the Chairperson and the complainant advised of next steps in the Board process. The letter becomes part of correspondence that will be dealt with at the next Board meeting while the public is excluded.
2. Letter is tabled at a Board meeting and referred to relevant parties for reporting back to the Board. The Board decides whether to deal with the matter as a whole or appoint a committee to investigate and recommend to the Board.
3. At the meeting of the Board/committee the reports are received and the parties may be invited to speak to their complaint or answer questions. The Board/committee considers the evidence and/or information and comes to a decision or recommendation.
4. Depending on the delegated powers of the committee either they or the Board as a whole comes to a resolution as to how the Board will respond and/or what actions will be taken.
5. The Board's response is communicated to the parties of the complaint. This may be either publicly or confidentially, depending on the case.
6. Any of the parties may request the Board to reconsider their decision – however, normally for such a reconsideration to take place, new information that would have been relevant to the Board's deliberations must be produced.

### Guidelines

- Issues of a serious matter, e.g. allegations of physical abuse, may require a special meeting of the Board to be called.
- All letters addressed to the Chairperson are for the whole Board. The Chairperson cannot decide independently as to what action will be taken.
- Resolution or dismissal of the complaint must not be discussed before all the information is to hand.
- Conflicts of interest will be determined on a number of issues, including whether the complaint involves the actions of any Trustee.
- The Board must exercise caution when dealing with complaints regarding staff, particularly in relation to confidentiality and processes to ensure the principles of natural justice are met. It is advisable to contact the regional NZSTA personnel/industrial advisor in such cases. The Board will need to consider the relevant staff disciplinary policies/employment contracts and expert advice from the NZSTA Advisor.
- The Board recognises that not all complainants will be satisfied with the outcome of the complaint. After **one** reconsideration if the Board is confident of its decision, it will refuse to enter into further discussion/correspondence. In making such a decision the NZSTA Helpdesk can assist by giving an objective assessment on Board's processes in dealing with the complaint.
- A complaint regarding lack of compliance in relation to an agreed complaint resolution will be treated as a serious matter and actioned with urgency as a new complaint rather than as a reconsideration of the previous issue.
- Trustees need to be clear in their mind of the difference between a complaint they have as a parent (i.e. regarding their own child) and a complaint they have as a Trustee (e.g. obstruction of staff preventing them carrying out Board work).  
In the first instance, they are required to follow normal procedures and are excluded from decision-making due to conflict of interest. The latter case is dealt with as an agenda item for the whole Board (possibly with the public excluded).