



# REEFTON AREA SCHOOL

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

POLICY REVIEWED 30.03.2017

### Rationale

Reefton Area School want to do things well and get things right so that we provide the best conditions for teaching and learning. We want to hear when you feel we have done well and if you think something needs to be put right or improvements made.

Your suggestions, complaints and compliments are important to us. We learn from them and they help us improve our services and, ultimately, outcomes for our students and parents/ caregivers.

### What is a complaint?

A complaint is... An informal or formal expression of dissatisfaction about service: action/non-action; or things affecting student achievement and /or well-being.

### You may want to complain if you think:

- You have not been treated satisfactorily (fairly, politely, promptly, to an acceptable standard)
  - We have not done something that we should have done
- or
- We have done something poorly

### There are two ways to initiate a complaint:

- 1 An informal complaint:** A telephone call or face-to-face meeting to express concern, mild dissatisfaction or to request some low level action.  
A call will be given about action taken as a follow up.
- OR**
- 2 A formal complaint:** This should be in writing, addressed to the Principal or, if the complaint is about the principal, it should be addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

### Stage One

If an informal complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved (or has remained unresolved for an unacceptable length of time) then a written complaint clearly and objectively outlining the issue, problem or cause of dissatisfaction should be sent to the appropriate person. This could be:

- The Teacher • The Form Teacher • The Deputy Principal • The Principal
- The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

## **Stage Two**

The complaint will be investigated by senior staff and action will be taken or negotiated / agreed upon.

The action taken or negotiated / agreed upon, and any other relevant communication, will be outlined in a letter of reply from the Principal and / or Chairperson.

Follow-up action and the written response from the Principal will be made within **one week** of the remedial action being taken.

## **Stage Three**

If Stage Two does not satisfactorily resolve the situation or the problem/issue recurs or you continue to be unhappy with the outcome then a letter to Chairperson of the Board will initiate an investigation by the Board of Trustees.

## **Anonymous Complaints**

Reefton Area School will not respond to or investigate anonymous, unsigned written complaints. Any letters received with no name or address cannot be acknowledged.

## **Publication**

The complaints procedure will be available on the school website and published annually in school newsletters

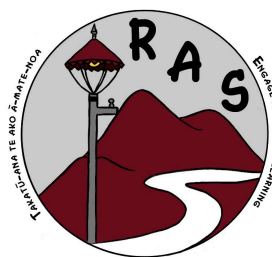
## **Support Documents:**

- Steps in Making a Complaint
- Procedures for Complaints Policy on Staff Conduct and Discipline
- Procedural Guidelines in Serious Allegations Against Staff

**Debbie Bland**

**Chairperson Board of Trustees**

**March 2017**



# REEFTON AREA SCHOOL PROCEDURE FOR STEPS IN MAKING A COMPLAINT

A complaint is... An informal or formal expression of dissatisfaction about service: action/non-action; or things affecting student achievement and /or well-being.

## Steps

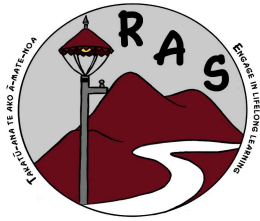
Do I wish to make an informal or formal complaint?

### **A Informal Complaint:**

- i Contact (by telephone or meeting)
  - The teacher
  - The form teacher
  - The deputy principal
  - The principal
- ii Explain the nature of the situation (Specifics are helpful)
- iii Discuss how things can be remedied
- iv Agree on a course of action.
- v Await implementation.
- vi Initiate a follow-up discussion to confirm positive outcome.

### **B Formal Complaint**

- i A letter expressing the nature of the issue, concern, problem, dissatisfaction – preferably itemising the things are not acceptable.
- ii The letter is sent to the person you want to take remedial actions (with a copy to the Principal)
- iii The complaint is investigated and a meeting held to explore solutions and agree on actions to be taken.
- iv Remedial action implemented and documented in a reply from the Principal.
- v Subsequent feedback regarding the outcome would be appreciated.
- vi If dissatisfaction still exists then write to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.



# REEFTON AREA SCHOOL PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS AGAINST PRINCIPAL

- All complaints about the principal shall be dealt with as set out in the Principal's Collective Employment Contract.
- All complaints against the principal shall be referred, in the first instance, to the Chairperson of the Board.
- While formal procedures are available as a last resort, every effort should be made by all concerned to resolve the matter informally. The Chairperson of the Board has a key role in facilitating such a resolution.
- Where the Chairperson has been unable to resolve the complaint, the complaint should be made in writing to the Board of trustees and be signed by the complainant.
- Copies of the letters of complaint should be given to the principal for a written response.
- The Board will consider the principal's written response and after considering all information, make a decision.
- The Board will acknowledge the complaint and inform the complainant in writing of any action taken in resolution.
- Where the Board consider a resolution is reasonable and effective, the complainant and the Principal should be advised by the Board that no further action is intended.
- If the Board is not satisfied, the full Board or a Committee of the Board may discuss the complaint and recommend actions to the Principal. The Principal should be invited to respond to the Board's recommendations.
- In the case of allegations that have disciplinary implications, the Board should convene a Committee to investigate and report only on the substance of the claim. Such a sub-committee will include a professional or union representative nominated by the Principal, as well as a professional or School Trustees' Adviser selected by the Board.
- The Committee should report in writing to the Board detailing all parties consulted and the content of any written submissions. The Committee may offer a recommendation to the Board.
- The Principal should be invited to respond to the report.
- In discussion at a board meeting of the Principal's response, the principal may make a statement, answer questions, but not be present during the discussion on action to be taken on the complaint.
- The principal may be represented at all meeting with the Board, or sub-committee of the Board, by a professional or union advocate of his choice.
- All business concerning the complaint and action resulting from it will be held "in committee". (That is confidential to the Board of Trustees)



# REEFTON AREA SCHOOL PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS AGAINST TEACHING AND SUPPORT STAFF

- Complaints in the first instance are to be referred to the principal. All complaints should be resolved in the lowest possible manner. If this is not possible a formal complaint should be made.
- All formal complaints against staff members should be submitted in writing to the Board of Trustees and signed by the complainant.
- Copies of the letter of complaint should be given to the staff member for a written response.
- The Board will consider the staff member's written response and after considering all information, make a decision.
- The Board will acknowledge the complaint and inform the complainant of any actions taken in resolution.
- Where the Board considers a resolution is reasonable and effective, the complainant and the staff member will be advised by the Board that no further action is intended.
- If the Board is not satisfied, the full board or a Committee of the Board will discuss the complaint and recommend actions to the staff member. The staff member is invited to respond to the Board's recommendations.
- In the case of allegations that may have disciplinary implications, the Board should convene a Committee to investigate and report on the substance of the complaint. Such a Committee will include a professional or union representative nominated by the staff member, as well as a professional or School Trustees' Association adviser selected by the Board.
- The Committee should report in writing to the Board detailing all parties consulted and the content of any written submissions. The Committee may form a recommendation to the Board.
- The staff member should be invited to respond to the report.
- In discussion at a Board meeting the staff member's response, the staff member may make a statement, answer questions, but not be present during the discussion on action of the complaint.
- The staff member may be represented at all meetings with the Board, or Committee of the Board, by a professional or union advocate of his/her choice.
- All business concerning the complaint and action resulting from it will be held "in committee". (That is confidential to the Board of Trustees)

- Any member of the Board of Trustees who is personally involved in the complaint shall take no part in the discussion about it, but may submit a statement on the matter.
- No person with any personal involvement in the complaint shall be a member of any committee or inquiry.
- If the complainant is not satisfied, the Board Chairperson should advise the complainant of further avenues, eg Human Rights Commission, Ombudsman etc.

**Refer to:**

Principals' Collective Employment Contract  
Area School Teachers Collective Contract  
Support Staff Collective Contract.

**Contact Numbers**

Wayne Wright Principal

Work 03 7328 421  
Home 03 7328 527  
e-mail [principal@ras.school.nz](mailto:principal@ras.school.nz)

Sue Bass Deputy Principal

Work 03 7328 421  
Home 03 7328 682  
e-mail [suebass@ras.school.nz](mailto:suebass@ras.school.nz)

Debbie Bland Chairperson Board of Trustees

Home 03 7327 016  
e-mail [stu.deb.bland@clear.net.nz](mailto:stu.deb.bland@clear.net.nz)

Simon Burke Senior Student Advocate

Work 03 7328 421  
Home 03 7327 011  
e-mail [simonburke@ras.school.nz](mailto:simonburke@ras.school.nz)