
Joint Proprietor/Board Communications and Complaints Policy

This document outlines the joint communications policy between the Board of Trustees and the Proprietor in relation to complaints and media.

Complaints

Each Board of Trustees and Proprietor should have their own procedures in place to handle any complaints received. The below is a suggested procedure:

1. All parents/caregivers should be given a copy of the complaints procedures when enrolling students. This could also be published in the school newsletter once a year. Copies of the procedure should be available at the school office for anyone who requests a copy.
2. The complaints procedure should state that the complainant speaks directly to a staff member about this issue in the first instance. The complainant should then speak with the Principal if not satisfied with the outcome. If the issue is not resolved adequately then the complainant should write a letter of complaint to the Board of Trustees.
3. The Board of Trustees should acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant of next steps in the board process.
4. The letter of complaint should be tabled at the next board meeting (public excluded) and referred to relevant parties for reporting back to the Board. The complaint could be dealt with by the whole Board or a committee could be appointed to investigate and make recommendations to the Board.
5. The Board should consider whether the Proprietor needs to become involved also. If the complaint relates to the Special Character of the School, property, or any other issue of mutual interest then it is essential the Proprietor is notified (and involved if required). If in any doubt, the Board Chair should consult with the Proprietor as to whether they need to be involved.
6. The Board should also consider whether expert advice is required from the NZSTA adviser, Ministry of Education and/or APIS.
7. Reports should be received by the Board or committee and parties may be given the opportunity to be heard.
8. The Board will then consider the evidence, consult with the Proprietor if necessary, and come to a decision or recommendation. The decision or recommendation must reflect any findings of the Proprietor concerning maintenance and preservation of the Special Character of the School.
9. The Board's response is then communicated to the parties to the complaint.
10. Any parties may request the Board to reconsider their decision.
11. If the Proprietor receives a complaint about a particular school, the Proprietor will show this complaint to the Board of Trustees and work with the Board of Trustees to resolve the complaint.

Media

Each Board of Trustees and Proprietor should have their own procedures in place to handle any media enquiries (including regular media training). The suggested procedure is as follows:

1. Only the Chairman of the Board is authorised to speak to media.
2. If any other Board member is approached by media, they should decline to respond and direct all enquiries to the Chairman of the Board.
3. The Chairman of the Board should not answer queries straight away but get the media person's contact details and advise that they will come back to them with a response within a certain timeframe.
4. The Chairman of the Board should then work on a response for the media.
5. If the issue is contentious the Chairman of the Board must consult with the other board members over the media release.
6. The Chairman of the Board must consult with the Proprietor if the issue to be spoken about relates to the Special Character of the School or the property. The Proprietor may direct the Chairman of the Board in how to respond or direct that the Chairman of the Board not respond.
7. If the Proprietor is contacted by media about a particular school, the Proprietor will notify the Board of Trustees of that school and consult with the Board of Trustees prior to a media release.