



## Concerns and Complaints Policy

### PURPOSE

- To ensure all concerns, incidents and complaints are attended to promptly, respectfully, and professionally with the goal of achieving effective resolution for all parties involved.
- To establish clear lines of communication and procedures for addressing concerns and complaints.
- To ensure that students, parents, caregivers and community members feel supported to raise concerns in a respectful, structured, and solution-focused manner.

### GUIDELINES

- A clear procedure for handling concerns and complaints will be maintained to provide an open and fair way of resolving issues and a safe and supportive environment for all students, staff and visitors.
- We foster open communication and encourage our school community and members of the public to contact us promptly when issues involving the school arise. We advise people with concerns or complaints to raise these with the school in the first instance rather than sharing concerns with others, or online, to give the school a fair opportunity to resolve the matter.
- Formal complaints should be made in writing and addressed to the Principal. The Principal will manage complaints in an appropriate manner which may include:
  - Meeting the complainant in person.
  - Informing the Board Presiding Member
  - Providing a full report of the complaint to a Board meeting
  - Convening a meeting of the Board Disciplinary committee.
  - Informing outside agencies (Ministry of Education, Police etc) if necessary.
- Any investigations carried out as a result of receiving a complaint are done so in a lawful manner and where staff members are involved the conditions of the relevant employment contracts are adhered to.
- This policy applies to complaints involving students, staff or the Board.

### For Students

- Students are encouraged to raise concerns directly with their teacher or mentor teacher as soon as an issue arises. Conversations will be handled confidentially and with respect.
- Students are welcome to bring a support person if they wish.
- Early discussion often leads to simple and effective resolution.
- If a student does not feel comfortable approaching the teacher directly, they may speak to one of the following:
  - The Learning Area Leader of the relevant subject
  - Their Dean
  - A member of the Senior Leadership Team.

# Te Kauwhata College

## For Parents and Caregivers

- In most cases, concerns should be directed to the staff member involved (e.g. classroom teacher).
- Contact may be made by phoning the school office or emailing the staff member directly. Teachers may be unable to answer calls during class time but will aim to respond by the end of the next school day.
- Please leave clear contact details and preferred times for follow-up.
- You may also speak to one of the following:
  - Your student's Mentor Teacher
  - The Learning Area Leader for the subject
  - The Dean
  - The Guidance Counsellor
  - A member of the Senior Leadership Team

**Refer to the Concerns and Complaints Process Flowchart for further steps.**

## UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS

Te Kauwhata College values open communication and is committed addressing all reasonable concerns and complaints in good faith. However, the school may decide not to pursue complaints that are considered unreasonable, vexatious, or harassing.

A complaint may be deemed unreasonable if the complainant:

- Continues to pursue a matter that has already been investigated and appropriately resolved
- Makes excessive or unrealistic demands in relation to the complaint
- Refuses to cooperate (e.g. does not clearly define the issue or fails to provide relevant information)
- Engages in aggressive, threatening, or manipulative behaviour
- Does not follow the school's established concerns and complaints procedures

In such cases, the school reserves the right to limit communication with the complainant, seek external advice, or involve a mediator or relevant agency.

Persistent or intrusive behaviour may be treated as harassment under the school's related policies.

# Te Kauwhata College

## APPENDIX 1: FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This procedure applies when a concern has not been resolved through informal or internal school processes, or when the matter is serious enough to warrant immediate formal attention.

### Written Complaint Received:

#### 1. Acknowledgement of Receipt

- You will receive written acknowledgement of your complaint.
- The school will outline the expected timeframe for investigating and responding to the complaint.

#### 2. Investigation

The Principal or designated senior staff member will:

- Review the complaint
- Speak with the complainant (you), and offer the opportunity to meet with a support person present
- Interview any relevant individuals, including the person(s) subject to the complaint
- Collect written statements where appropriate.

Investigations will be conducted in a fair, objective, and confidential manner. Staff involved will be treated in accordance with their employment agreements and professional standards.

#### 3. Outcome and Response

Once the investigation is complete, the Principal will:

- Decide on the appropriate course of action
- Provide you with a written response outlining the outcome and any actions taken
- Keep a secure, confidential record of the complaint and outcome.

#### 4. Referral to the Board (if required)

If the complaint is unresolved, you may write to the Board Presiding Member, outlining the details of your complaint, all previous steps taken to resolve the issue, and why you believe the matter needs Board consideration.

Complaints to the Board must include your name and contact details and preferred method of contact.

The Board Chair will first assess whether the appropriate steps have been followed. If not, the complaint may be referred back to the relevant stage. If accepted:

The Board will review the matter in confidence, ensure natural justice is upheld, and may:

- Seek further information
- Invite relevant parties to speak (with support persons if desired)
- Convene a disciplinary or resolution subcommittee meeting if necessary.

The Board will communicate its final decision in writing. Where appropriate, a follow-up check-in may be arranged within one month to ensure the matter has been resolved and no further concerns remain.