

## **NAG 3**

### **Complaints Policy**

#### **Rationale:**

God clearly identifies in scripture that where there are problems between people there is an appropriate format by which problems are to be resolved. Problems should be resolved between those parties where the problems lie and in a spirit of forgiveness and redemption. The school wishes to acknowledge that there are times when conflict will occur, and it wishes to deal with conflict in an appropriate manner. The following procedure is deemed by the school as the appropriate means of addressing issues and complaints that arise in the school.

#### **Operating Intention:**

1. To provide clear guidelines in the way that complaints should be addressed.
2. To ensure that all complaints are given a fair and appropriate hearing.
3. To ensure that all grievances are resolved or dealt with in accordance with school policy and procedures.

#### **Operating Guidelines:**

1. Where concerns, complaints or grievances arise, the school will endeavour to resolve the conflict in a manner that is acceptable to all parties concerned.
2. Decisions relating to conflict resolution will always be made in accordance with what is best for the school as a whole.
3. All minor concerns or complaints should initially be directed to the party involved.
4. All complaints are to be dealt with allowing for natural justice and in confidentiality.
5. In all matters of complaints the Board of Trustees will have the final decision which will be made in accordance with what is best for the school as a whole.

## Complaints Procedures:

### Starting point

<p>Your <b>concern</b> involves a classroom matter or a particular staff member</p> <p><b>NO</b> →</p> <p><b>YES</b> ↓</p> <p>Write a note, email or phone the staff member concerned to make a suitable time to discuss the issue. Indicate before the discussion what the concern is about.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Talk with the relevant staff member about the issue. Be prepared to listen to their point of view.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Provide feedback to the staff member as to whether you were satisfied or not, to ensure the concern is settled.</p> <p><b>ISSUE RESOLVED?</b> <b>NO</b></p> <p><b>YES</b> ↓</p>	<p>→</p> <p>Your concern does not involve a classroom matter or particular staff member, <b>OR</b> has not been resolved by visiting the staff member.</p> <p><b>YES</b> ↓</p> <p>Write a note, email or phone the team leader to make a suitable time to discuss the issue. Indicate before the discussion what the concern is about.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Talk with the team leader about the issue. Be prepared to listen to their point of view.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Provide feedback to the team leader as to whether you were satisfied or not, to ensure the concern is settled.</p> <p><b>ISSUE RESOLVED?</b> <b>NO</b></p> <p><b>YES</b> ↓</p>	<p>→</p> <p>Your concern does not involve a classroom matter or particular staff member, <b>OR</b> has not been resolved by visiting the staff member or the team leader.</p> <p><b>YES</b> ↓</p> <p>Write a note, email or phone the Principal and make a time to discuss the concern. Indicate before the discussion what the concern is about, and the steps you have taken to remedy it.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Discuss with the principal, be prepared to listen to their point of view also, and provide feedback to ensure the concern is settled.</p> <p>The concern may be referred back to the staff member or team leader particularly when this process has not been followed to date</p> <p><b>ISSUE RESOLVED?</b> <b>NO</b></p> <p><b>YES</b> ↓</p>	<p>→</p> <p>Your concern has not been resolved by visiting the staff member, team leader or the principal, <b>OR</b> it involves the Principal or Board of trustees.</p> <p><b>YES</b> ↓</p> <p>Your concern has now become a <b>complaint</b></p> <p>↓</p> <p>Write to the Board of Trustees via the chairperson, outlining your complaint in detail, and all the actions taken to date. The chairperson will need to ensure the correct procedure has been followed before the board will consider and may direct you back to the staff member, team leader or principal.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Include your name, signature and contact numbers. Your complaint will be acknowledged along with an expected timeframe for resolution.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>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 through this procedure. Once the board has considered and resolved the complaint, the board will endeavour to convene a follow up contact within <i>one month</i>.</p> <p>←</p>
<p>No further action is required</p>			

If a complaint is addressed to the Board of Trustees, this process will be followed:

The Board is well advised to seek counsel from the New Zealand School Trustees Association Industrial Relations Advisors to guide the process. Also to check with the New Zealand School Trustees Association Handbook.

1. When The Board has received a complaint, the complaint will be addressed in writing to the chairperson. The chairperson will need to ensure the correct procedure has been followed before The Board will consider. The Chairperson will direct the party back to the staff member or Principal and provide the complainant with a copy of this Complaints Procedure should the criteria for a formal complaint not be met.
2. The complaint needs to be signed and include contact name and phone number. The complaint needs to be specific so as the employee can identify the particular incident or matter at issue.
3. The employee concerned will receive a copy of the complaint in writing. It is strongly recommended that the person making the allegations be identified. A written response to the allegation should be sought from the employee by an agreed date.
4. The employee should be made aware at this point that they are entitled to seek advice and/or representation.

5. If a response is not provided by the agreed deadline, a letter from the Board needs to point this out and seek immediate response. The letter needs to point out that if a response is not forthcoming, the Board will be forced to consider the complaint without the benefit of the employee's response.
6. The Board should offer the employee the opportunity to talk to the written response if necessary and bring a support person.
7. The Board will establish a complaints committee to investigate the true facts. Details of the investigation and its nature need to be detailed in writing and reported back to the Board together with a recommended course of action within a reasonable timeframe.
8. If it is found there is a case to answer then
  - (i) The employee must be advised of the right to seek representation
  - (ii) The employee must be given the right to respond to the findings
  - (iii) The employee should be afforded the opportunity to be heard by the Board
  - (iv) The Board will need to consider the recommendation (if appropriate) and determine what disciplinary action (if any) is appropriate
  - (v) Boards must ensure objectivity and fairness
9. In all matters of complaints the Board of Trustees will have the final decision which will be made in accordance with what is best for the school as a whole.

**Conclusion:**

Despite our best efforts as human beings, mistakes will be made and problems arise that cause concern or offence. It is the schools desire to deal with the concerns and complaints efficiently and effectively, in a Christian framework of care and concern for the individual and yet act in such a way as justice may be seen to be done.

**FORMULATED BY:** New Plymouth Adventist School Board of Trustees

**REVIEW RESPONSIBILITY:** BOT Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Principal

**APPROVED: Board Chair** \_\_\_\_\_

**BOT RATIFIED**

Reviewed: 19 Feb 2020	Next review: 18 Feb 2021
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