

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

1. Internal Complaints Procedures

The school will develop procedures for students to express complaints and have them dealt with fairly and effectively.

These procedures will

- be easily understood and followed by students.
- be clearly communicated to students and their parents.
- cover a range of complaints.
- provide recourse for students and their parents if they are not satisfied with how their concern was dealt with.

In developing these procedures, the school will:

- apply the principles of fairness, consistency, objectivity, and promptness when responding to complaints.
- make the procedures easy to understand by using a visual flow chart, and step-by-step instructions, in plain English, as well as in other languages if necessary.
- develop the procedures in consultation with international staff and other relevant staff.
- include clear direction on who to go to for support, and where they can be found.
- identify different types of complaints and the appropriate person to deal with each type of complaint.
- advise international students first to approach the staff member closest to the problem.
- include photographs and locations of appropriate staff for ease of identification for students.
- inform students about the procedures both verbally and in writing.
- make the information available to students via orientation materials and homestay handbook, and to parents via pre-departure information, the international student handbook and school website.
- remind students about the procedures throughout the year in international assemblies and during interviews.
- display the complaints procedure information in the international office, esol classrooms and other areas frequented by international students.
- inform key staff in the school e.g. ESOL teachers, SLT of the international student complaints procedures.
- inform residential caregivers of the procedures in the written information provided to them, and verbally during the initial vetting interview, so they can support their student.
- let students know that they have a right to an advocate, and make sure advocates have institutional knowledge (policies, procedures, people) and can listen without prejudice to the student's point of view.
- let students know that they may bring another support person with them (such as a friend or family member or homestay parent) during any stage of the process.
- survey students, parents, staff to check comprehension of the complaints procedures and record results as evidence for self-review and update these procedures in response to feedback.

2. External Complaints Process

The school will provide information to students or parents on how to submit a formal complaint to NZQA in the event they are not satisfied with how their complaints were dealt with by the school.

The school will

- display the complaints process information in key student areas e.g. international office, esol classrooms and other areas frequented by international students around the school.
- provide information about complaints processes on the school website.
- include information about the complaints process in the pre-departure information, Student Handbook and (age appropriate) orientation materials.
- inform students of the process both verbally and in writing.
- survey international students and parents to check they understand the information provided about the complaints process and update procedures and communication in response to feedback received.
- inform agents of the complaints process in the agent pack.
- include updates about the NZQA complaints process and the DRS in international staff meetings or PD sessions, keeping minutes or presentation notes as evidence for self-review.

3. Staff Procedures for Addressing Complaints

The school will develop staff procedures for dealing with complaints by international students or their parents/legal guardians or other stakeholders.

These staff procedures will

- identify the key staff involved and clearly define their roles and responsibilities at each stage of the process.
- Determine how the complaints procedures are communicated to students, parents and other parties
- Identify how and where an international student complaint, the steps taken to resolve it, and the outcome are recorded.
- Align with the procedures for students to raise complaints.
- Be regularly reviewed.

In developing these procedures, the school will:

- apply the principles of fairness, consistency, objectivity and promptness when responding to complaints.
- use staff experienced in working with international students and the requirements of the Code to develop and review the procedures.
- ensure that all staff who may be approached by students with concerns, understand the school's Code responsibilities and have training in how to respond appropriately to concerns or complaints, including active listening, and applying the principles of fairness, consistency, objectivity and promptness.
- identify individuals within or outside of the school who may be appropriate advocates for students who wish to talk to the school about a complaint. These will include a list of first language speakers and their contact details, for all language groups within the international student cohort.

- inform students that the school has access to first language support people, should they need advocacy or support.
- check that the information given to students matches with actual practice.
- hold specific meetings where staff discuss student issues and concerns and identify and address these early: eg. international staff or teacher team meetings/ parent-teacher-pupil conferences.
- keep records of all complaints received, the steps taken to resolve them and outcomes in each case in the International Students google drive.
- communicate with parents about concerns expressed by their child and how the school is addressing these concerns.
- identify the points at which parties will be updated on progress, and how they will be informed of these updates.
- provide all parties with a written summary of the outcome of the complaints.
- check in with the student and, if necessary, their parents after the matter has been resolved to ensure they have been able to resume student life and do not need additional support.
- refer any ongoing complaints to a different (more senior) person within the school than the staff member(s) who dealt with the initial complaint.
- gather feedback on the effectiveness of the procedures and make changes as necessary as part of the school's self-review process.