Concerns and Complaints

This policy provides staff members, parents/caregivers/whānau, students, and the wider school community with clear procedures for raising concerns and making complaints. Complaints may also come from members of the public.

Our concerns and complaints procedures enable us to:

- maintain a safe environment for our students and staff
- treat all people fairly and with dignity and respect
- resolve matters of concern early and at the lowest level, if possible
- respond to feedback and concerns constructively
- deal with complaints fairly, effectively, and in a timely manner
- take into account individual circumstances
- maintain privacy and confidentiality
- preserve and enhance school and community relationships
- check that solutions have been implemented and are working, including feeding back to the person who raised the issue where appropriate
- monitor and record concerns and complaints about student safety and wellbeing
- meet our legal and ethical obligations.

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 other people or online.

Most concerns can be resolved informally through discussions with the people involved – see **Raising Concerns**. If informal discussion doesn't resolve the issue, see **Making a Formal Complaint or Serious Allegation**.

For an overview of the process, see our **Concerns and Complaints Process** flowchart.

Sometimes parents contact the Ministry of Education about an incident involving their child at school. The Ministry upholds the school's ability to self-govern and follow their own policies and processes for managing complaints and will usually direct complaints back to the school in the first instance.

Parents or students with concerns may seek advice from a lawyer, **Youth Law** (0800 884 529), **Community Law** (phone local centre), **Student Rights Service** (0800 499 488), or the **Ombudsman** (0800 802 602).

Complaints register

Auckland Point School keeps a complaints register to record formal complaints and to audit our policies and procedures. This includes recording employment-related matters. Information will be held in accordance with our **privacy policy and guidelines** and the board reviews the register regularly. Generally, only formal complaints or complaints that

come to the attention of the principal or board will be recorded in the register. Concerns resolved informally may not be recorded.

Unreasonable complaints

Auckland Point School will receive and consider all reasonable and legitimate concerns and complaints in good faith. However, the school may refuse to take any action on receiving a complaint or concerns that are considered unreasonable or vexatious.

A complaint may be considered unreasonable if the person making a complaint:

- continues to pursue an issue after it has been considered and deemed resolved by the school
- makes unreasonable demands in relation to the complaint
- is uncooperative (e.g. refusing to define the issue), fails to provide evidence, or provides excessive/irrelevant information
- displays aggressive, threatening, or manipulative behaviour
- fails to follow the school's policies and procedures.

In some situations where unreasonable complaints are made, the school may need to take legal advice or involve an external agency or mediator to help resolve the matter.

Note that unwelcome, intimidating, and intrusive behaviour is dealt with as **harassment**.

Related topics

- **Student Wellbeing and Safety and**
- **Community Conduct Expectations**
- **Harassment**
- **Privacy**
- **Protected Disclosure**
- **Official Information Requests**

Legislation

- Employment Relations Act 2000
- Protected Disclosures Act 2000
- Education and Training Act 2020
- Privacy Act 2020
- Public Service Act 2020

Resources

- Ministry of Education | Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga (Educational Leaders): **Dealing with complaints**
- NZSTA | Te Whakarōputanga Kaitiaki Kura o Aotearoa: **Dealing with complaints**
- Te Kawa Mataaho | Public Service Commission: **Acting in the Spirit of Service: Speaking Up**
- Ombudsman: **Good complaints handling by school boards**
- Ombudsman: **Managing unreasonable complainant conduct**