

## Complaints

The purpose of our complaints policy is to provide clear guidelines for the school community in raising and resolving concerns and complaints.

We have procedures in place that we follow to ensure that complaints are handled appropriately. Our procedures enable us to:

- deal with complaints fairly, effectively, and promptly
- take into account individual circumstances
- maintain confidentiality
- preserve school/community relationships and communication
- monitor and record complaints and concerns about student safety.

Most complaints can be resolved informally by discussions with the people concerned. See **Guidelines for Informal Complaints**. The school also has a procedure for making a **formal complaint** if informal discussion doesn't resolve the issue.

For complaints concerning harassment, see **Harassment**. For allegations of theft or fraud, see **Theft and Fraud Prevention**. School employees needing to make a protected disclosure, see **Protected Disclosure**.

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Generally, an anonymous complaint cannot be processed unless there is a sound legal reason for protecting the identity of the complainant.

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## Guidelines for Informal Complaints

These are recommended guidelines for informal complaints.

If you have a complaint about a staff member, contact the person involved and discuss the matter. We ask that parents make this direct approach as soon as possible. Be prepared to make a time to discuss your complaint if the staff member is unable to talk with you straight away. Be open to listening to the other side of the story to avoid communication breakdowns.

If the matter is a general issue, or you do not wish to contact the staff member concerned, or you are unhappy with the outcome of your initial meeting, contact a senior staff member or the principal to discuss further resolution.

If the matter concerns the principal and you have not first resolved it by discussion, or you feel uncomfortable directly approaching the principal, contact the chairperson of the board of trustees.

If you complain to a board member, you will be encouraged to resolve the issue with the guidelines above, and the board member will inform the principal and board chair.

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If a staff member is the complainant (including complaints about colleagues), the same procedure must be followed, commencing with an initial discussion with the people concerned to try to resolve matters.

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If an informal meeting does not resolve your concern or complaint, you can make a **formal complaint**.

# Formal Complaints

If an informal meeting does not resolve your concern or complaint, you can make a formal complaint.

In the interests of fairness, any formal complaint or serious allegation must be made in writing and resolved in a timely fashion. All parties should respect confidentiality.

Follow this process:

<b>Responsibility:</b>	<b>Action</b>
Complainant	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Put your concerns in writing, and sign the letter. Give as many details as possible, including details of efforts that have been made to resolve the issue. Include names and contact phone numbers.</li><li>2. Send the letter marked Confidential to the school principal or, if the complaint is about the principal, to the chairperson of the board of trustees. The contact details are available from the school office.</li></ol>
Principal (if complaint is about a staff member)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing or by email to the complainant. Give a copy of the complaint to the staff member concerned. Inform the chairperson of the board of trustees.</li></ol>
Board chair (if complaint is about the principal)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing or by email to the complainant. Give a copy of the complaint to the principal.</li></ol>

If the interim response does not resolve matters, or the matter is deemed sufficiently serious, an **investigation** may take place.

When a formal complaint is received, the school may choose to investigate it if it is deemed serious enough to warrant it after considering the initial response from the person the complaint is about. Not all complaints require an investigation but all written complaints should be disclosed to the staff concerned at the earliest opportunity. Relevant collective employment agreement provisions for dealing with complaints and discipline must be observed including allowing representation of staff at any meeting to discuss a written complaint.