



GUIDELINES FOR RESOLVING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY 5 GUIDELINE 2

From time to time an individual may have cause for concern or a complaint. It is in the interests of the whole school community that issues be dealt with earlier rather than later.

DEFINITIONS

CONCERNS: A concern is a matter, activity, event or statement connected to St Benedict's School that leads to anxiety or worry for a student, teacher, parent or person with a special interest in the school. A concern about student, classroom programme, student teacher or teacher should in the first instance be taken to the class teacher, and thereafter, failing resolution, to the principal.

COMPLAINT: A complaint is a matter, activity, event or statement connected to St Benedict's School that is judged by the complainant to be of such seriousness or gravity that it is presented in writing by the signatory, to the Principal who reports on the actions taken to the chairperson of the Board of Trustees. Where the complaint concerns the principal, the complaint will be taken directly to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. A concern, taken in the first instance to the teacher and then to the Principal that does not result in satisfaction may be formally presented as a complaint.

Where a concern or complaint involves a Board of Trustees member or non-teaching staff member, the above definitions and processes still apply where relevant.

1. Any person who is subject of a complaint is "innocent until proven guilty".
2. A formal complaint must be signed for a response to be initiated.
3. Any person who is the subject of a complaint has the right to know the details of the complaint including the source of the complaint.
4. Any person who is the subject of the complaint has the right to be heard in connection with the complaint.
5. Any person who is the subject of the complaint has a right to be represented.
6. If the complaint relates to a staff member, concluding in the Principal, and is of such gravity that it would be inappropriate for that person to continue his/her duties, then the Board of Trustees may at any time following the receipt of the complaint, pending the investigation of that complaint, suspend that person on full pay.
7. Nothing in the procedures shall limit or prevent any rights under the personal grievance procedures of any employment contract.
8. Reference may need to be made to the Child Abuse Policy.

PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

St Benedict's School will consider any concern or complaint submitted to the school as a serious matter and will attempt to resolve accordingly to the policy approved by the Board of Trustees.

The procedures for handling concerns and complaints are as follows:

1. CONCERNS

- i. If any parents or person with a special interest in St Benedict's School has a genuine concern about any aspect of the school curriculum or about any activity or lack of activity involving the staff or the pupils he or she shall first approach the classroom teacher or where appropriate, the Principal. The teacher or the Principal shall endeavor to resolve the concern to everyone's satisfaction by informal means.
- ii. If the person or the parent with the concern remains dissatisfied following the Principal's intervention then he or she may forward a written and signed complaint on the matter to the Board of Trustees which will be tabled or actioned in accordance with procedures of the Complaints Investigation Committee.
- iii. If the Principal is the subject of the concern, then a complaint in writing should be forwarded to the Board of Trustees and to the Principal. The Board will action it in accordance with the procedures of the Complaints Investigation Committee.

2. COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE

- i. There shall be established a Complaints Investigation Committee made up of the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, the Principal and one lay person, appointed by the Board of Trustees, who shall be agreeable to both parties.
- ii. The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees shall act as convener of the Complaints Investigation Committee.
- iii. Depending on the circumstances and the nature of the complaint the Board of Trustees may also co-opt a person who may be able to offer specialist advice or assistance in the matter before the committee.
- iv. If any member of the committee is the complainant or the subject of the complaint personally then the Board of Trustees shall appoint a substitute member from amongst the remaining members of the Board to take the place of such a person.

3. INVESTIGATION

- i. Before any complaint relating to any staff member or Board of Trustee member can be acted upon, it must be presented in writing by the signatory.
- ii. Any written complaint is to be referred to the Complaints Investigation Committee which shall consider the complainant's case and proceed to act in accordance with this policy.
- iii. The Committee shall inform the person who is the subject of the complaint about the precise nature and source of the complaint and call for, receive and consider that persons response to the complaint.
- iv. The Committee shall afford the person who is the subject of the complaint the opportunity to be heard.
- v. The Committee shall call for any additional relevant information.

4. ACTION ON COMPLAINT

- i. After investigating the complaint the Committee shall report its findings and conclusions to the full membership of the Board of Trustees and make such recommendations as it thinks appropriate in the circumstances.
- ii. The Board of Trustees shall consider the Committee's report and recommendation and then may, in its absolute discretion, determine to adopt the recommendation of the Committee or take such alternative action as it considers appropriate in the circumstances.