

# Concerns and Complaints Process

Most concerns can be resolved informally by discussions with the people involved.

## STEP 1

Your concern is **GENERAL IN NATURE**  
**OR ...**  
involves a particular **STUDENT OR STAFF MEMBER**.

**Contact the person involved to arrange a time to discuss the matter privately.**

Indicate what the concern is about and let them know if you'll bring a support person to the meeting.  
If the concern is about a student, contact the student's teacher (or principal).

**Meet with the person involved to discuss the matter.**  
Be prepared to listen to different points of view and try to work towards a resolution.  
This may require another meeting and/or involve senior management.

**Is the matter resolved?**  
Provide feedback as to whether you were satisfied with the outcome, or if the matter is not resolved.

YES

**NO FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED**

## STEP 2

Your concern has **NOT** been resolved by meeting with the person concerned  
**OR ...** does **NOT** involve a particular student or staff member  
**OR ...** you **DO NOT** wish to approach the person concerned  
**OR ...** involves the principal or a trustee (board member).

**Contact the principal, senior management, or board member (as appropriate) to arrange a time to discuss the matter privately.**  
Indicate what the concern is about, any steps taken to resolve the matter, and let them know if you'll bring a support person the meeting.

**Meet with the appropriate person (as above) and discuss the matter.**  
Be prepared to listen to different points of view and try to work towards a resolution.

**The principal may involve other people** to help resolve the concern.

**Is the matter resolved?**  
Provide feedback as to whether you were satisfied with the outcome, or if the matter is not resolved.

YES

## STEP 3

Your concern has **NOT** been resolved by previous steps  
**OR ...** your concern is more serious  
**OR ...** your concern is serious and it's not appropriate to contact the principal (senior management) about it.

**You can make a formal complaint.**

See the school's **Making a Formal Complaint or Serious Allegation** procedure (SchoolDocs).

**Put the complaint in writing (email or letter), giving as many facts and details as possible, and any steps taken to resolve the matter.**

Include your name, signature, and contact details.  
Send to the principal, presiding member (board chair), or deputy board chair/other board member, as appropriate.

**Your complaint will be acknowledged.**

The school will decide whether a formal investigation is necessary or appropriate. See the **Making a Formal Complaint or Serious Allegation** procedure (SchoolDocs).

**If a formal investigation is required**, subject to privacy, confidentiality, or other ethical and legal requirements, the school may keep you informed about the investigation process and timeframes, including confirmation of when the matter is concluded.

**NOTE:** Unless there are exceptional circumstances, **a complaint will not be considered unless the correct process has been followed.** You may be directed back to the staff member or principal to follow the process.

This flowchart aligns with the school's Concerns and Complaints policy and procedures | Copyright © SchoolDocs Ltd

February 2022

**Once a formal complaint has been resolved, there are no further avenues to pursue the complaint with the school.**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you are encouraged to take advice and may wish to consider contacting other agencies. See the school's **Making a Formal Complaint or Serious Allegation** procedure (SchoolDocs).



# Kerikeri Primary School

---

## Raising Concerns

Where appropriate, we try to deal with concerns and complaints informally in the first instance. If you would like to raise a concern with us, please follow the steps below. If you believe your concern cannot be resolved informally, it may be appropriate to make a formal complaint – see [Making a Formal Complaint or Serious Allegation](#).

### 1. Raise the concern with the right person

In all instances, you may have a support person to help you raise a concern or make a complaint.

If you approach a board member with your concerns, you will be asked to follow the actions below and the board member will inform the principal and board chair.

If several people share a concern, the process is the same. You could nominate a group representative to approach the school, and it may be appropriate for the group and the school to use a mediator.

- If you have a **general concern about the school or its programmes**, discuss it with the person involved or with a member of the management team or the principal.
- If you have a **particular concern about a staff member or a school activity**, contact the person involved to discuss the matter privately. We ask that you make this direct approach as soon as possible.

If you do not wish to approach the person involved, contact a member of the management team or the principal to discuss your concern. The principal or management team member may communicate with the person involved.

- If you have a **concern about your own child or one of our other students**, contact the student's class teacher or the principal to discuss the matter. The school monitors, records, and responds appropriately to any concerns about a student's safety and welfare.

If your concern relates to another student, you must not approach that student or their parents/caregivers/whānau directly. Speak to their teacher or the principal.

---

If you want to raise concerns (especially serious concerns) about a student's wellbeing and/or safety, see [Supporting Student Wellbeing](#).

---

- If you have a concern about another **parent, caregiver, or member of the school community** on a school-related matter, raise this with the principal.
- 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 board chair.
- If the matter concerns a **board member**, contact the board chair, or deputy chair if it concerns the board chair.

### 2. Work towards a resolution

In most cases, concerns can be resolved informally with constructive discussions.

- Be prepared to make a time to discuss your concern if the person involved is unable to talk with you straight away.
- Be open to listening to the other side of the story to avoid communication breakdowns.
- Follow-up actions or later check-ins may be able to be agreed where appropriate.
- Involving a third party to facilitate discussion or participate in a meeting may be appropriate.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your initial meeting, contact the principal, a member of the management team, or the board chair to discuss further resolution.

If this process does not resolve your concern, you can make a **formal complaint**.

### 3. Follow-up and feedback

Resolution of the concern or complaint may include checking that the solutions have been implemented and are working. The effectiveness of the solutions may be fed back to the person who raised the issue where appropriate. This follow-up may be recorded in the concerns and complaints register.

In some circumstances it will not be possible or appropriate for the school to advise you of a final outcome.

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

**Release history: Term 1 2022, Term 1 2019**

<i>Last <b>scheduled review</b></i>	
<i>Last <b>internal review</b></i>	<i>Term 3 2021</i>
<i><b>Topic type</b></i>	<i>Generic</i>



# Kerikeri Primary School

---

## Making a Formal Complaint or Serious Allegation

In the first instance, follow the steps in **Raising Concerns**. If your concerns have not been resolved, or for more serious matters, you can make a formal complaint. Formal complaints may be about an employee of the school, a parent or caregiver, a student, or any matter within the school's responsibility. If you have a complaint about the conduct or competence of a teacher, the complaint must be made directly to the employer (board). In **some cases**, a complaint may be made directly to the Teaching Council.

Formal complaints should be made in writing (i.e. email or letter) to ensure the school is able to meet its legal and ethical obligations, including complying with the requirements of natural justice.

All parties should respect privacy and confidentiality, including avoiding the use of social media to promote a point of view.

---

### How to make a complaint

Put your specific complaint(s) in writing and include your preferred contact details. Give as many facts and details as possible, including the names of people involved and dates of events, as well as any steps you have taken to resolve the matter. It will not usually be possible to effectively investigate complaints that are made **anonymously**. If you have any specific concerns about your identity being disclosed then please include these with your formal complaint so they can be discussed with you directly.

The email or letter should be marked "confidential" and sent to:

- the principal, if the complaint is about a staff member, student, parent or caregiver, or other member of the school community
- the board chair, if it is about the principal, or is about the conduct or competence of a teacher and is serious in nature
- the deputy chair, if it is about the board chair.

Contact details for the principal, board chair, and deputy chair are available at the school office or online.

---

### What happens with your complaint

The principal, board chair, or deputy chair will check that your complaint has come to the correct person and then send you an acknowledgement of receipt, within 5 working days.

#### First steps

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the first steps may include:

- asking you for more details about your complaint so that your concerns can be investigated effectively
- suggesting possible alternative options for informal or low-level resolution
- referring the matter to the board for consideration at an in-committee meeting, so that the board can determine the next steps
- conducting preliminary investigative steps or enquiring into the facts
- consulting external advisors (e.g. legal advice, NZSTA).

#### Decision to investigate

After receiving a formal complaint, the school will need to decide whether an investigation is necessary or otherwise appropriate. It is likely that your written complaint will be disclosed to the person complained of at an early stage. This is to ensure fairness and meet the requirements of natural justice. Where a complaint is being investigated the person complained of will usually be informed of the intended investigation process. If the person complained of is an employee of the school they must be advised of the complaint and be given an opportunity to

provide explanations and comments before the school makes any decision that is likely to affect the employee's continued employment.

- If your formal complaint **does not** justify a formal investigation, the principal or board will consider the issues raised and all of the relevant information, and provide you with a written response.
- If your formal complaint **does** justify a formal investigation, see **Formal investigation process** below.

Before starting an investigation, the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA) or legal advisors should be contacted for advice. The school's insurer may need to be notified. It may also be necessary to liaise with other external agencies, such as Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children and/or the New Zealand Police, before starting an investigation.

---

## Formal investigation process

If a formal investigation is required, subject to privacy, confidentiality, or other ethical and legal requirements, we may keep you informed about the investigation process and the expected timeframes, including confirmation of when the matter is concluded.

- Relevant collective employment agreement provisions for dealing with complaints about staff members must be observed, including protecting the staff member's dignity and mana, advising them of their right to seek support and representation before responding to complaints, and giving them a reasonable opportunity to take that advice.
- A full documentary record of any formal complaint is completed and stored confidentially in a secure location.

See [Investigating a Formal Complaint or Serious Allegation](#) 

### Outcome of the investigation

Once a formal complaint has been resolved, there are no further avenues to pursue the complaint at your school. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you are encouraged to take advice and may wish to consider contacting the Human Rights Commission, Ombudsman, Ministry of Education, ERO, or the Office of the Privacy Commissioner. If your complaint was about the conduct or competence of a teacher, you may also be able to make a complaint to the [Teaching Council](#).

**Release history:** [Term 1 2022](#), [Term 1 2019](#), [Term 1 2017](#)

<i>Last <b>scheduled review</b></i>	
<i>Last <b>internal review</b></i>	<i>Term 3 2021</i>
<i><b>Topic type</b></i>	<i>Core Generic</i>



# Kerikeri Primary School

---

## Making a Formal Complaint or Serious Allegation

In the first instance, follow the steps in **Raising Concerns**. If your concerns have not been resolved, or for more serious matters, you can make a formal complaint. Formal complaints may be about an employee of the school, a parent or caregiver, a student, or any matter within the school's responsibility. If you have a complaint about the conduct or competence of a teacher, the complaint must be made directly to the employer (board). In **some cases**, a complaint may be made directly to the Teaching Council.

Formal complaints should be made in writing (i.e. email or letter) to ensure the school is able to meet its legal and ethical obligations, including complying with the requirements of natural justice.

All parties should respect privacy and confidentiality, including avoiding the use of social media to promote a point of view.

---

### How to make a complaint

Put your specific complaint(s) in writing and include your preferred contact details. Give as many facts and details as possible, including the names of people involved and dates of events, as well as any steps you have taken to resolve the matter. It will not usually be possible to effectively investigate complaints that are made **anonymously**. If you have any specific concerns about your identity being disclosed then please include these with your formal complaint so they can be discussed with you directly.

The email or letter should be marked "confidential" and sent to:

- the principal, if the complaint is about a staff member, student, parent or caregiver, or other member of the school community
- the board chair, if it is about the principal, or is about the conduct or competence of a teacher and is serious in nature
- the deputy chair, if it is about the board chair.

Contact details for the principal, board chair, and deputy chair are available at the school office or online.

---

### What happens with your complaint

The principal, board chair, or deputy chair will check that your complaint has come to the correct person and then send you an acknowledgement of receipt, within 5 working days.

#### First steps

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the first steps may include:

- asking you for more details about your complaint so that your concerns can be investigated effectively
- suggesting possible alternative options for informal or low-level resolution

- referring the matter to the board for consideration at an in-committee meeting, so that the board can determine the next steps
- conducting preliminary investigative steps or enquiring into the facts
- consulting external advisors (e.g. legal advice, NZSTA).

### Decision to investigate

After receiving a formal complaint, the school will need to decide whether an investigation is necessary or otherwise appropriate. It is likely that your written complaint will be disclosed to the person complained of at an early stage. This is to ensure fairness and meet the requirements of natural justice. Where a complaint is being investigated the person complained of will usually be informed of the intended investigation process. If the person complained of is an employee of the school they must be advised of the complaint and be given an opportunity to provide explanations and comments before the school makes any decision that is likely to affect the employee's continued employment.

- If your formal complaint **does not** justify a formal investigation, the principal or board will consider the issues raised and all of the relevant information, and provide you with a written response.
- If your formal complaint **does** justify a formal investigation, see **Formal investigation process** below.

Before starting an investigation, the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA) or legal advisors should be contacted for advice. The school's insurer may need to be notified. It may also be necessary to liaise with other external agencies, such as Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children and/or the New Zealand Police, before starting an investigation.

---

### Formal investigation process

If a formal investigation is required, subject to privacy, confidentiality, or other ethical and legal requirements, we may keep you informed about the investigation process and the expected timeframes, including confirmation of when the matter is concluded.

- Relevant collective employment agreement provisions for dealing with complaints about staff members must be observed, including protecting the staff member's dignity and mana, advising them of their right to seek support and representation before responding to complaints, and giving them a reasonable opportunity to take that advice.
- A full documentary record of any formal complaint is completed and stored confidentially in a secure location.

See [Investigating a Formal Complaint or Serious Allegation](#) 

### Outcome of the investigation

Once a formal complaint has been resolved, there are no further avenues to pursue the complaint at your school. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you are encouraged to take advice and may wish to consider contacting the Human Rights Commission, Ombudsman, Ministry of Education, ERO, or the Office of the Privacy Commissioner. If your complaint was about the conduct or competence of a teacher, you may also be able to make a complaint to the [Teaching Council](#).

**Release history:** [Term 1 2022](#), [Term 1 2019](#), [Term 1 2017](#)

---

<i>Last <b>scheduled review</b></i>	
<i>Last <b>internal review</b></i>	<i>Term 3 2021</i>
<i><b>Topic type</b></i>	<i>Core Generic</i>

---