

AVONDALE COLLEGE

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES



We encourage all concerns (except concerns about violence, sexual allegations, or any form of bullying or harassment, which must be handled formally) to be resolved informally and at the lowest level possible.

1. Informal Concerns

1.1 Concerns about staff members

Concerns about teachers, or other staff, should be addressed to the staff member concerned, and we encourage you to contact them and attempt to resolve matters informally. You might want to approach their line manager or supervisor, for advice and support on resolving your concerns at the lowest level. Alternatively, a Dean, Director or Head of Department, could provide assistance and support.

If your concerns remain unresolved, you should contact the relevant member of the Executive (Deputy Principal) in charge of the year level or subject area, to which your concern relates.

In most circumstances we encourage a face to face discussion with the staff member, if that is acceptable to both parties, or some other form of informal resolution that respects the mana and dignity of the complainant and the staff member.

1.2 Concerns about students

Students cannot be approached directly by non-teaching staff, parents or other members of the community over concerns, even informal ones.

Concerns about a student should be directed in the first instance to the relevant Dean, who will determine in consultation usually with a member of the Executive, the most appropriate way to resolve the concerns. The school has a number of statutory obligations to protect the safety and welfare of our students, so face to face discussion, while encouraged for concerns relating to staff members, may not be appropriate with regards students. Each situation will be different.

1.3 Concerns about the school, the Board of Trustees or the Principal

Concerns about the school, should be referred to the Chairperson of the Board. This must be done in writing, care of the Board of Trustees Secretary, even if it is not a formal complaint. The Chair does not personally respond to concerns by phone or in person. All communication is via the Board Secretary or the Principal. The Board and Trustees do not meet with those expressing concerns except in exceptional circumstances.

Concerns about the Principal should also be directed in writing to the Board Chairperson.

The Board Chairperson will respond to your concerns within 2 weeks of the school receiving the concern.

2. Formal Complaints

If your concerns have not been resolved, or for more serious matters, (including allegations of violence or threats of violence, any form of bullying or harassment, and any allegations involving drugs, weapons or sexual 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.

2.1.1 Must be in writing

Any formal complaint or serious allegation **must be made in writing**.

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

2.1.2 To make a complaint

Put your specific complaint(s) in writing with as many facts and details as possible, including the names of people involved and dates of events, together with any steps you have taken to resolve the matter and your preferred contact details.

The letter or email 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

Contact details for the Principal, Board Chair, are available from the Board Secretary or school website.

When your complaint is received:

The Principal, or Board Chair, will check that your complaint has come to the correct person and then send you an acknowledgement of receipt, usually within a week. You may be asked for further details about your complaint, to assist in determining the appropriate investigation process.

The Principal will:

- Take steps to resolve the complaint in accordance with their delegated authority and the relevant school policies, including undertaking a preliminary assessment of the complaint
- More general complaints or those which are unlikely to lead to disciplinary action against a staff member will be resolved informally.
- Take appropriate advice from advisors such as NZSTA
- Report to the Board in accordance with school policy

The Board Chair will:

- Undertake a preliminary assessment of any complaints about the Principal
- More general complaints or those which are unlikely to lead to the Board taking action against the Principal will be promptly discussed with the Principal at an informal meeting, usually held within a week of receipt of the complaint, where the potential resolution can be considered.
- Take appropriate advice from advisors such as NZSTA

Subject to the privacy of the person or people concerned, we will keep you informed about the process and the expected timeframe for any investigation, and will provide you with written confirmation when the matter is concluded.