



WHAKATANE HIGH SCHOOL

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

Note on the use of these procedures:

- For the purposes of these procedures, we define Grievances and Complaints as follows:
 - **Grievance means:** an approach to the school by or on behalf of a student that expresses dissatisfaction or unhappiness with some element of the student's enrolment at the school. Grievances may relate to pastoral care, accommodation, the education programme or any other element of the student's enrolment. Grievances can be made formally or informally and are dealt with through the school's internal grievance procedures.
 - **Complaint means:** a formal approach to the Code Administrator where a student is unable to access a school's internal grievance process or is dissatisfied with the outcome of that process.
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1. Grievances Procedures

The school will develop procedures for students to express grievances and have them dealt with fairly and effectively.

These procedures will

- be easily understood and followed by students
- be clearly communicated to students and their parents
- cover a range of grievances
- provide recourse for students and their parents if they are not satisfied with how their concern was dealt with

In developing these procedures, the school will:

- apply the principles of fairness, consistency, objectivity and promptness when responding to grievances
- make the procedures easy to understand by using a visual flow chart, and step-by-step instructions, in plain English, as well as in other languages if necessary
- develop the procedures in consultation with international staff and other relevant staff
- include clear direction on who to go to for support, and where they can be found
- identify different types of grievance and the appropriate person to deal with each type of grievance
- advise international students first to approach the staff member closest to the problem
- include photographs and locations of appropriate staff for ease of identification for students
- inform students about the procedures both verbally and in writing

- make the information available to students via orientation materials, the homestay handbook and the student handbook, and to parents via pre-departure information, the international student handbook and school website.
- remind students about the procedures throughout the year in international meetings and during interviews.
- display the grievance procedure information in the international office, ESOL classroom and on the google site for International students.
- inform key staff in the school, eg guidance counsellor, deans, ESOL teachers and SLT of the international student grievances procedures.
- inform residential caregivers of the procedures in the written information provided to them, and verbally during the initial vetting interview, so they can support their student.
- let students know that they have a right to an advocate, and make sure advocates have institutional knowledge (policies, procedures, people) and can listen without prejudice to the student's point of view.
- let students know that they may bring another support person with them (such as a friend or family member or homestay parent) during any stage of the process.
- survey students, parents, staff to check comprehension of the grievance procedures, record results as evidence for self-review and update the procedures in response to feedback.

2. Complaints Process

The school will provide information to students or parents on how to submit a formal complaint to NZQA in the event they are not satisfied with how their grievances were dealt with by the school.

The school will

- display the complaints process information in key student areas around the school: International Office, ESOL room, Google Site for Internationals.
- provide information about complaints process on the school website.
- include information about the complaints process in pre-departure information, the Student Handbook and the Parent Handbook and (age appropriate) orientation materials.
- inform students of the process both verbally and in writing.
- survey international students and parents to check they understand the information provided about the complaints process and update in response to feedback received.
- inform agents of the complaints process when enrolling a student with them.
- include updates about the NZQA complaints process and the DRS in international staff meetings or PD sessions, keeping minutes or presentation notes as evidence for self-review

3. Internal Procedures for Addressing Grievances

The school will develop internal procedures for dealing with grievances by international students or their parents/legal guardians or other stakeholders.

These procedures will

- identify the key staff involved and clearly define their roles and responsibilities at each stage of the process
- Determine how the grievance and complaint procedures are communicated to students, parents and other parties
- Identify how an international student grievance, the steps taken to resolve it, and the outcome are recorded

- Align with the procedures for students to raise grievances
- Be regularly reviewed

In developing these procedures, the school will:

- apply the principles of fairness, consistency, objectivity and promptness when responding to grievances
- use staff experienced in working with international students and the requirements of the Code to develop and review the procedures
- ensure that all staff who may be approached by students with concerns, understand the school's Code responsibilities and have training in how to respond appropriately to concerns or grievances, including active listening, and applying the principles of fairness, consistency, objectivity and promptness
- identify individuals within or outside of the school who may be appropriate advocates for students who wish to talk to the school about a grievance. These will include a list of first language speakers and their contact details, for all language groups within the international student cohort
- inform students that the school has access to first language support people, should they need advocacy or support
- check that the information given to students matches with actual practice
- hold specific meetings where staff discuss student issues and concerns and identify and address these early: (International Staff meetings, Meetings with guidance counsellors, deans and/or SLT members).
- keep records of all grievances received, the steps taken to resolve them and outcomes in each case (in the student's google file and on e-school).
- communicate with parents about concerns expressed by their child and how the school is addressing these concerns.
- identify the points at which parties will be updated on progress, and how they will be informed of these updates.
- provide all parties with a written summary of the outcome of the grievance.
- check in with the student and, if necessary, their parents after the matter has been resolved to ensure they have been able to resume student life and do not need additional support.
- refer any ongoing grievance to a different (more senior) person within the school than the staff member(s) who dealt with the initial grievance.
- gather feedback on the effectiveness of the procedures and make changes as necessary as part of the school's self-review process.