



OTAGO GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

Concerns and Complaints

Rationale

We value the partnership between home and school and so encourage open communication. It is important that the concerns of students, staff, parents/caregivers/whānau and wider community are recognised and satisfactorily resolved in a fair, transparent, effective and timely manner using restorative practices wherever possible. As most concerns can be resolved informally through direct discussions, we would prefer that you come and talk through any issues confidentially with the appropriate person rather than discussing them in the community.

This provides students, staff, parents/caregivers/whānau and the wider community clear guidelines for raising and resolving concerns and complaints relating to students, staff or volunteers acting in an official capacity for the school.

Aims:

We have procedures in place to ensure that all concerns and complaints are handled appropriately. Our procedures enable us to:

1. provide a fair, transparent, and effective process for the resolution of concerns and complaints in a timely manner before they escalate into something larger.
2. achieve satisfactory outcomes for all involved.
3. take all concerns seriously, using the principles of natural and restorative justice (wherever practicable), so that everyone is treated with dignity and respect to ensure the mana of all individuals is upheld.
4. provide a physically and emotionally safe environment for all students and staff.
5. provide guidance and support to those involved in the process, as required.
6. respond to feedback and concerns constructively to preserve and enhance student and staff wellbeing as well as school and community partnerships.

Guidelines:

All parties should be prepared to openly listen to the other side of the story to avoid communication breakdowns. This process may require more than one meeting and/or may involve members of the school leadership team or outside agency support to find a satisfactory resolution.


Please discuss the issue with the right person in the first instance (see flowchart below).

1. Where possible concerns should always be raised directly with the person concerned. Please make a time with the person concerned to discuss the matter privately (Staff contact details can be found on the school's website <https://www.otagogirls.school.nz/contact>).

2. Guidance and support will be available to students and staff when appropriate or upon request.
3. Accurate records will be kept by school officials throughout the concerns and complaints process. Records will remain confidential to the parties involved but will be shared as necessary if the concern is escalated to the Principal, Board or Ombudsman.
4. You will be kept informed throughout the process and of the outcome of any investigation.
5. Police and other outside agencies will be used when appropriate.
6. Formal complaints about staff should be addressed to the principal, identifying the staff member concerned and outlining both the nature of the complaint as well as any steps taken to resolve the issue informally, if any.
7. If a complaint against a staff member is to become the subject of formal disciplinary investigation, this will be conducted in accordance with relevant employment agreement provisions and natural justice. (We would advise any staff member who has a complaint lodged against them to contact their union representative for support and guidance).
8. If the principal has been unable to resolve your concern, or your complaint is about the principal, you should write to the School Board, c/o the Chairperson, outlining the nature of your complaint and the steps you have already taken to attempt to resolve the issue. (Note: except in exceptional circumstances, the Board will not accept any complaint unless it is in writing, signed, and a reasonable attempt has been made to resolve it through the informal process.)
9. Should the Board be unable to satisfactorily resolve the complaint, you can write to the Office of the Ombudsman to have the board's process reviewed.

Please follow the process for raising concerns and complaints as outlined on our Concerns and Complaints Process Flowchart below.

Refer to: Concerns and complaints process flowchart

<p>Signed by Principal - August 2021</p> 	<p>Date to be reviewed - August 2024</p>
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Concerns and complaints process flowchart

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

