



# Blue Mountain College

## COMMUNICATIONS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

### Rationale

Blue Mountain College seeks to foster harmonious relationships that enhance teaching and learning through effective communication and to ensure that procedures are in place to deal with complaints quickly, fairly and in accordance with any legislative, regulatory or contract requirements that may exist.

### Guidelines

1. Blue Mountain College believes that the learning of students is enhanced by fostering harmonious and positive relationships between all those in the College Community.

Open and effective communication is essential to this and is promoted by:

- Welcoming enquires about College activities and involving interested people in the planning and development of such activities
- Providing regular written and oral reports on student progress
- Arranging parent/teacher meetings throughout the year on a whole school, level or an individual basis as appropriate.
- Placing material in the local newspaper
- Website - [www.bmc.school.nz](http://www.bmc.school.nz)
- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/BMCTapanui/>
- Encouraging and welcoming contact with the College and its staff (at all times but particularly if problems arise)
- Keeping parents informed about issues relating to their children and their education

Parents are encouraged to contact staff (teachers, form teachers, deans, senior staff, guidance counsellor) on matters concerning their children

2. In order to maintain good relationships between members of the school community it is essential to have systems in place to ensure that complaints are correctly, sensitively and fairly handled with an emphasis on finding outcomes satisfactory to all parties.

3. All complaints will be treated impartially on their merits. The rights of all students are central to any action that may be taken or decision that is made.

4. There are systems in place to ensure that there is effective communication between staff and parents when there are matters of concern about particular students

### Complaints Procedures

While initial complaints may be oral a formal complaint must be in writing and should be as specific as possible. The contact person for information on how to make a formal complaint is the Principal or Deputy Principal (if you are unsure how to make a complaint please ask them and they will assist you). The procedures to be followed for complaints about staff are in the personnel policy. To raise a concern or complaint about a staff member the Principal is the first point of contact (except where the complaint involves the Principal in which case the Board Chairperson is the initial contact).

As each complaint will be unique and must be treated on its merits it is not possible to prescribe exactly what must happen. Again the Principal (or other senior staff member) will provide advice. However in general the following principles for dealing with complaints should apply for any complaint:

- Complaints will be dealt with (and hopefully resolved) at the lowest level possible
- Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged as soon as possible and within 3 working days.

- Where possible complaints should be resolved by discussion, mediation or other non-confrontational approach with an emphasis on finding solutions acceptable to all parties
- All complaints will be taken seriously but if they are later shown to be malicious or mischievous action may be taken against the person laying the complaint
- Care must be taken to ensure that the rights of all parties are protected during the investigation of any complaint
- The person(s) complained about will be informed of the nature of the complaint and their rights in respect of any investigation at the earliest possible point. Where appropriate they will be advised to seek advice from an appropriate source (eg - for staff this would be their Union)
- If a written response is sought from the subject of the complaint, it must be supplied within **10 working days** of receipt of the request
- Within the constraints of confidentiality and the requirements of the Privacy Act the complainant will be informed of the nature of any action taken in respect of the complaint
- Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. All actions taken will be documented and this documentation will be kept secure and destroyed when it is no longer required
- The principles of natural justice and any relevant statutory, regulatory or contractual obligations or requirements will be adhered to at all times

The following statement is to be included in the handbook issued to all families:

*“All complaints will be dealt with in confidence, investigated and the appropriate action, determined by the nature and seriousness of the alleged incident, will be taken. During such investigations the principles of natural justice shall apply and we will try to resolve any issues at an informal level. However the College is, of course, bound by a range of legislative, regulatory and contractual obligations that may determine how we deal with any matter”.*

Approved: 2022

Review: 2025

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

See *Concerns and Complaints Procedures in Policy* file on z drive