

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a simple and transparent process for handling complaints and grievances within the Zeal Futures Secondary School (the School) community. The School leadership encourages feedback from parents, carers, students, and community members at all times. We understand some stakeholders may disagree with decisions made by the School or may be unhappy with services provided by the School from time to time. We will always aim to encourage the resolution of complaints informally, and at the lowest level wherever possible, and to ensure complaints are resolved fairly, promptly, and in accordance with relevant legal requirements.

We will always keep the process of complaints handling strictly confidential and will endeavour to provide clear and timely responses for all parties involved. The School will securely maintain records of any discussions and determinations in a complaints register for a period of seven years.

### Policy

Our School will always encourage complaint resolution in the first instance by informal means. The School staff will be very open to discussing the full range of feedback received from students, parents, carers, and community members. Zeal Futures Secondary School views complaints, grievances, compliments, and other constructive feedback as ways of creating opportunities for the School to improve its services and prevent future problems. All complaints and grievances are taken seriously, and the School aims to deal with them in a timely and effective manner.

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction related to educational or operational matters within the School, or the behaviour of a staff member, contractor, or volunteer. Complaints may be made by any member of the School community. If the complaint concerns staff behaviour, which may constitute reportable conduct, it will be addressed in accordance with the School's Child Protection Policy. Complaints should be addressed promptly and appropriately, with the aim of resolving issues informally where possible. Formal complaints are documented and handled according to the procedures outlined below.

Informal complaints should be raised by a student, parent or other stakeholder directly with the person involved however, if the complainant does not feel comfortable doing so or the matter is one where it may not be appropriate to do so, a complaint can be made to the Principal of Zeal Futures Secondary School. Any complaint about the conduct of a teacher or other staff member should be raised directly with the Principal in the first instance. Should the matter not be resolved through informal processes, the complainant may raise the matter formally with the school. A formal complaint can be made in writing to the Principal via email: [dlaarkamp@zealfutures.com.au](mailto:dlaarkamp@zealfutures.com.au)

If the complaint is about the Principal, the complaint should be made via email to the Board, sent to the CEO: [ssmith@zealfutures.com.au](mailto:ssmith@zealfutures.com.au)

### Assessing Complaints

The Principal will generally be the senior member of staff who will assess the complaint and determine whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or if a staff grievance or reportable conduct matter which are dealt with by utilising other relevant policies. Other matters the Principal will determine are the priority of the complaint in terms of urgency in regards of the matters raised.

The Principal will decide, in consultation with other senior staff and relevant stakeholders, the urgency and seriousness of the matters raised and whether the School may be required to report the matter to the Office of the Children's Guardian, Police, Department of Communities and Justice or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

### Managing a Serious or Formal Complaint

The Principal generally will manage a formal complaint by taking the following steps:

- acknowledging receipt of the complaint with the complainant within 48 hours;
- advising the complainant of the likely steps to be undertaken by the School in response to the complaint;
- if the Principal deems it is appropriate, advising all relevant parties of the complaint at the proper time during the process and providing them with an opportunity and mechanism to respond;
- collecting any additional information the School considers necessary to assess the complaint;
- the Principal, in consultation with senior staff, will make a decision about how the complaint will be resolved and advise the complainant in writing, along with any other relevant parties of the resolution decision;
- advice will then be provided of any proposed actions needing to be taken.

Due to the nature of some complaints, it is possible some steps listed above may not be taken as they are not consistent with the resolving the complaint according to certain laws or regulations. The Principal and senior staff will decide on a case by case basis, the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.

A complainant and other relevant parties the complaint is about may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the School about the complaint however, the School maintains the right to determine whether the person's preferred support person is appropriate and may not approve the attendance of a support person where they are determined by the School to be inappropriate. The support person will not be an active member of the complaint resolution or have decision making ability, but will be available to support and assist the relevant parties throughout the process.

### Related Documents

- Education Act NSW (1990)
- Education Regulation NSW (2017)
- NSW Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools Manual NSW Education Standards Authority September 2023

Approved by Zeal Futures Learning Board of Directors on: 19<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

All applicable legislative requirements have been thoroughly reviewed and integrated into the development of this policy. These legal provisions are systematically reassessed and incorporated during each policy review to ensure ongoing compliance.

### Document History

| Version | Prepared By | Approved By        | Date       | Description      |
|---------|-------------|--------------------|------------|------------------|
| 1.0     | D. Laarkamp | Board of Directors | 19.02.2026 | Initial creation |