



# Te Aroha College Protected Disclosures Policy

## Rationale and Purpose

Te Aroha College is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity and accountability in all of its operations. This policy provides a framework for employees, students, and other members of the school community to report any concerns regarding serious wrongdoing within the school. The Protected Disclosures Act 2000 (New Zealand) provides protection for individuals who make disclosures of serious wrongdoing in good faith. This policy aims to ensure that individuals feel safe and supported when making disclosures and that all reports are handled appropriately and confidentially.

## Definitions

**Protected Disclosure:** A report made by an employee, student, or other member of the school community about serious wrongdoing, as defined by the Protected Disclosures Act 2000.

**Serious Wrongdoing:** Includes but is not limited to:

- Unlawful, corrupt, or irregular use of public funds or resources.
- Conduct that poses a serious risk to public health or safety, or the health or safety of any individual.
- Conduct that poses a serious risk to the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation, and detection of offences and the right to a fair trial.
- Conduct that poses a serious risk to the environment.
- Any criminal offense.
- Any conduct that is oppressive, improperly discriminatory, or grossly negligent, or that constitutes gross mismanagement.

## Procedures

### 1. Making a Protected Disclosure

1.1 Any employee, student, or member of the school community who wishes to make a protected disclosure should do so in writing. The disclosure should be addressed to the Principal or, if the disclosure involves the Principal, to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

1.2 The written disclosure should include:

- The nature of the serious wrongdoing.
- The name(s) of the person(s) involved.



- Any evidence or information supporting the disclosure.
- The date(s) and time(s) of the alleged wrongdoing.

## **2. Handling and Investigation of Disclosures**

2.1 Upon receiving a protected disclosure, the Principal (or Chairperson of the Board of Trustees) will acknowledge receipt of the disclosure in writing within five working days.

2.2 The Principal (or Chairperson of the Board of Trustees) will assess the disclosure to determine whether it constitutes serious wrongdoing under the Protected Disclosures Act 2000.

2.3 If the disclosure is deemed to constitute serious wrongdoing, the Principal (or Chairperson of the Board of Trustees) will initiate an investigation. The investigation will be conducted promptly, fairly, and confidentially.

2.4 The person making the disclosure will be informed of the progress of the investigation and its outcome, subject to any legal or confidentiality constraints.

## **3. Protection for Whistleblowers**

3.1 Te Aroha College will take all reasonable steps to protect the identity of the whistleblower. Information identifying the whistleblower will not be disclosed unless:

- The whistleblower consents in writing.
- Disclosure is essential to the investigation.
- Disclosure is required by law.

3.2 Any person who retaliates against a whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal for employees or other appropriate actions for students or other members of the school community.

## **4. Support for Whistleblowers**

4.1 Te Aroha College will provide appropriate support for whistleblowers, which may include access to counselling services and legal advice.

4.2 Whistleblowers are encouraged to seek advice and support from their union or professional association.

## **5. False or Malicious Disclosures**

5.1 Making a false or malicious disclosure is a serious offence. Any employee or student who makes a false or malicious disclosure will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal for employees or other appropriate actions for students.



## 6. Review of the Policy

6.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees to ensure it remains effective and compliant with the Protected Disclosures Act 2000 and any other relevant legislation.

## Conclusion

Te Aroha College is committed to fostering an environment of openness, accountability, and integrity. By providing a clear process for making protected disclosures and ensuring protection for whistleblowers, the school aims to maintain high ethical standards and address any serious wrongdoing promptly and effectively.

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Ratified: February 2024  
Date of next review: February 2027