

NŌNA TE AO COMPLAINTS POLICY

Version	Approved By	Date Approved	Next Review Date
2.0	Trust Board	19 March 2026	19 March 2029

PURPOSE

Nōna Te Ao is dedicated to providing a fair, transparent, and accessible process for resolving complaints related to service provision. This policy ensures Nōna Te Ao Trust handles complaints fairly, transparently, and in accordance with tikanga Māori.

We value feedback and are committed to resolving concerns constructively while prioritizing safety, clarity, and continuous improvement.

SCOPE

This policy applies to complaints about Trust services, staff, volunteers, Trustees, or decisions. It covers complaints from rangatahi, whānau, partners, funders, or the public.

OUR VALUES

The Trust recognises the following values that form the basis of this policy.

- **Whakapapa** We honour our intergenerational responsibility to nurture, uphold and reinvest knowledge, experience, and capability so each generation is better equipped to contribute, lead, and succeed. Within the context of this policy, the Trust acknowledges that information and stories are intrinsically linked to whakapapa and therefore need to be protected with care.
- **Arohanui** We care for our rangatahi and their /whānau and recognise the potential, shaped by lived experience of regional life.
- **Whanaungatanga** We build strong, trusting relationships that enable honest kōrero and role modelling for rangatahi. Within the context of this policy whanaungatanga reflects the Trust's aspiration to connect with others who can support the vision "Rangatahi Māori from Te Tairāwhiti are elevated and empowered to explore, pioneer and excel in all fields", through capturing stories and data to help strengthen the pathway forward.
- **Rangatiratanga** We empower rangatahi to create their own pathways and grow as leaders in their chosen fields. Within the context of this policy the Trust shows leadership in terms of keeping the pathway safe for rangatahi and whānau to share information, stories and ideas.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Accessibility

The complaints process is clearly communicated to staff and service users through written policies, handouts, and online resources. The process is easy to access and understand,

designed to be accessible to all, ensuring that no one is disadvantaged by language or other barriers.

Fairness

All parties are treated fairly and given opportunity to be heard. Complaints are handled promptly and effectively.

Timeliness

Complaints are addressed promptly and without unnecessary delay. Complaints will be acknowledged within five working days, with a resolution aimed within 30 working days, depending on complexity. Any delays will be communicated, and expectations will be managed clearly.

Confidentiality

All complaints are treated confidentially to safeguard the privacy of both the complainant and any involved parties. Only relevant personnel will have access to complaint details. Complaints are handled with appropriate confidentiality and respect for privacy.

No Retaliation

No person will face negative consequences for making a complaint in good faith. Complainants, staff, and service users are protected from any retaliation or negative consequences for raising concerns.

Safe Reporting Environment

Individuals including rangatahi, whether front-line facilitators, middle management, executive staff, or board members, can raise complaints in a supportive environment without fear of repercussions. Both complainants and staff may access external support or mediation if needed, ensuring fairness and safety throughout the resolution process.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

This policy is informed by and aligns with the following legislation and standards:

- **Privacy Act 2020** – Requires confidential handling of complaint information and protection of personal information
- **Human Rights Act 1993** – Establishes the right to make complaints without discrimination or retaliation
- **Protected Disclosures Act 2000** – Protects individuals who report serious wrongdoing from retaliation
- **Charities Act 2005** – Establishes accountability requirements for charitable organizations
- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi** – Guides culturally responsive complaint handling processes

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

Complaints can be made (in te reo Māori, English, or NZ Sign Language):

- In writing (email or letter)
- By phone
- In person
- Through a support person or advocate

For Rangatahi

You can make a complaint directly, through the kura, or with support from whānau or another trusted person. Your voice matters and you will be listened to with respect.

Contact the Chair at nonateaocharitabletrust@gmail.com or 020 4153 3443, or any Trustee if the complaint involves the Chair.

All complaints

Please provide:

- Your name and contact details
- Details of the complaint and any relevant context
- Any relevant dates or documentation
- What outcome you are seeking

Anonymous complaints will be considered but may be harder to investigate fully.

COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESS

Step 1: Acknowledgment

The complaint will be acknowledged within five working days. You will be advised who is handling your complaint and expected timeframes.

Step 2: Assessment

The complaint will be assessed to determine if it can be resolved informally or requires formal investigation. For serious complaints, an independent person may be appointed to investigate.

Step 3: Investigation

The complaint will be investigated fairly, with all relevant parties given opportunity to provide information. Staff are trained to handle complaints sensitively and effectively. Information will be gathered to understand what occurred.

Step 4: Resolution

A decision will be made based on the information gathered. You will be advised of the outcome and any actions to be taken.

Most complaints will be resolved within 30 working days. Complex matters may take longer - you will be kept informed of progress and any delays will be communicated clearly.

ESCALATION PROCESS

Front-line facilitators or staff may escalate complaints to middle management or the executive team if the issue is not resolved at their level. Serious or unresolved complaints may be raised to the Board or referred to external mediation if necessary.

SERIOUS COMPLAINTS

Complaints involving child safety, serious misconduct, serious ethical or legal concerns, or illegal activity will be escalated immediately to the full Trust Board and may be referred to Police, Oranga Tamariki, or other relevant external authorities.

The complainant and subject of the complaint will be kept informed as appropriate, while maintaining confidentiality and safety.

EXTERNAL RESOLUTION

External Mediation

If a complaint cannot be resolved internally, Nōna Te Ao may seek external mediation or resolution to ensure fairness and transparency.

Referral to External Bodies

In cases where external oversight is necessary (e.g., involving serious ethical or legal concerns), the complaint may be referred to relevant external authorities such as Charities Services, WorkSafe New Zealand, the Privacy Commissioner, or other appropriate agencies.

IF YOU ARE UNHAPPY WITH THE OUTCOME

If you are not satisfied with how your complaint was handled:

- You can request the Trust Board review the decision
- You can contact external agencies such as Charities Services
- You can seek independent advice or mediation

LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

The Trust will use complaints as opportunities to improve services. We are committed to using complaints and feedback to improve service delivery.

Data Collection

All complaints are documented, including the nature of the complaint, steps taken to resolve it, and the outcome.

Analysis and Learning

Regular reviews of complaints data are conducted by the executive team to identify trends or recurring issues. Complaints and outcomes will be reviewed regularly to identify areas for improvement. This information is used to improve service delivery, inform staff training, and adjust policies.

Feedback Loops

Where appropriate, complainants and staff will be informed of any changes made as a result of their complaint, ensuring that they feel heard and contributing to an open culture of continuous improvement.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Chair and CE

- Receive and acknowledge complaints promptly
- Ensure fair and timely investigation
- Keep complainants informed of progress
- Report serious complaints to the Board immediately

Trust Board

- Oversee the complaints process
- Review serious or unresolved complaints
- Ensure this policy is followed and implemented
- Review complaints data to identify systemic issues See also: Data Privacy & Service User Rights Policy.

All Staff and Volunteers

- Handle complaints sensitively and guide service users in raising concerns
- Escalate serious complaints appropriately
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the complaints process

You have the right to ask for a copy of any personal information we hold about you, and to ask for it to be corrected if you think it is wrong. If you'd like to ask for a copy of your information, or to have it corrected, please contact us.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries about this policy, please contact:

Board Chair: nonateaocharitabletrust@gmail.com

This policy is available on the Trust website at www.nonateao.co.nz