



English Teaching College
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Self-review reports on complaints and critical incidents for English Teaching College 2024 - 2025

Complaints

A complaint is defined as 'an objection to something that is unfair, unacceptable, or otherwise not up to normal standards'.

Retrieved from <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/complaint>

ETC's Student Complaint Process - Grievance Procedures, are found in the Student Handbook. This is provided to all students studying at ETC. The Student Handbook is also on the ETC website.

Grievance Procedures are also available in every classroom and student communal area so they are easily accessible for every student to read.

Students are advised that in the event of wishing to make a complaint, they must first follow ETC's Grievance Procedures. If the complaint is not resolved by ETC then the student can make a complaint to NZQA for Code breaches or to Study Complaints Ngā Amuamu Taura for contractual and financial disputes.

Grievance Procedures are also available in the Staff Handbook. Staff are advised that if they are not in a position to handle the student's grievance then they escalate the complaint upwards so that the grievance/complaint is dealt with in a manner that is appropriate to the complainant.

The procedures are easily understandable and students are advised at orientation to seek help immediately if they have any concerns, no matter how small the problem may seem. ETC has first language support for many languages on-site or by Teams from other campuses. These languages include; Japanese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Han, Thai, Farsi, Arabic, German, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Swedish, Malay, and Vietnamese.

If a student makes a formal complaint these are given priority and students are given a timeline of how their complaint will be managed. Where possible, ETC uses culturally appropriate natural justice aligned to the seriousness of the complaint.

To date ETC is satisfied with the effectiveness of its grievance procedures in practice. Student concerns are generally rectified and dealt with easily when they are small in nature. It is always ETC's intention that any student grievances are acted upon at any early stage before being escalated to the status of a formal complaint. In the case of more serious complaints, resulting in the disciplinary process, ETC's decisions are underpinned by ETC policies and best practice. These are understandable by the parents or agents representing the student. While students are offered the option of proceeding with a formal complaint it was found that students may decline this option as they do not wish to cause 'trouble'. ETC recognises that there may be a cultural component to this so takes cultural considerations into account when dealing with both informal and formal complaints.

A review of ETC's student feedback systems reported that ETC has effective means of obtaining informal feedback from students but acknowledged that ETC does not have a single repository of complaints. Instead complaints are kept by the individual managers dealing with complaints. Work is being undertaken to have a single repository for complaints whereby informal grievances may be stored, captured, collated, analysed to redress any concerns. Upon completion of the framework ETC will provide PD to its staff to ensure consistency in capturing data and information for reporting purposes.

ETC recognises that reporting requirements for the annual Code attestation now necessitate that changes are made to provide breakdowns into the number, nature and outcome of complaints, including the learner's experience. The new Informal Complaints Framework will capture information around informal complaints for annual self-review and reporting purposes. However, ETC recognises that it has to balance the requirements of the Privacy Act in providing disaggregated information by diverse learner groups so as not to identify individuals.

Aligned to knowing the category of an informal grievance is the opportunity to provide professional development for staff and learning topics to be included in the orientation programme for students. In this way ETC is proactive in filling any gaps in knowledge to prevent any potential areas of concern.

Critical Incidents

ETC defines a critical incident using ISANA NZ's definition:

'A tragic or traumatic event or situation affecting a student/students which has the potential to cause unusually strong emotional reactions in the school/campus community'.

Retrieved from https://isana.org.au/docs/2014/Seow_MaryAnn_NOTES.pdf

This definition encapsulates how a critical incident may be viewed by students and staff at ETC.

ETC recognises the importance of continuously reviewing its processes and procedures around preparing for critical incidents and emergencies. Preparedness planning during 2024 – 25 included:

- First aid training given to more staff so that sufficient certified first aiders are on the staff to ensure first aid cover on campus. Most school or classroom Learning Outside The Classroom (LOT) trips also have first aid cover.
- Reviewing the Critical Incident Policy with the inclusion of the Auckland ETC campus.
- Cloud based access to learner and staff information re emergency contacts so if one campus is affected in a natural disaster then information is available for other campuses or off campus. Staff emergency contact information can also be accessed off-site.
- Regular fire and earthquake drills are held on each campus.
- Establishment of a Health and Safety committee with representatives from all campuses meeting to discuss any issues.
- Continued use of PeopleSafe cloud based system to record accidents and emergencies and follow up by manager.
- Maintenance of confidential files within SMS to record pastoral care issues and follow up.
- Strengthening of external stakeholder community links for referrals of staff and students to services.
- Continuation of contract with EAP to allow staff to access confidential counselling services – personal and professional situations.

With the increase in severe weather related events aligned to global warming ETC is guided by any city/regional emergency weather alerts to close campuses. If sufficient notice period is given then students are told in class that their ETC campus will be closed immediately or the following day. Where

an unexpected weather event necessitates closure of an ETC campus without prior notice then all students are advised via text and social media that the campus will be closed for the day.

ETC has a handbook relating to critical incident management. This is updated as and when required by the Health and Safety committee or the Executive Team to ensure a high level of preparedness around critical incident management ensuring staff and students were kept safe and informed.

ETC provides information on how students can access emergency and urgent assistance in the Student Handbook which is provided to all students studying at ETC. This is also available on the ETC website. Emergency instructions are also available in different languages in classrooms and student spaces. All students and staff are provided with the ETC 24/7 emergency phone number in case of student or campus emergencies. Emergency contact details are kept for all students so that in the event of an emergency next of kin/emergency contacts may be contacted. Emergency contact details are available digitally from home computers by management and administration staff and managers' phones in case of an emergency where buildings cannot be accessed.

ETC provides information on how staff can access emergency and urgent assistance in the Staff Handbook and staff are also advised of critical incident procedures at their initial induction. Staff members are advised on how to handle emergencies in the classroom and what protocols to follow so that any emergency is handled in a timely manner.

Currently ETC uses PeopleSafe – a digital system which all staff can access and record critical incidents. This sends an email to members of the Executive Team, the Health and Safety representative and the Health and Safety consultant who review the incident and decide what action is required. The procedure is reviewed afterwards to see if any further action is required resulting in a procedural review. PeopleSafe keeps a record of how critical incidents are resolved. Depending upon the incident, additional information is found in communications or in the Pastoral Care confidential folder.

ETC is satisfied with its management of critical incidents in practice. Staff understand and follow best practice around the required procedures. Management is always informed quickly and external advice is available and/or sought as required. First aid kits are kept fully stocked and stocktakes are regularly undertaken. RAM documents are filled out prior to LOTC and First Aid kits are taken on those excursions which are out of range of immediate medical care.

The Executive Team and Management are aware of local, national and international incidents and natural disasters and will support staff and learners as needed. The campus Director of Studies will support staff to respond appropriately should these incidents affect ETC's learners.

Following any critical incidents staff will meet as a team to debrief and discuss what went well, where things could have been done better and where changes to procedures are required.

To date the current system has worked well at ETC but it is recognised that reporting requirements for the annual Code attestation now necessitate that changes are made to provide breakdowns into the number, nature and outcome of critical incidents, including the learner's experience. ETC is undertaking a review of its reporting procedures and is implementing a Critical Incident Framework for capturing information for annual reporting purposes around critical incidents. In this way ETC will be in a position to identify common themes and issues. However, ETC recognises that it has to balance the requirements of the Privacy Act in providing disaggregated information by diverse learner groups which may identify individuals.

Upon completion of the Critical Incident Framework ETC will provide PD to its staff to ensure consistency in capturing data and information for reporting purposes