

TOKOROA CENTRAL SCHOOL

NAG 1
NEG 5

SCHOOL POLICY: CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE SCHOOL BY A PARENT/ CAREGIVER

Rationale

A concern/complaint may be the result of actions of speech or deed, construed by parents or a member of the community to be detrimental to the child or children at the school.

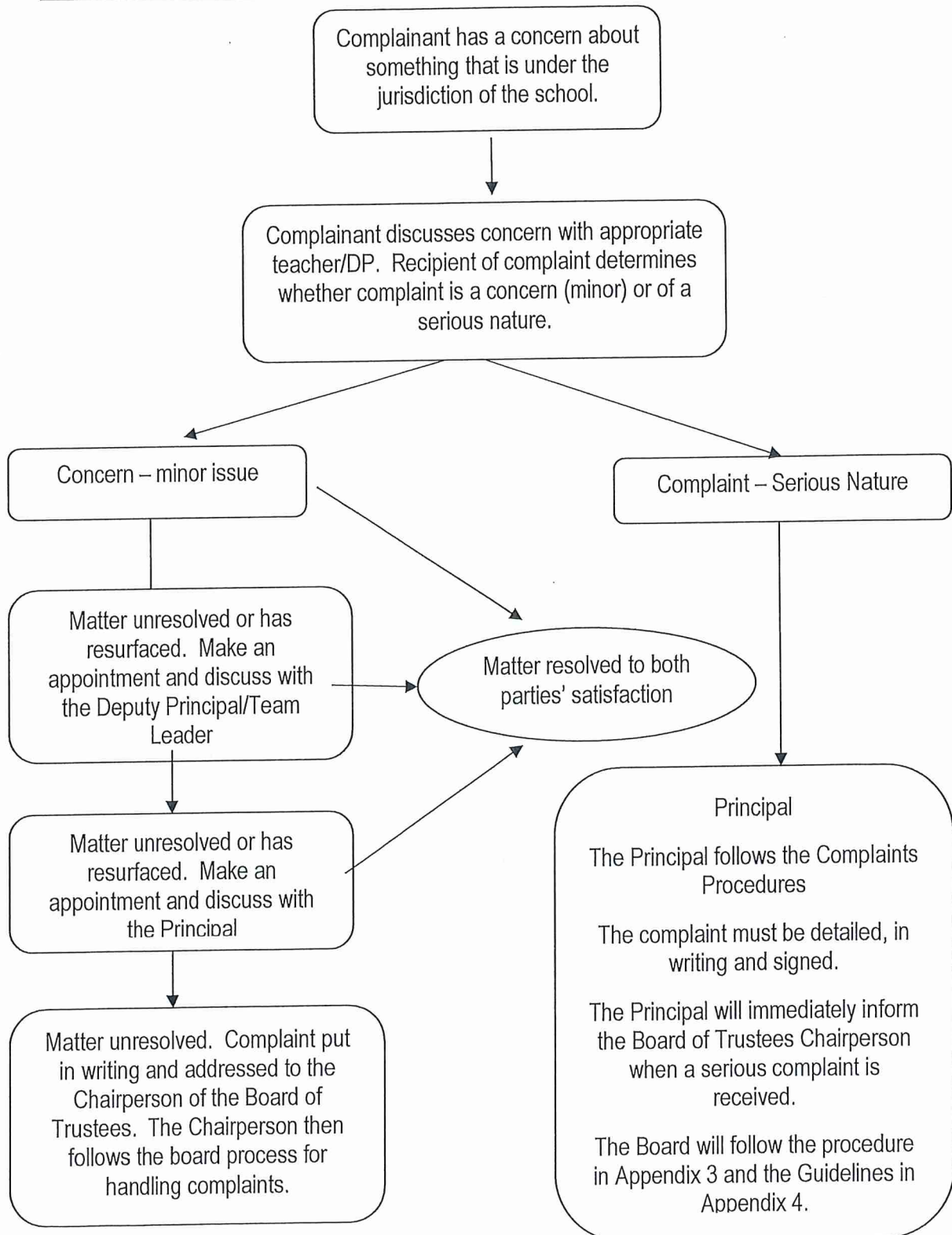
Purpose

To ensure all complaints are handled in a fair and just manner procedure will be along the following lines:

1. Where concerns by parents/caregivers cannot be resolved by the member of staff and parent/caregiver concerned, then the concerns shall be referred to the School Principal.
2. In the first instance, the Principal will listen to the concerns of the parent/caregiver before approaching the staff member concerned. It may be appropriate that the Deputy Principal be advised of the relevant details, and be present when the Principal talks with the staff member. Once details are known, the Principal is expected to get in touch with the parent/caregiver, outlining the intended course of action or actual outcomes. If the parent/caregiver so wishes, the matter may be taken further, and if so, the Principal will inform the staff member.
3. Where the member of staff is approached initially, they may state that they wish the matter to be continued with the Principal present.
4. Often, but not always, a meeting will be held with the parents/caregivers, staff member and Principal all present. It may also be appropriate for the Deputy Principal to be present at this meeting. The member of staff must have the opportunity to respond.
5. If the parent/caregiver is not happy with the outcome, the Principal will insist that if the matter is to be followed through, the complainant has two courses of action available:
 - (a) to call another meeting of those present on the first occasion.
 - (b) if the parent/caregiver is not happy with the outcome, a formal complaint in writing may follow. This is sent to the Principal.
6. When a formal letter of complaint is sent to the School, the Board of Trustees must be notified within 24 hours. The letter must be redirected to the Principal, who will follow the matter through and take it back to the Board of Trustees with a recommendation. Should the Board of Trustees receive a letter of complaint, a photocopy of this letter must be directed to the School Principal immediately.
7. It is at this stage that the Board of Trustees becomes involved.
8. If legal or further action is to be taken, the School Trustees Association should be called in.

No contact will be made with the public or the media, except through the Board of Trustees member designated to do this.

Tokoroa Central School Complaints Procedure for Students/Parents/Caregivers/Staff Making a Complaint



Notes

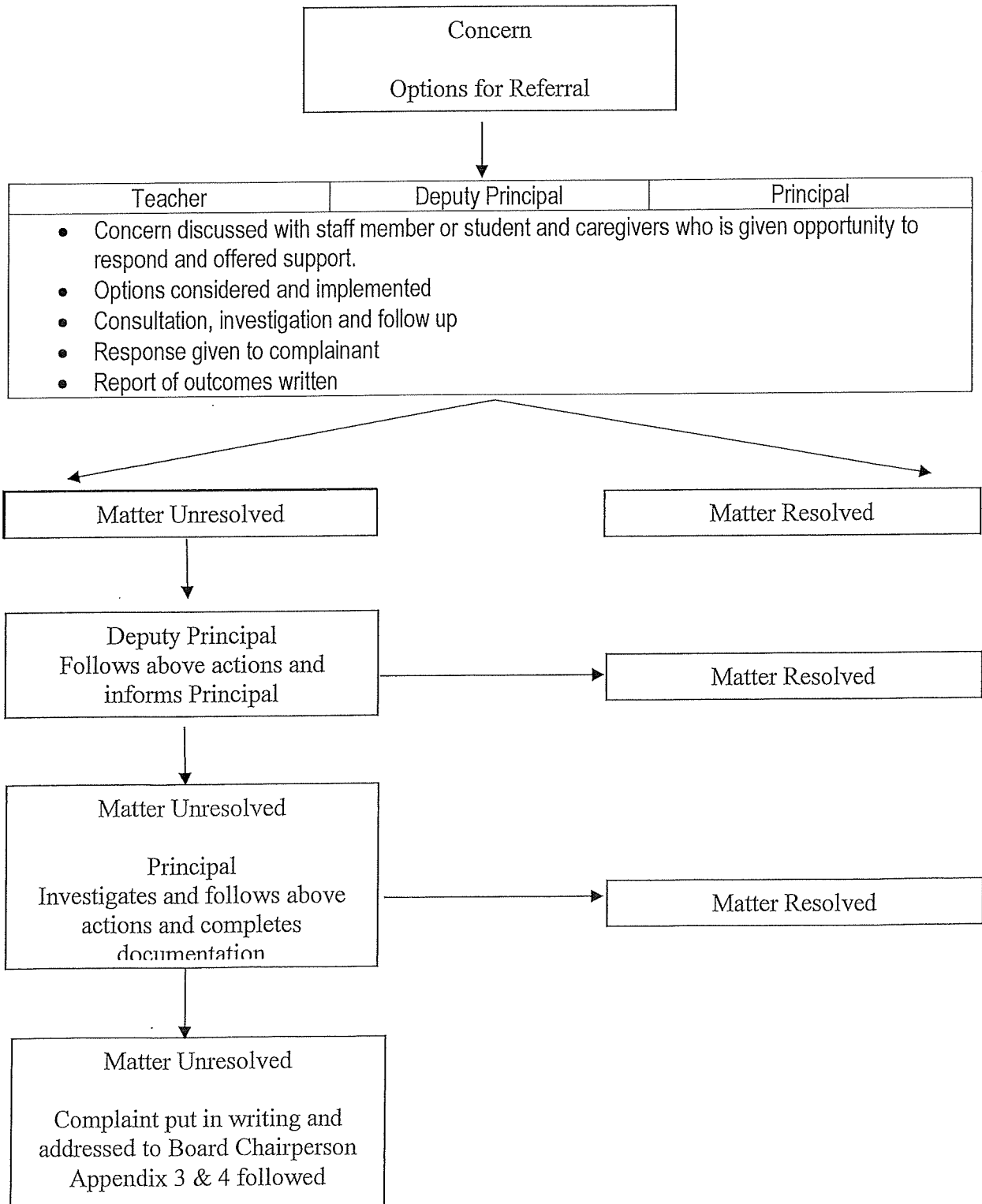
1. While minor issues may be able to be discussed in a quick informal chat with a staff member, the preferred option is to arrange a time to discuss the matter in order that both parties give the matter proper attention.
2. If the complaints procedure has not been followed the board will normally return any letter of complaint to the writer and ask that they follow the procedure first.
3. All parties to a complaint may bring a support person to any meeting where the issue is to be discussed.

**Tokoroa Central School
Detailed Procedure (Internal) for Dealing with Complaints**

Teacher or Deputy Principal receives a written or verbal complaint

Teacher or DP asks if this is a:

1. Concern – may be written or verbal but are not expected to have disciplinary, legal or industrial consequences.
2. Complaint – may have disciplinary, legal, industrial consequences. These must be referred immediately to the Principal.



Tokoroa Central School
Guidelines for Board of Trustees
In Dealing with Serious Complaints

1. Issues of a serious nature, e.g. allegations of physical abuse, gross, serious or sustained poor performance, dishonesty, verbal abuse, harassment, undermining Board policy, etc may require a special meeting of the board to be called.
2. All letters addressed to the chairperson of the board are for the whole board. The chairperson cannot decide independently as to what action will be taken unless delegated authority to do so by the board.
3. Subject to agreement between the parties resolution or dismissal of the complaint will not occur before all the information is at hand.
4. Conflict of interest will be determined on a number of issues, including the relationship to anyone involved in the complaint.
5. The board must exercise caution when dealing with complaints regarding staff, particularly in relation to confidentiality and processes to ensure the principles of natural justice are met. It is advisable to contact the regional NZSTA personnel/industrial adviser in such cases. The board will need to consider the relevant staff disciplinary policies, employment agreements and expert advice from the NZSTA adviser.
6. In the case of complaints against staff the Board's insurance company should be informed of possible future actions.
7. The board recognises that not all complainants will be satisfied with the outcome of a complaint. After one reconsideration, if the board is confident of its decision, it will refuse to enter into further discussion/correspondence. In making such a decision the NZSTA helpdesk can assist by giving an objective assessment of a board's processes in dealing with the complaint.
8. A complaint regarding lack of compliance in relation to an agreed complaint resolution will be treated as a serious matter and actioned with urgency as a new complaint rather than as a reconsideration of the previous issue.
9. Trustees need to be clear in their mind of the difference between a complaint they have as a parent (i.e. regarding their own child) and a complaint they have as a trustee (e.g. obstruction of staff preventing them carrying out board work.) In the first instance they are required to follow the normal procedures and are excluded from decision making due to conflict of interest. The latter case is dealt with as an agenda item for the whole board (possibly with the public excluded.)
10. Trustees need to be clear in their actions when a parent, community member or student makes an approach to them directly about a concern &/or complaint. The trustee must advise the complainant of the correct procedures to follow and direct them to these procedures.

Tokoroa Central School Complaints Procedure for Board of Trustees Receiving a Complaint

Letter of complaint is acknowledged by the Chairperson and the complainant advised of the next steps in the board process. The letter becomes part of the correspondence that will be dealt with at the next board meeting while the public is excluded. If the complaints procedure (for concerns) has not been followed the board will normally return any letter of complaint to the writer and ask that they follow the procedure first.

Letter is tabled at board meeting (with the public excluded) and referred to relevant parties for reporting back to the board. The Board decides the appropriate response pathway or directs it back to Appendix 1. They decide whether to deal with the matter as a whole or appoint a committee to investigate and recommend to the board.

At the meeting of the board/committee the reports are received and the parties may be invited to speak to their complaint or answer questions. The board/committee considers the evidence and/or information and comes to a decision or recommendation.

Depending on the delegated powers of the committee either they or the board as a whole come to a resolution as to how the board will respond and/or what action will be taken.

The board's response is communicated to the parties to the complaint. This may be managed either publicly or confidentially depending on the case.

Any of the parties may request the board to reconsider their decision – however normally for such a reconsideration to take place new information that would have been relevant to the board's deliberations must be produced.

9. Should the complaint be about the School Principal and cannot be resolved, the complaint should then be referred, in writing, to the Board of Trustees.
10. The staff member concerned is entitled to Union representation.
11. In all cases of complaints, a complaint record sheet is to be filled out.

PRINCIPAL

Dated: 22.2.21

Reviewed:

BOARD CHAIRPERSON

Dated: 22.2.21

Reviewed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M. J. ...', is written over the 'Reviewed:' line for the Board Chairperson. The signature is cursive and extends upwards and to the right.