

Complaints from Parents/ Caregivers

Procedure (Initial Complaints)

NAG 3.8

Overview

This procedure is designed to help parents and guardians understand what to do if they are concerned about some aspect of the school. The school encourages open communication and prefers that you come to talk through a problem rather than discuss it in the community. It is our job to be fair and listen to your concerns, but this involves your support as well. Prompt action and fair measures are in the interests of all staff, caregivers and students.

Guidelines: What do I do if I have a concern?

1. If the matter involves the classroom programme or a teacher, write a note or telephone the school with a view to making a time to discuss the concern with the teacher. The staff member concerned may not be able to talk to you when you approach them, so it is best to make a time when you are both free.
2. Indicate before the discussion what the concern is about.
3. Talk with the relevant staff member about the issue and be prepared to listen to their point of view.
4. Provide feedback to the teacher as to whether you were satisfied or not, to ensure the problem is settled.

What if I do this but the problem is not solved, or if the concern does not involve a particular teacher?

(It may be that if your concern has not been addressed or resolved then consideration may be given to moving to the next stage – a complaint in writing)

1. If you are not satisfied with the result of your speaking to the teacher concerned or feel they may not be able to help, make a time to see the Principal. Write down the details of your complaint and the steps you have taken to remedy the situation.
2. The complaint will, in the first instance, be dealt with by the Principal
3. The Principal may refer the matter back to back to teachers, senior staff or to the Board of Trustees.
4. If the matter has not been resolved by the Principal you may then write to the board of Trustees outlining your concern.
5. If your complaint relates to the Principal or Board of Trustees you should write to the Chairperson of the Board outlining your concerns in detail, including your name and contact telephone number.

Useful Tips:

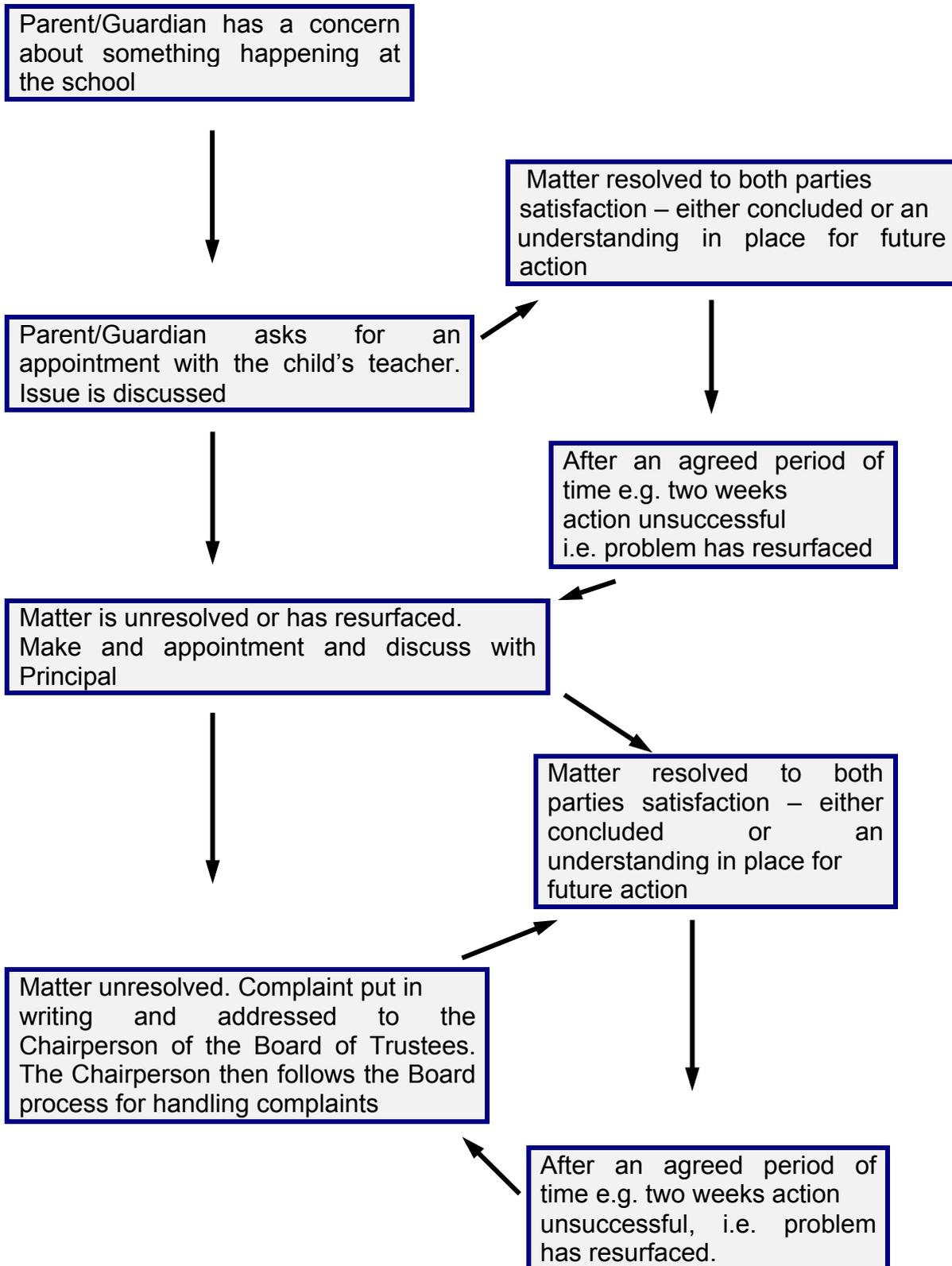
- Approach a teacher with your concern when they are not teaching
- Problems should not be discussed in front of children – either at school or at home
- We ask that staff show respect for you and ask that you show respect for them
- The first person you should see regarding your concern is the person closest to the problem
- There are usually two sides to a story
- If you have concerns regarding a child you must approach the school NOT the child. We will only know of your concern if you tell us

Conclusion:

The Principal, Staff and Board of Trustees will endeavour to resolve the concern/issues to the mutual satisfaction of all parties.

Complaints Procedure for Southland Adventist Christian School

This procedure will provide Board members, all staff, students and caregivers with clear and consistent procedures and guidelines for the making and handling of complaints



Complaints from Parents/ Caregivers

Procedure (serious complaints)
NAG 3.8

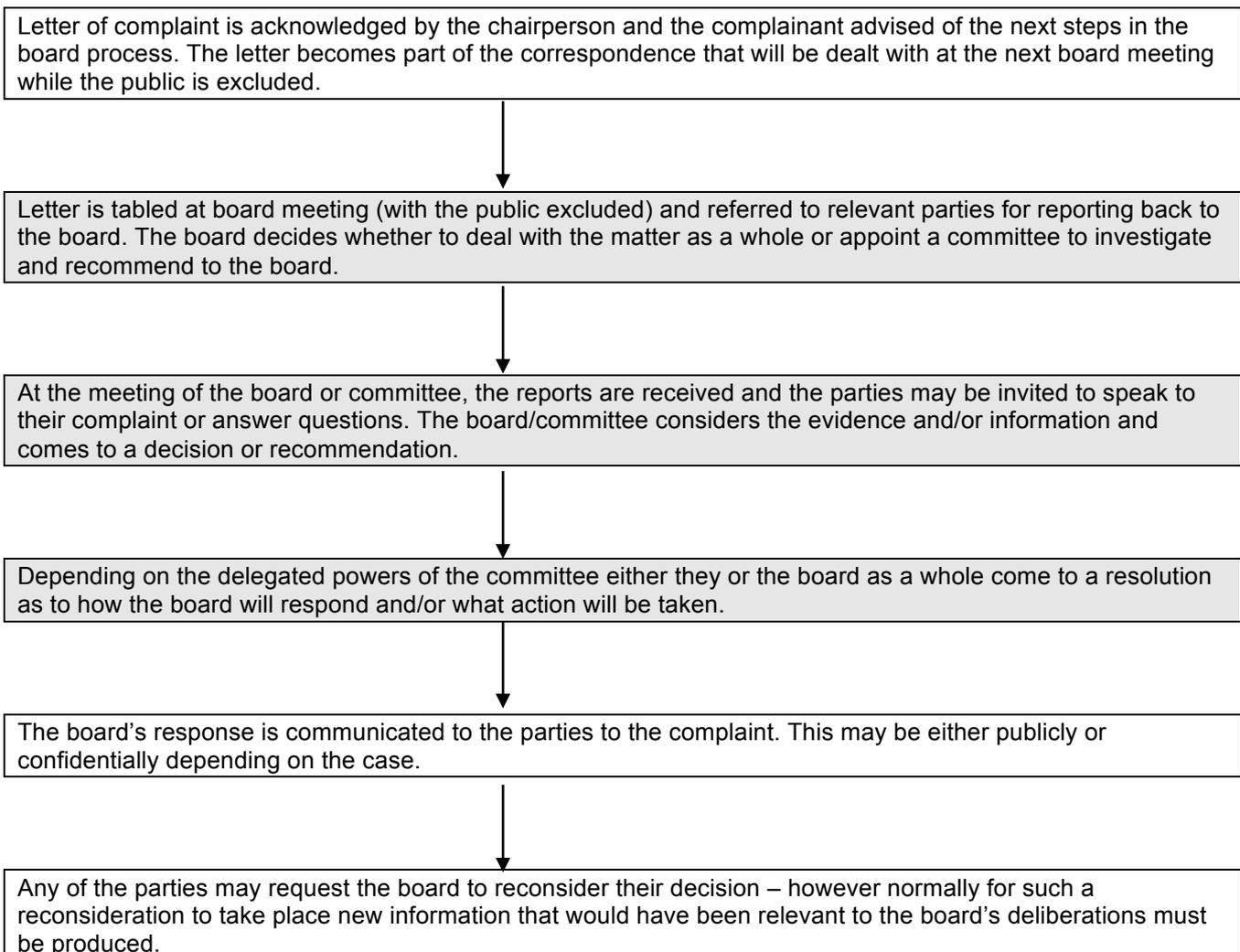


Education — Empowered by Christ

Stage One: School Community Process

1. While minor issues may be able to be discussed in a quick informal chat with a staff member, normally in order for both parties to give the matter full attention, arranging a time to discuss the matter is the preferred option.
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. The board needs to formally receive a complaint in order to act on it. If a complaint is serious enough for the board to deal with, it is serious enough to be put in writing. If you have concerns about expressing the matter clearly in writing, please discuss the matter in confidence with the board chair (or another delegated board member) to enable them to assist you with this.
4. All parties to a complaint may bring a support person to any meeting where the issue is to be discussed.

Board of Trustees Complaints Procedure for Southland Adventist Christian School



– shaded area denotes “public excluded” meetings

Stage Two: Board Process

1. Issues of a serious matter, such as allegations of physical abuse, may require a special meeting of the board.
2. All letters addressed to the chair of the board are for the *whole board*. The chair cannot decide independently what action will be taken unless the board has delegated them authority to do so.
3. Resolution or dismissal of the complaint must not be discussed before all the information is to hand.
4. Conflict of interest will be determined on a number of issues, including whether the complaint involves the actions of any trustee.
5. The board must exercise caution when dealing with complaints regarding staff, particularly in relation to confidentiality and the principles of natural justice. 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. The board recognises that not all complainants will be satisfied with the outcome of a complaint. After *one* reconsideration, the board, if it is confident of its decision, will refuse to enter into further discussion or correspondence. The NZSTA helpdesk can help with such a decision by giving an objective assessment of a board's processes in dealing with the complaint.
7. 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.
8. Trustees need to be clear in their mind of the difference between a complaint they have as a parent (that is, regarding their own child) and a complaint they have as a trustee (for example, 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).