

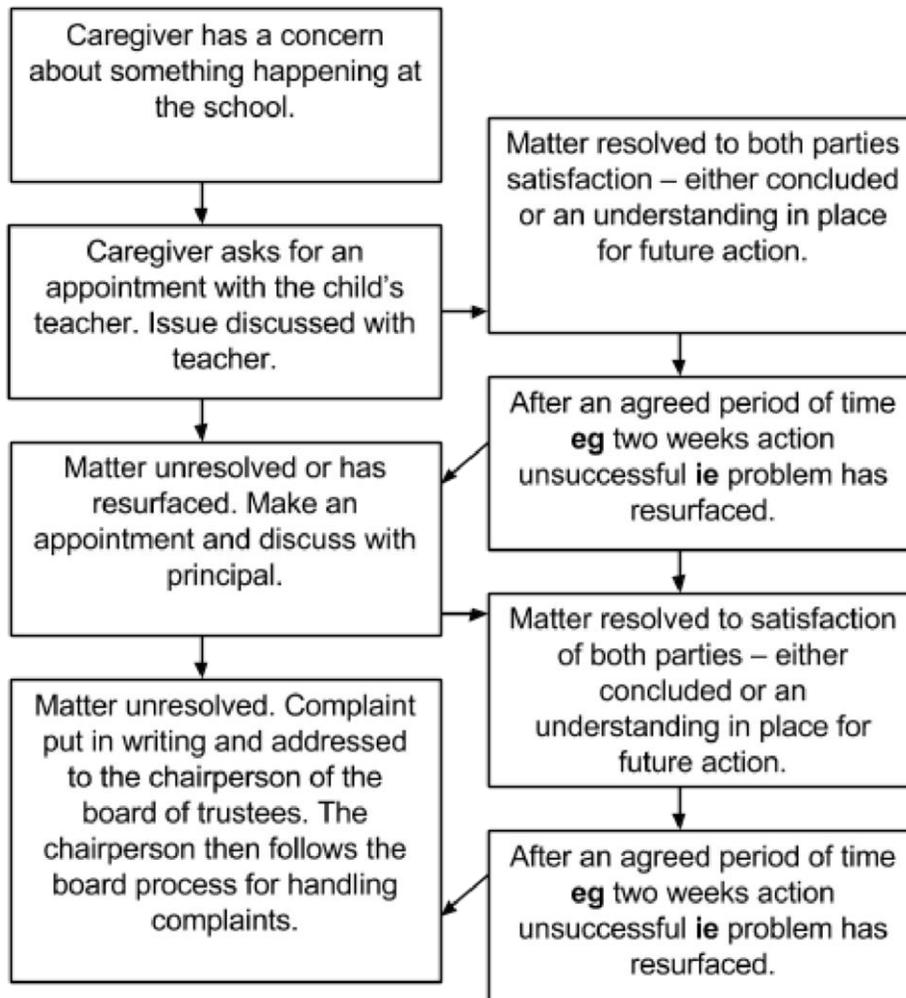
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## COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Board will deal with all complaints in a way that is:

- (a) Fair and reasonable;
- (b) Timely as reasonably practicable (refer procedure chart);
- (c) Transparent;
- (d) Accessible;
- (e) Consistent;
- (f) Mutually communicative; and
- (g) Compliant with the Board's legal obligations, School Charter and School policies and procedures.



**Complaints Procedure for Chelsea School**

## Stage One: School Community Process

### Notes:

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.

## Chelsea School Board of Trustees Complaints Procedure

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.

Letter is tabled at board meeting (with the public excluded) and referred to relevant parties for reporting back to the board. The board decides 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 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.

- highlighted area denotes "public excluded meetings"

## Stage Two: Board Process

### Guidelines:

1. Issues of a serious matter, **eg** allegations of physical abuse, 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 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 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 contracts, 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, 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.
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 [**ie** regarding their own child] and a complaint they have as a trustee [**eg** 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].