

5.1 Child Protection Policy

This policy outlines the board's commitment to child protection and recognises the important role and responsibility of all our staff in the protection of children. It includes the board's expectations when child abuse is reported or suspected by us.

All staff members (including contractors and volunteers) are expected to be familiar with this policy, its associated procedures and protocols, and abide by them.

The board of trustees has an obligation to ensure the well-being of children in our care so they thrive, belong and achieve. We are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. The safety and well-being of the child is our top priority. Advice will be sought through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

Child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person. Staff are trained to recognise abuse and be alert to changes in student well-being or behaviour. We ensure staff are familiar with child-protection policies and procedures, and abuse recognition and reporting procedures as part of the school's professional development and safe practice. Staff must engage with our child protection and abuse recognition and reporting policy annually.

In line with section 15 of the Children, Young People's Well-being / Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, any person in our school/kura who believes that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually) ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived must follow school procedures and may also report the matter to a social worker (Oranga Tamariki), or the local police.

Although ultimate accountability sits with the board, the board delegates responsibility to the principal to ensure that all child safety procedures are implemented and available to all staff, contractors, volunteers and parents. Therefore, the principal must:

1. Develop appropriate procedures to meet child safety requirements as required and appropriate to the school
2. Comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities
3. Make this policy available on the school's website or available on request
4. Ensure that every contract or funding arrangement, that the school enters into requires the adoption of child protection policies where required
5. Ensure the interests and protection of the child are paramount in all circumstances
6. Recognise the rights of family/whanau to participate in the decision-making about their children
7. Ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect, deal with disclosures by children and allegations against staff members and can take appropriate action in response
8. Support all staff to work in accordance with this policy, to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are understood and implemented
9. Promote a culture where staff feel confident they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal
10. Consult, discuss and share relevant information, in line with our commitment to confidentiality and information sharing protocols, in a timely way regarding any concerns about an individual child with the board or designated person
11. Seek advice as necessary from SBANZ (School Boards Association) advisors on employment matters and other relevant agencies where child safety issues arise.

12. Make available professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy
13. Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.

3. Complaints Policy

All complaints, concerns and incidents are attended to promptly, respectfully and professionally and seek to bring effective resolution to all parties concerned.

The board delegates to the principal full responsibility of ensuring processes are in place and operating effectively and adequately. In the event of a complaint or grievance concerning the principal, responsibility lies with the board.

In complying with the policy, the principal shall not fail to:

- Implement and maintain robust procedures to meet the policy requirements
- Ensure that the process for complaints or grievances is clearly communicated and posted on the school website (if applicable)
- Ensure that the complainant has previously followed the school's concerns and complaints procedure before escalating to the board level

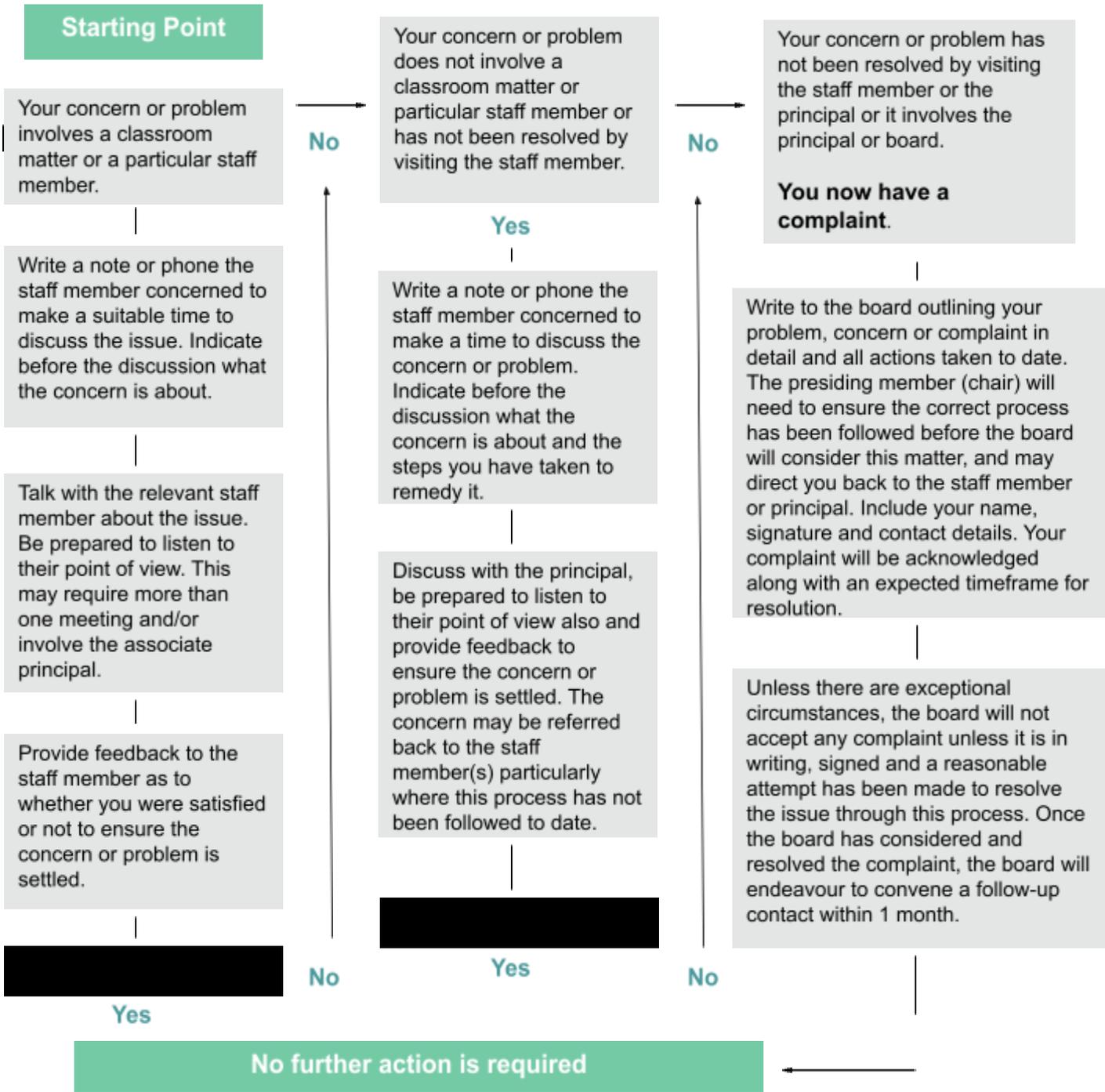
Should the board receive a complaint regarding the principal or determine that any policy violation may have occurred, the board, in the first instance, will consider whether this may be dealt with in an informal manner (as per the employment agreement provisions that apply to the principal).

Where the board considers the degree and seriousness of the concern or any violation sufficient to warrant initiating a disciplinary or competency process, the board shall seek the support and advice in the first instance from an NZSTA adviser to ensure due process is followed.

The board shall advise its insurance agent of any complaint escalated to the board.

Once the dispute Resolution Scheme comes into effect, in the event that a serious dispute is not able to be resolved, the board shall advise the parent of their right to apply to the Chief Referee for the dispute to be resolved by a dispute resolution panel.

Board Complaints Flowchart



Board complaints checklist

1. The presiding member ensures the process has been followed as outlined in the concerns and complaints procedure or is a genuine complaint against the principal or board.
2. The presiding member verifies with the principal that any staff (or others) identified in the complaint are aware of the situation and that there has been discussion and attempts to reconcile.
3. If the complaint or action is employment-related or has potential industrial relations implications, the presiding member contacts the NZSTA employment advisory and support centre. For all other complaints, contact the NZSTA governance advisory and support centre.
4. The presiding member alerts the school's insurance broker.
5. The presiding member acknowledges the letter of complaint within 7 days and advises the board process, or redirects the complainant to the principal, syndicate leader or staff member as appropriate. The presiding member reports to the board without names or details at the next meeting.
6. Once confirmed as a legitimate complaint to the board, the presiding member forwards it confidentially to all board members for consideration. Any member who has a conflict of interest should declare and take no further part in the process around this matter.
7. Board requests principal to present a full written report to the board outlining all actions taken, advice received, meetings held and justified decisions made.
8. The board determines if the principal's report fully satisfies it of a full and fair process. If so, the board supports the principal and advises the complainant.
9. If not satisfied, the board meets and discusses in public excluded business, determines whether or not to formally meet the complainant and delegates responsibility to members of the board as deemed appropriate.
10. Board delegates meet with the complainant and discuss the complaint more fully - clarifying, investigating and verifying. Support persons should be confirmed as welcome to attend this meeting.
11. Board delegates report back to the full board and recommend actions/decisions.
12. Board considers recommendations, records and formally minutes decisions.
13. Board advises complainant in writing of its provisional decisions and factors considered in reaching them, within 21 days of complaint receipt, unless otherwise agreed by all parties. The complainant is allowed to comment before the board's final decision is reached.
14. The board advises the complainant of their right to apply for dispute resolution if they are dissatisfied with the outcome.
15. The board aims to convene a follow-up meeting within 1 month of step 9.

