

Concerns and Complaints

Definitions

A concern is a minor issue that may be resolved informally directly between the parties involved.

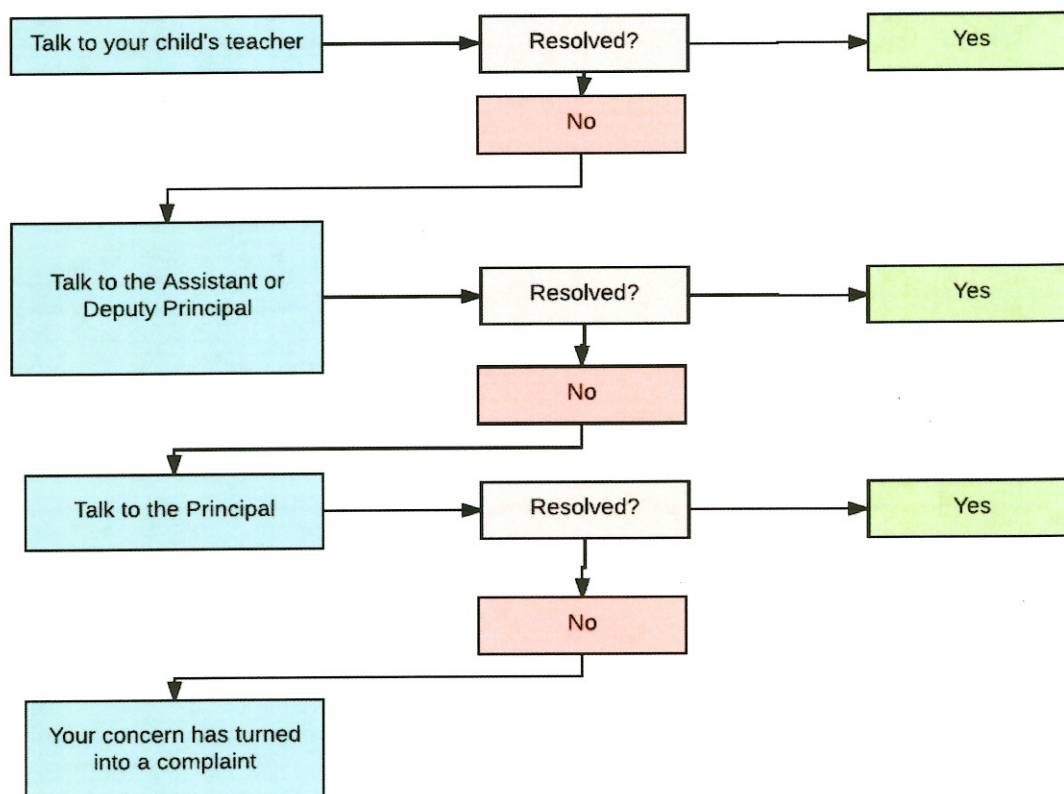
A complaint is an issue of a serious nature and may involve the consideration of disciplinary, legal or employment consequences. It may involve the principal or board of trustees. An unresolved or repeated concern might be escalated to a complaint.

Concerns process

- Concerns should, in the first instance, be addressed to the relevant staff member i.e. classroom teacher.
- If the concern does not involve a particular staff member or has not been resolved by the relevant staff member, it should be addressed to the deputy or assistant principal.
- If the concern has not been resolved by either the relevant staff member, deputy or assistant principal, it should be addressed to the principal.
- If the concern remains unresolved, or it involves the principal or board of trustees, it should be addressed to the board chairperson in writing.

Parental Concern Flowchart

Steps to follow if you have a concern regarding your child at school.



Complaints Process

Any complaints received by the principal will be considered and a determination made as to whether they are a concern or a complaint according to the previous definitions. Following this, any complaint will either be investigated by the principal and the outcome conveyed to the complainant, or a recommendation made to refer the complaint to the board of trustees. Complaints to the board of trustees must be in writing, signed by the complainant and addressed to the chairperson of the board. The board chairperson will:

- Confirm a complaint exists, i.e. it is of a serious nature **or** it is an unresolved concern.
- Acknowledge the complaint within 7 days and advise the board process, **or** if it is a concern that has not been dealt with by the concerns procedure, redirect the complainant to the principal to deal with.

Board process for dealing with complaints

- A special meeting of the board may need to be called. The board meets “in committee”, and determines how this complaint will be resolved (see flowchart). Consideration will be given to any investigation already carried out by the principal.
- Any delegations need to be formally recorded. Has the committee the authority to make decisions, bring recommendations or bring findings? Determine timeframes.
- Before any investigation the delegated person(s) should make contact with NZSTA and if appropriate the school’s insurer. The board must exercise caution when dealing with complaints regarding staff, particularly in relation to confidentiality and process to ensure that the principles of natural justice are met. The board will need to consider employment contracts and advice from the NZSTA Employment Adviser.
- Board delegate(s) report back to full board and bring findings, recommend actions or report decisions made.
- Board takes appropriate actions, records and formally records decisions.
- Board advises complainant, in writing, of its decisions and factors considered in reaching its decisions within 21 days of the complaint being received unless otherwise agreed by all parties.

Parental Complaint Flowchart

