



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

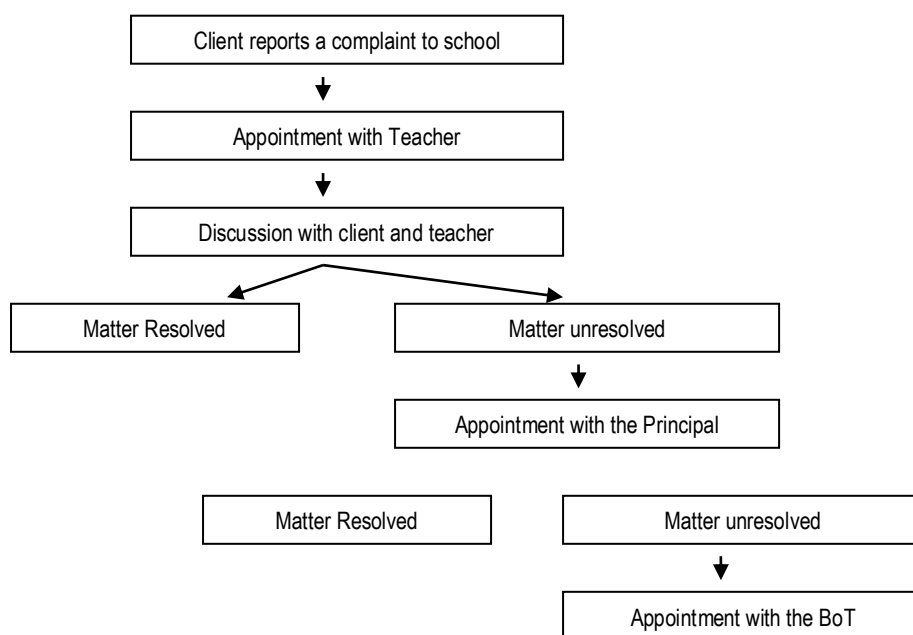
Purpose

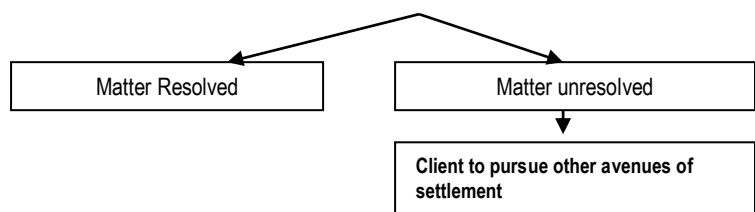
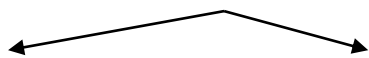
- To deal efficiently and effectively with complaints within the school community.
- To ensure that the principles of natural justice are upheld for all people concerned.
- To ensure all complaints are treated with confidentiality.

Implementation

Complaint Procedure Relating to Clients (eg parents, caregivers)

1. Client has a concern about something relating to school.
2. Client asks for an appointment with the pupil's teacher.
3. **Matter resolved** to both parties satisfaction – either concluded or an understanding in place for future action.
OR
4. **Matter unresolved**, has resurfaced or after agreed period of time, action is seen as unsuccessful. Make an appointment and discuss with the Principal.
5. **Matter resolved** to both parties satisfaction – either concluded or an understanding in place for future action.
OR
6. **Matter unresolved** or, after agreed period of time action unsuccessful (problem resurfaces.) Complaint put in writing and addressed to the chairperson of the Board of Trustees. The chairperson then follows the Board process for handling complaints.



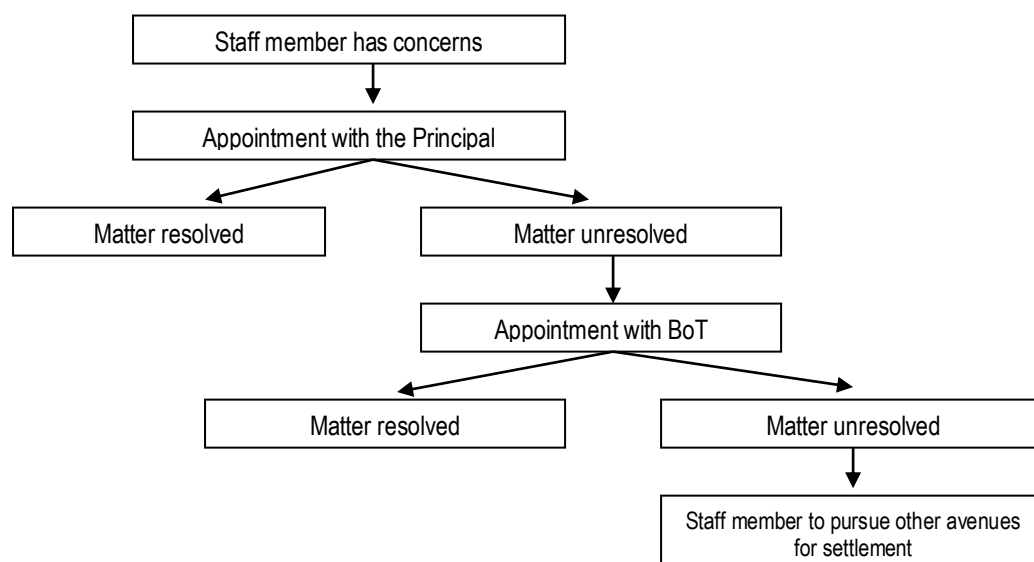


Complaint Procedure Relating to Staff

1. Staff member has a concern about something relating to school or employment matter.
2. Staff member asks for an appointment with the Principal.
3. **Matter resolved** to both parties satisfaction – either concluded or an understanding in place for future action.

OR

4. **Matter unresolved** or, after agreed period of time action unsuccessful (problem resurfaces.) Complaint put in writing and addressed to the chairperson of the Board of Trustees. The chairperson then follows the Board process for handling complaints.



5. **Complaints against the principal** should be made directly to the Board chairperson. Initially the complainant should have a meeting with the board chairperson for mediation and to seek a resolution. If a resolution is not found, then the problem can be taken formally to the Board.

Notes

- While minor issues may be able to be discussed in a quick informal chat, normally in order for both parties to give the matter full attention, arranging a time to discuss the matter is the preferred option.
- The Board Chair in consultation with the Principal needs to decide whether the complaint is a management or governance issue and act accordingly ie if it is a management issue it should be handed to the Principal to deal with where appropriate.
- If the complaint procedure has not been followed, the Board should normally return the letter of complaint to the writer and ask they follow the procedure first.
- The Board of Trustees needs to formally receive a complaint in order to act on it. If the complaint is serious enough for the Board to deal with, it is serious enough to be put in writing. If a client or staff member has concerns about expressing the matter clearly in writing they may discuss the matter in confidence with the Board chairperson (or another delegated Board member) to enable them to give assistance with this.
- All parties to a complaint may bring a support person to any meeting where the issue is discussed.

Palmerston North Adventist Christian School Board Complaints Procedure

- The letter of complaint is acknowledged by the chairperson and the complainant advised of the next steps in the Board of Trustees process. The letter becomes part of the correspondence that will be dealt with at the next Board meeting (*while in committee.*)
- The letter is tabled at the Board meeting 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 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 involved in the complaint. This may be either publicly or confidentially communicated 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 deliberation must be produced.

Notes

- Issues of serious concern, eg allegations of abuse, may require a special meeting of the Board of Trustees to be called.
- All letters addressed to the chairperson of the Board of Trustees are to the whole Board. The chairperson cannot decide independently as to what action will be taken.
- Resolution or dismissal of the complaint must not be discussed before all the information is at hand.
- Conflict of interest will be determined on a number of issues, including whether the complaint involves the actions of any trustee.
- The Board of Trustees 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. The Board will need to consider the relevant staff disciplinary policies and employment contracts. It is advisable to seek expert advice in such cases.
- The Board of Trustees recognises that not all complainants will be satisfied with the outcome of the complaint. After one reconsideration, and the Board is confident of its decision, it will refuse to enter into further discussion/correspondence.
- 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.

Reviewed: June 2020 by the Personnel Committee

