



3.3 Concerns and Complaints Policy

We are always happy to help and want to put things right. This policy sets out the principles and guidelines for addressing any issues that arise. It applies to any person associated with the school (e.g. parents, caregivers, staff, Principal, student, trustee) who wishes to make a complaint about a staff member or any other person or event for which the school is responsible.

PRINCIPLES

Informal resolution – Concerns or complaints will be resolved at the lowest level possible.

Natural justice principles – all complaints will be fully and fairly investigated, dealt with impartially and in confidence.

Time limits – complaints will be dealt with within agreed time limits and everyone will be kept fully informed. Complaints of an historical nature will not normally be considered.

Support – complainants will be encouraged to be supported by a friend or advice and the subject of a complaint will be given the same level of support as the complainant.

Anonymous or vexatious complaints – Will not usually be investigated except at the discretion of the principal or Board Chair.

Publicity and accessibility – The procedure will be well publicised and easily accessible to all.

Monitoring – the principal will keep records of all complaints for monitoring purposes.

Review: This Policy shall be reviewed by the Board of Trustees every three years and will be available on the school's website.

GUIDELINES

Note to parents: "Open and full communication is a priority. Just "popping in" to the classroom may not be satisfactory as classroom teachers are busy people who endeavor to give their students quality learning time. They would also like to give you the quality time."

Informal – *when it is reasonable to assume the matter can be resolved through constructive discussion*

1. Parents to make an appointment to see their child's teacher outside of classroom time i.e. before 8.30am or after 3.00pm by emailing the teacher or contacting the office for assistance.
2. Parents will be encouraged to enter this discussion in the spirit of constructive problem solving. Where this is not possible the meeting should will be terminated and the complainant referred to the principal.
3. If possible, the two parties will seek to agree on the action required to resolve the complaint.

4. If the complaint remains unresolved or if the problem has resurfaced, the complainant may discuss the matter with the Assistant or Deputy Principal or make an appointment to meet with the principal.
5. Staff will brief Team Leaders of the parent complaint and steps agreed to resolve matters.
6. Staff members who have a complaint against a fellow staff member should also seek to resolve minor matters through constructive open to learning dialogue. If this is not possible or matters remain unresolved, the staff member should refer the matter to the Assistant, Deputy Principal or Principal as the complainant sees fit.

Formal – when the concern is in writing and/ or the complainant considers the matter to constitute a serious complaint and/ or has been unable to resolved through an informal process.

PRINCIPAL

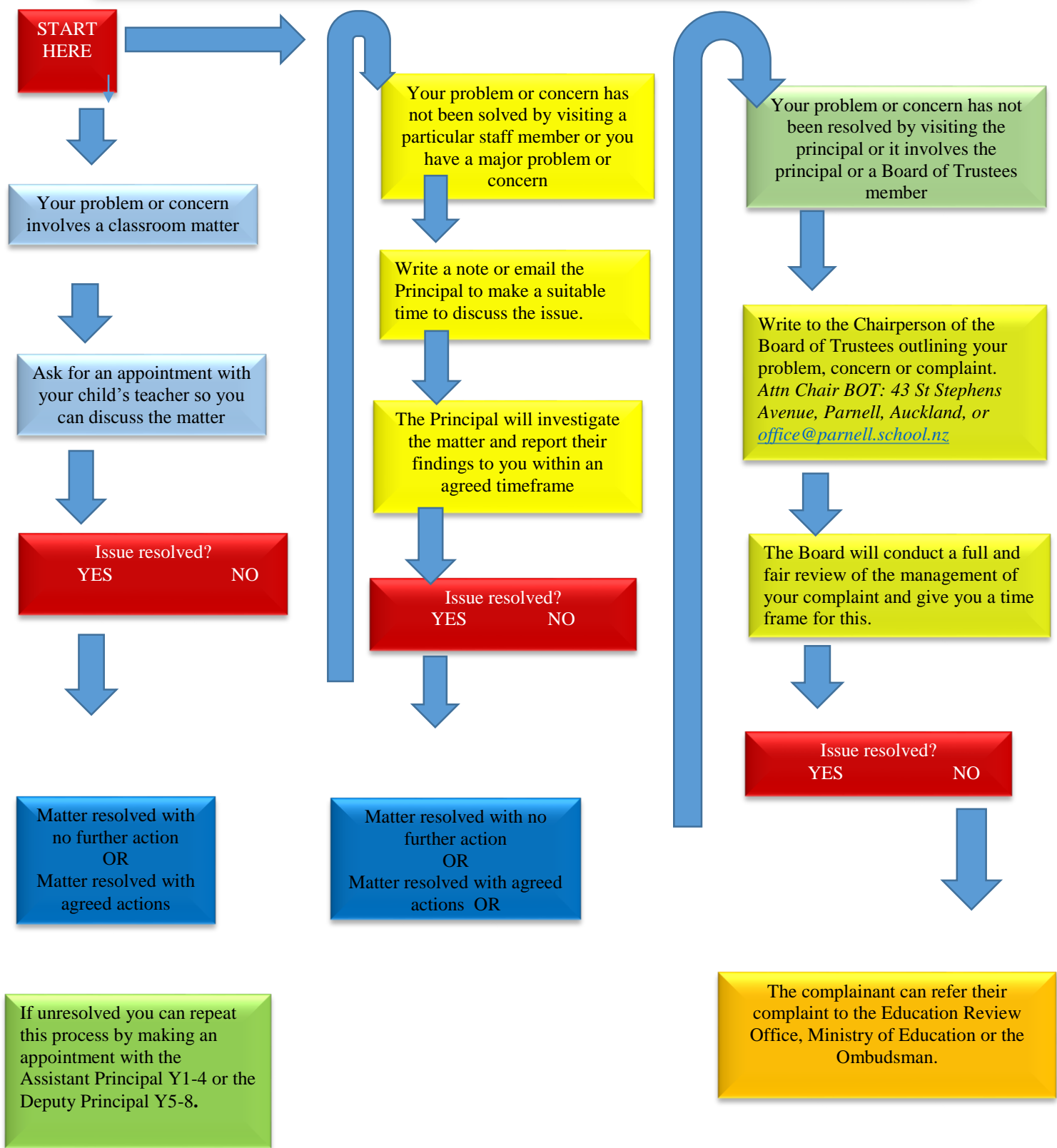
7. The principal will meet with the complainant, make a record of all matters and discussions concerning any complaint including details of any agreed outcome and timeline.
8. If deemed to be a minor matter or a first concern raised in regard to this staff member, the matter may be resolved through discussion with the principal and a commitment to agreed actions.
9. Where the matter is considered by the principal to be likely to be of a serious nature or is a second or later complaint against the same staff member, the principal will write to the staff member outlining the concern or complaint and require them to attend a formal meeting. The staff member will be advised to bring a support person to the meeting.
10. The principal will advise the school's insurers and follow their advice.
11. The principal will also advise the Board Chair but they will not become involved in the complaint at this stage. However if the matter involves significant safety concerns, the complaint may be escalated to the Board for investigation after discussion with the insurers.
12. With the agreement of the insurers and the Board Chair, the principal may suspend the staff member on full pay during the investigation if they believe there are sufficient safety concerns for students or other staff.
13. The principal will conduct a full and fair investigation. This will include
 - Informing the person complained about of the complaint in writing and giving adequate time for a response to the complaint;
 - Advising and suggesting the person complained about, seeks assistance and representation;
 - Providing an opportunity for the complaint to speak to the complaint in addition to a written response;
 - Confidentiality - by which all parties agree to avoid discussing any matters relating to the complaint with any third parties until the final outcome is reached.
14. The principal will respond to the complainant and the person complained of in writing with a final decision. A copy will be placed in the staff member's file.
15. If the person who is the subject of the complaint or the person laying the complaint is dis-satisfied with the outcome of the principal's investigation and decision, either party may appeal to the Board Chair.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

16. The Board will accept written and signed complaints from parent or staff that have been unresolved through steps 1-12 above, is of a serious or urgent nature, is against the principal or is a protected disclosure.
17. The Board will acknowledge the letter of complaint, advise of the next steps in the Board process and ensure the staff member is aware of their right to representation and support.
18. The Board will notify its insurer of the complaint (if not already done in Step 8 above), and take appropriate legal advice as required.
19. The Board will conduct an independent review of the complaint and steps taken to investigate and resolve the matter where it is a complaint that has been managed by the principal. If considered necessary and at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, an independent person maybe appointed by the Chairperson to review or conduct a further investigation.
20. The outcome of the complaint will be reported at a Board in-committee meeting for a review and final decision.
21. If the complaint is against the principal the principal will step aside from the review and decision.
22. The complainant and the person complained of will be advised of that decision.
23. A mandatory report will be made to the Education Council if the complaint is upheld and fits the criteria and the staff disciplinary policy will be followed.
24. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Board's decision, they may choose to take legal advice or refer their complaint to the Ministry of Education, the Education Review office, and/ or another government agency.

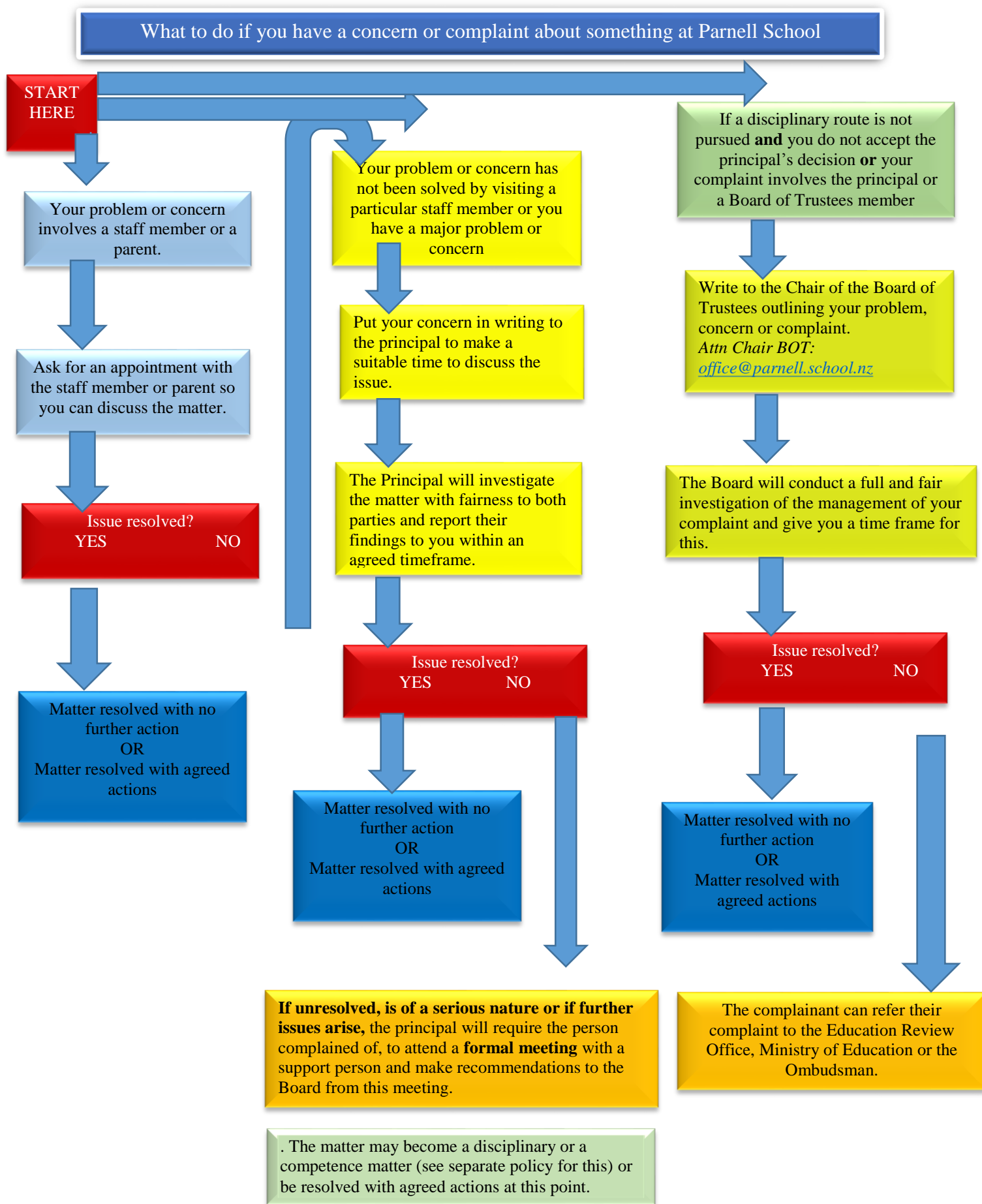
Appendix 1 – Flow chart outlining concerns and complaints procedures for parents and caregivers at Parnell School

What to do if you have a concern or complaint about something at Parnell School



This flowchart is a summary of the Concerns and Complaints policy available on the website or at the office

Appendix 2 – Flow chart outlining concerns and complaints procedures for staff at Parnell School



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