



GOVERNANCE

20 - Concerns and Complaints Policy

Most complaints can be resolved informally by discussions with the people concerned. If an informal approach is not successful the complaint should be brought to the attention of a senior staff member or the principal.

If the complaint is made to a board member, the complainant is encouraged to resolve the issue informally by raising the matter with the person concerned, and the board member must inform the principal.

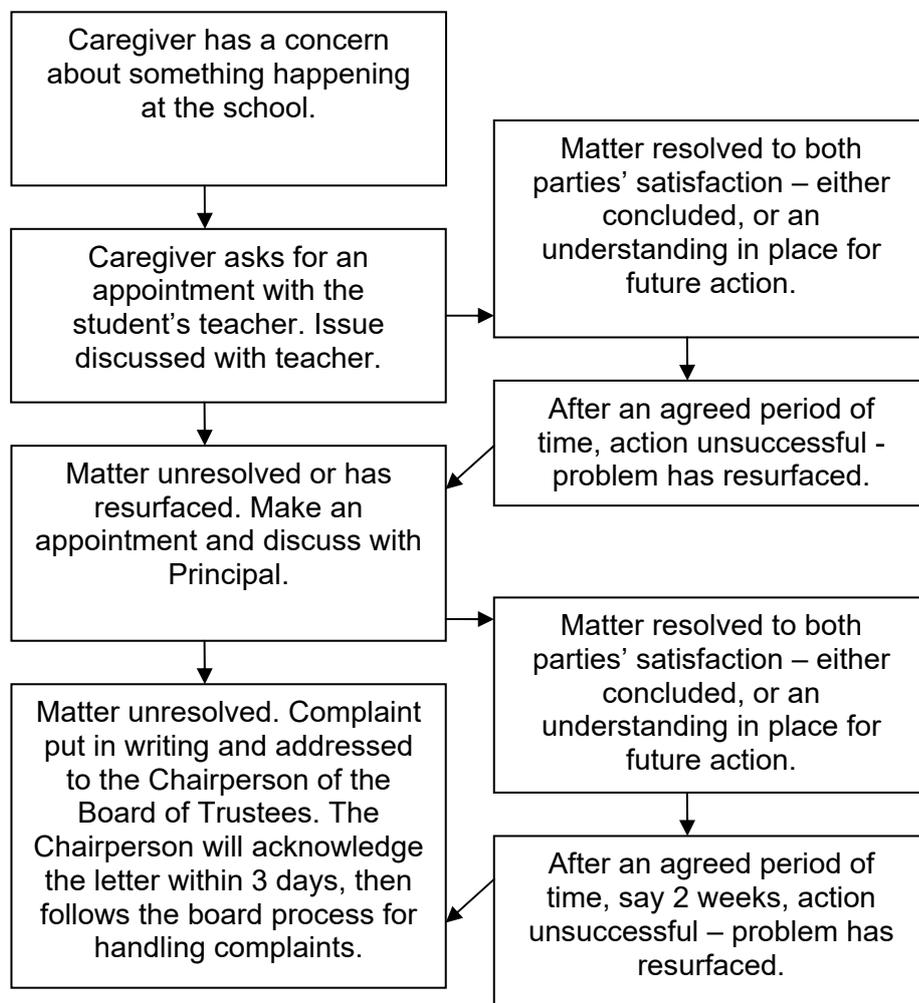
An anonymous complaint cannot be processed unless there is a sound legal reason for protecting the identity of the complainant.

This procedure enables us to:

- deal with complaints fairly, effectively, and promptly,
- maintain confidentiality and
- preserve school/community relationships and communication

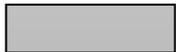
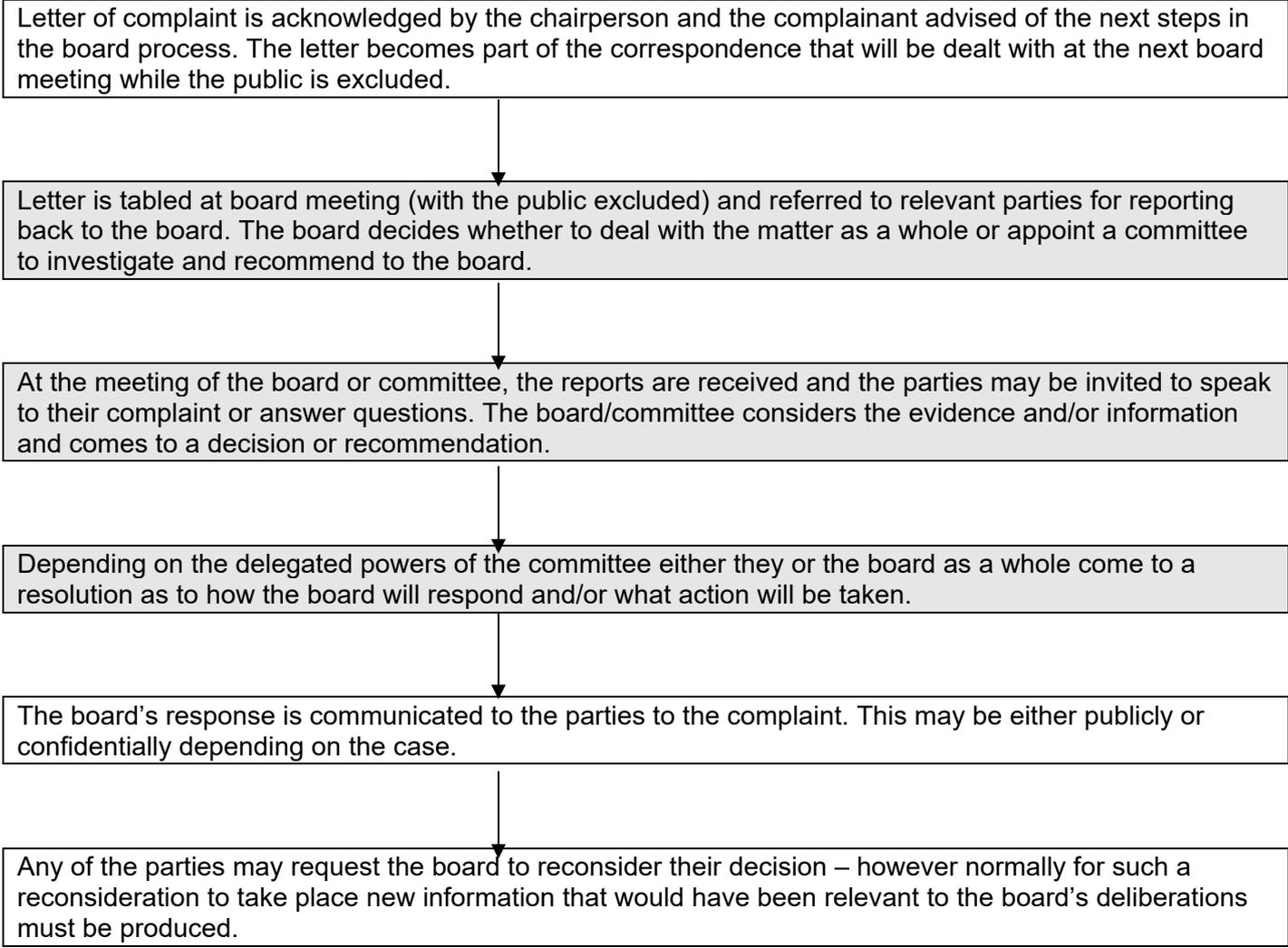
Salford School Community Process

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.



Salford School Board of Trustees complaints process

1. Issues of a serious matter, such as allegations of physical abuse, may require a special meeting of the board.
2. All letters addressed to the chair of the board are for the *whole board*. The chair cannot decide independently what action will be taken unless the board has delegated them authority to do so.
3. Resolution or dismissal of the complaint must not be discussed 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 the principles of natural justice. 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 agreements, 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, the board, if it is confident of its decision, will refuse to enter into further discussion or correspondence. The NZSTA helpdesk can help with such a decision 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 (that is, regarding their own child) and a complaint they have as a trustee (for example, 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).



– shaded area denotes “public excluded” meetings

Effectiveness Review

This policy will be reviewed triennially in accordance with the Board’s programme of self-review

Ratified

Signed

Review Date