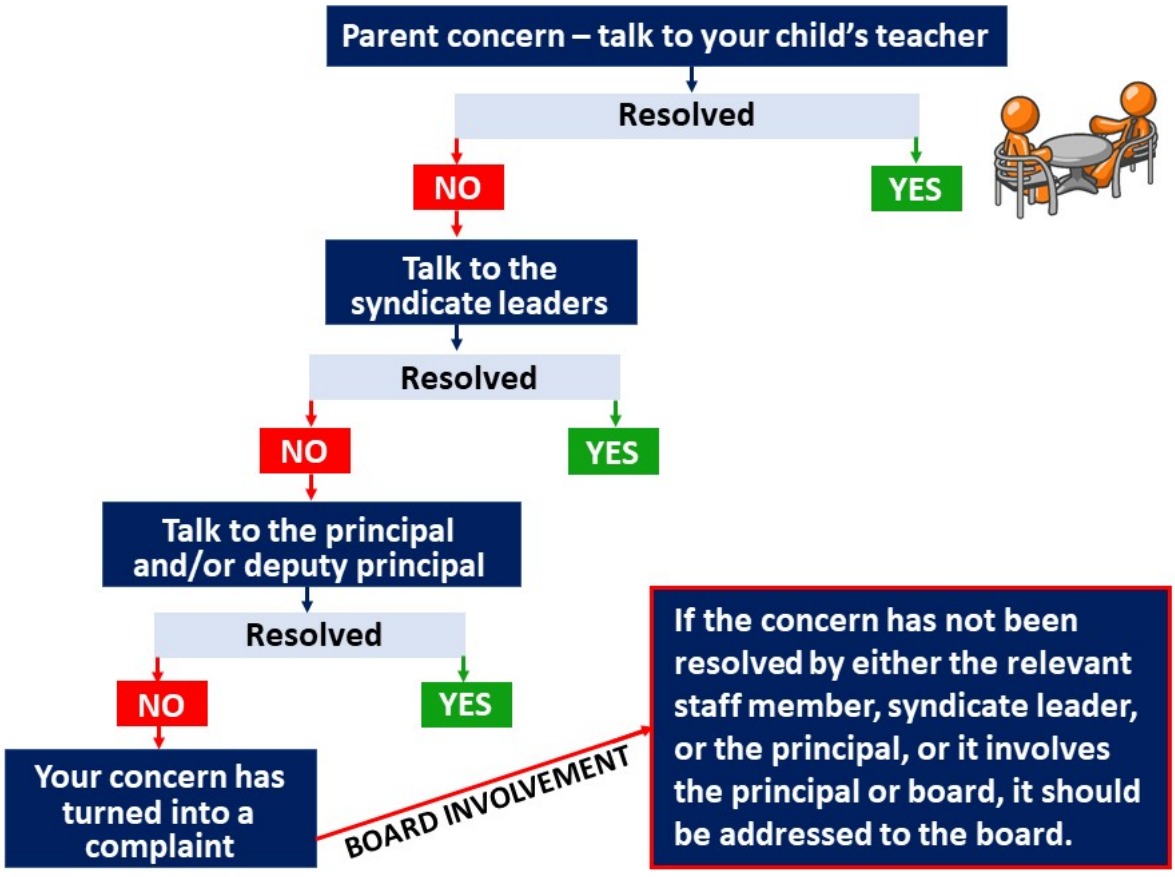
KNIGHTON NORMAL SCHOOL

SCHOOL PROCEDURE: CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

A concern is:	*A complaint is:*
An issue that may be resolved informally directly between the parties involved. Concerns are not expected to have disciplinary, legal or industrial consequences.	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.

Dealing with a concern or making a complaint



Note, a 'complaint' must be made in writing and state the word 'complaint'. Date your letter and address your letter to the Board Chairperson, Knighton Normal School. Please clearly state the matters your complaint is based on. The person/s mentioned in your letter of complaint will receive a copy of your letter; *laws of natural justice*.

COMPLAINTS: KNIGHTON NORMAL BOARD GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH A COMPLAINT

The School Board needs to **formally receive a complaint** in order to act on it; *refer to the Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedures.*
The Board firstly confirms that a complaint exists, that is, it is of a serious nature or an unresolved concern. If the complaint is serious enough for the Board to deal with, it is serious enough to be put in writing.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

On receiving a complaint, the **Board Chair** establishes, with full-board knowledge, a **Complaints Committee**. Trustees are informed regarding the nature, but not detail of the complaint, at the time the Committee is formed. The names of the Committee and the Committee's delegated authorities, are recorded in the In-Committee minutes of the Board Meeting.
The Board and Board's Complaints Committee, operate within relevant Policies, Procedures, Collective Employment Agreements and Legislative requirements.

PRINCIPAL

Should the **Principal receive a letter of complaint**, he / she informs the Board Chair within 12 hours, and forwards the letter to the Chair, keeping a copy 'confidentially' on school file.

The Principal *must not* make contact with any person, other than the Board Chair, until delegated the authority by the Board.

The Board **Complaints Committee** meets to work through the following considerations, knowing the need to acknowledge the letter of complaint, to the complainant, within 7 days of receiving their letter.

- A complaint is an issue of a serious nature and may involved the consideration of disciplinary, legal or employment consequences.
- Confirm a complaint exists; that is, it is of a serious nature or it is an unresolved concern.
- Acknolwdge complaint within 7 days and advise the Board process, or if it is a concern that has not been dealt with by the concerns procedures, redirect complainant to the Principal to deal with; attach a copy of the Complaints and Concerns Policy and Procedure.
- Complaints Committee establishes proposed action plan for dealing with the complaint; refer to considerations below, including Investigation Stage. Following acknowledgment to complainant, the next step may well be to inform the School's Insurer and also to contact NZSTA for advice and guidance.

COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE ROLES

- to work within the Board's 'delegated authorities' which may inlcude, but are not limited to:
  - direct the principal to investigate the matters raised by the complainant
  - if appropriate, Board Chair to attempt mediation with complainant
  - on the advice from NZSTA engage an 'external investigator' with 'Terms of Reference'
  - determine time frames
  - authority to make decisions and/or bring recommendations or findings to the Board
- before proceeding with an investigation the delegated person(s) should make contact with

INVESTIGATION STAGE

NZSTA and if appropriate, the Board's insurer. The Board must excercise 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 should contact the NZSTA Employment Advisory and Support Centre.

- Board dlegate(s) report back and bring findings, recommend actions or report decisions.
- Board takes appropriate actions, records and formally minutes decisions.
- Within 21 days of receipt of complaint, unless otherwise agreed by all parties, Board advises complainant, in writing, of its decision and factors considered in reaching its decision.

Should no 'new information' be provided, relevant to the Board's deliberations, the Board will close the investigation.

RESOLVED → Complaint and Reports held on In-Committee Board files.

NOT RESOLVED

Nothing stated above presents the School Board from taking additional or alternative action considered reasonable and appropriate to the Board. The above process may be used should a staff member have a complaint about a parent, board trustee or school visitor.