

The Board's Role in Concerns and Complaints

**A copy of this presentation is available now in the
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The recording will be published tomorrow

Preparing our minds for the session



E te hui

For this gathering

Whāia te mātauranga kia mārama

Seek knowledge for understanding

Kia whai take ngā mahi katoa

Have purpose in all that you do

Tū māia, tū kaha

Stand tall, be strong

Aroha atu, aroha mai

Let us show respect

Tātou i a tātou katoa.

For each other.

Your presenters

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What we'll cover

Part 1 – Understanding concerns and complaints

Part 2 – Your board's role

Part 3 – Dealing with a complaint

What you'll learn

- The difference between concerns and complaints
- The elements of fair complaint handling
- The steps to work through a complaint process
- What to do when a complaint involves staff or can't be resolved



Before we begin

Concerns and complaints can be time-consuming and tricky.

It's helpful to see them as a form of feedback.

Part 1

Understanding concerns and complaints



What motivates a concern or complaint?

- Dissatisfaction
- Trying to help or provide a solution
- Desire to improve the school for everyone
- Misunderstanding or miscommunication
- Personality clashes or prior conflicts



What's the difference?



Concerns

- Usually about the classroom and relationships within the school
- Best raised directly with those involved
- Unlikely to involve disciplinary, legal, or employment consequences

Complaints

- Unresolved concerns that have been escalated to your board
- About your board or principal
- May involve disciplinary, legal (human rights/privacy), health and safety, or employment consequences

Scenario 1: Concern or complaint?

A parent is upset about the lack of support for their child's learning needs.

They have contacted the principal, who has tried to resolve the issue.

Scenario 2: Concern or complaint?

The issue has not been resolved to the parent's satisfaction.

They have now contacted your board.

Scenario 3: Concern or complaint?

A parent confronts a student on the school grounds.

The student's whānau then write to your board.

Key takeaways

Concerns and complaints:

- Are motivated by many different factors
- May not directly involve the board
- Can provide an opportunity for improvement
- Should be dealt with at the lowest level possible
- Can usually be resolved by following a clear process





Part 2

Your board's role



What are your responsibilities?

- Develop a concerns and complaints policy – regularly review and share it
- Monitor the concerns and complaints data presented to your board
- Apply the principles of natural justice – manage complaints fairly and without prejudice

Does your policy stack up?

- Is the intent of the policy clear?
- Is it inclusive? Does it reflect your community, local tikanga, and school values?
- Has authority been delegated?
- Is the policy (and process) accessible to everyone in your community?
- Has the policy (and process) been shared with parents or whānau?
- Is this info easy to find on your school's website?



How do you monitor?

- Does the principal's report provide well-analysed data?
- Look for themes – are there recurring patterns?
- Seek assurance from the principal – are they actively dealing with concerns to avoid them becoming complaints?
- Does your school keep a concerns and complaints register?



Principles of natural justice

Both parties have the right:

To be heard

I can present my case and respond to allegations

To an unbiased decision-maker

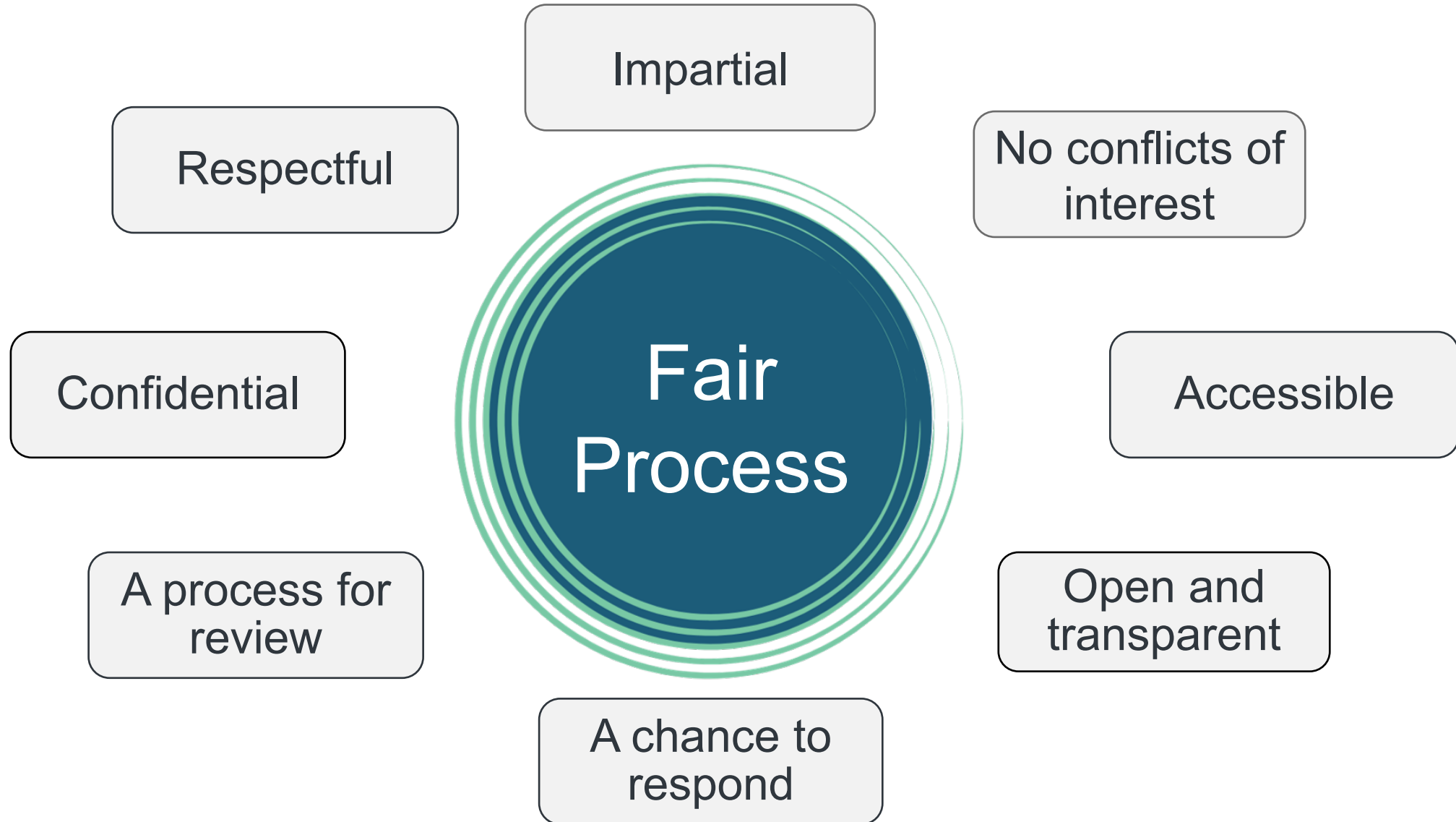
I am confident there are no conflicts of interest

To be informed

I know what's going on and why decisions are made



What makes a process fair?



Key takeaways

Your board's role is to:

- Set and review policy
- Make your policy and process easy to find
- Monitor the data
- Treat all complaints fairly and without bias





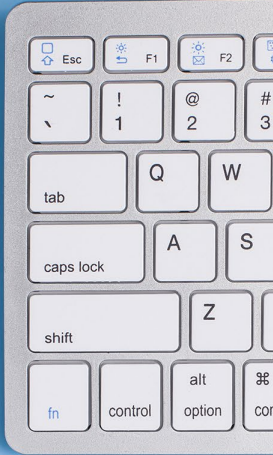
Part 3

Dealing with a complaint



What are the steps of a complaint process?

- Receive
- Engage
- Assess
- Respond
- Finalise



What if a complaint involves staff?



Contact our Advisory and Support Centre before you do anything

- Be mindful of both the complainant's rights and the obligation to be a good employer
- If it relates to employment or could become an industrial relations matter, alert your school's insurance broker
- Seek advice from an employment adviser if it relates to staff disciplinary policies or employment agreements

What if a complaint can't be resolved?

- Have you answered each part of the complaint?
- Have you followed your policy?
- Have you reviewed your process to ensure you've done everything possible?
- If you are confident in all the above, you can:
- Communicate expectations and set boundaries
- Refer the complainant to the Office of the Ombudsman



What are the benefits of getting it right?

- It's an opportunity for improvement
- Concerns are more likely to be resolved early
- Enhances your school and community culture
- Students feel safe and valued



Key takeaways

If you receive a complaint:

- Follow your complaints policy and process
- Seek advice if it involves staff
- Review your process if it remains unresolved
- Remember that getting the process right can benefit all





Reflection

What we covered:

- The difference between concerns and complaints
- The elements of fair complaint handling
- The steps to work through a complaint process
- What to do when a complaint involves staff or can't be resolved



Support and next steps



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Governance matters

govadvice@tewhakaroputanga.org.nz

Employment matters

eradvice@tewhakaroputanga.org.nz

Closing the session



Ka whakairia te tapu

Restrictions are moved aside

Kia wātea ai te ara

So the pathway is clear

Kia turuki whakataha ai

To return to everyday activities

Haumi e. Hui e. Tāiki e!

Enriched, unified and blessed!

Ngā mihi nui!
Thank you!