Complaints Management Policy

Policy No:	1.8	Version: 5	Feb 2026
Responsibility:	School Chair	Scheduled Review Date:	August 2028

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clearly articulate how expressions of concern and complaints are managed, in a safe, sensitive and timely manner.

2.0 Policy Statement

Tarremah Steiner School is committed to cultivating an inclusive community culture. We welcome expressions of concern and strive to offer a safe environment where we can work with all members of the community in a supportive manner. Tarremah values honest and direct communication between individuals, understanding that concerns will develop from time to time. Ensuring students are provided with a safe and inclusive learning environment will always be our priority. Any reports of possible child abuse, or risk of child abuse will be reported in accordance with the *Child safety and Mandatory Reporting Policy*.

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3.1 Scope of Policy

This Policy applies to the entire Tarremah Community. It offers a clear path to express concern about student behaviour, staff or parent conduct, and concerns about the curriculum, policies and procedure. The policy outlines the process for express an initial concern, and if the concern is not adequately addressed, with whom a subsequent concern should be raised.

3.2 Definitions

Assistance - providing information and or advocacy and support

TSSF Council – otherwise known as the School Council is responsible for school governance and meets once a month.

Council Chair – is responsible for facilitating the operations of the Schol Council and providing support to the School Chair.

School Chair – is the School's Chief Executive Officer. They are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the School, and they chair the School Executive and the College.

School Executive – the republican management body of the school consisting of the School Chair, Business Manager, Education Administrator, Education Facilitator, Chairs of the Early Childhood Faculty, Primary Faculty and Secondary Faculty, and a representative of support staff. The School Executive meet weekly.

Faculty – the faculty is the group of educational staff who make decisions about the day to day learning program, guiding instruction and student support.

The Early Childhood Faculty – all members of staff in the Early Childhood Centre (ECC) who meet weekly and twice a term with all ECC staff.

The Primary Faculty – all members of staff in the Primary School who meet weekly.

The Secondary Faculty – all members of staff in the Secondary School who meet weekly.

Class Teacher – a Primary School teacher responsible for teaching a Primary class from Class 1 to Class 6

Class Guardian – a Secondary School specialist teacher with a pastoral, administrative and behaviour management role with a year group from Class 7 to Class 10.

Education Administrator – is responsible for the induction of new staff and facilitating relief. They support the educational programme by managing teachers' planning and school procedure documentation.

Education Facilitator – facilitates staff professional development and learning. Primary roles are to assist the School Chair, to provide and oversee mentoring of teachers, provide assistance and guidance to teachers overseeing the educational program and student support.

Business Manager –is responsible for the financial management of the school. They oversee the management of administration staff, contractors, and hold the contractual and professional information about all staff and contractors.

WHS and Facilities Officer – responsible for WHS and maintenance of facilities.

The College – a consultative body and professional learning forum within the school, consisting of all employees of Tarremah who meet weekly.

4.0 Procedure

When a concern develops the concerned party should contact the most appropriate party directly in the first instance, so long as it is safe to do so. To do this they should consider whether their concern is about the conduct of a student, staff member or parent, or if it is about the curriculum, a policy, procedure or facilities. The following steps outline slightly different processes that should be followed by a parent, a staff member or a student *in the first instance*.

We recognise that power imbalances can and do occur with a School Environment. This may be between individual students or individual staff; between students and staff, between parents and staff; or even different families. All reasonable steps will be taken to avoid such imbalance, including supporting students through advocacy. Any reports of suspected child abuse, or risk of child abuse will be reported in accordance with our *Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policy.*

4.1 Concerns about student behaviour

- When a student has a concern with a peer, they should first raise that concern with their peers. If the concern is with a student in a different class, where a power imbalance may be present, they should take their concern to their class teacher or guardian.
- If a parent has a concern regarding a student, their Class Teacher or Guardian is the most appropriate person to speak to.
- If a staff member has a concern about a student they teach, that is in relation to something that has occurred whilst under their care, they should raise the concern with the student directly.
- If a staff member has a concern about a student who they do not teach, they should raise that concern with the student's Class Teacher or Guardian.

4.2 Concerns about Staff Conduct

- When a student has a concern about a staff member they should raise that concern with that staff member, if they feel comfortable doing so. If they do not feel comfortable doing so they should express their concern to their Class Teacher or Guardian.
- When a student has a concern about a staff member they should speak to their parents about the concern.
- When a parent has a concern about a staff member the concern should be raised directly with the staff member concerned. This can be done by email communication or a face to face meeting by appointment. The member of staff will make every effort to resolve the matter.
- When a parent has a concern which may amount to a suspicion of child abuse, or risk of child abuse, they must inform the School Chair, who will make a mandatory report, in line with the *Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policy.*
- When a staff member has a concern about a colleague, they should raise that concern with that colleague in the first instance. All staff must make every effort to resolve concerns.
- When a staff member has a concern that amounts to suspicion of child abuse, or risk of child abuse, they must report in accordance with the *Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policy.*

4.3 Concerns about Parent Conduct

- If a student has a concern about the conduct of a parent, they should speak to their Class Teacher or Guardian, and their own parent.
- If a parent is concerned about another parent's conduct, they should speak to their child's Class Teacher.
- If a staff member has a concern about the conduct of a parent, they should speak to them directly, if they have an existing relationship with that person and believe that they'll be able to resolve a concern. When this is not the case, they should speak to the relevant Class Teacher, Guardian or for finance matters, the Business Manager, who would be more likely to have such a relationship.
- Where any concern amounts to suspicion of child abuse, or risk of child abuse, that concern must be shared with the School Chair who will make a mandatory report, in line with the Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policy.

4.4 Concerns about the curriculum

- If a student has a question about the curriculum, they should speak to their Class Teacher, Guardian, or specialist teacher. This could be done during class. If the student has a concern, and would like a deeper discussion, this is best done with the teacher when they are not in the middle of teaching a class.
- If a parent has a concern about a particular part of curriculum, they should speak to the Class Teacher, Guardian, or in the Secondary School, the subject teacher.
- If a parent has a more overarching concern about the curriculum, they should speak the Education Facilitator.
- If a staff member has a concern about the curriculum, they should bring that concern to their Faculty.

4.5 Concerns about Policy, Procedures or Facilities.

- If a student has a concern about a policy, procedure or a school facility they should bring that concern to their Class Teacher or Guardian.
- If a parent has a concern about a policy, procedure or a school facility they should approach the most appropriate person in the first instance.
    - for policy or procedure regarding curriculum or pedagogy approach the Education Facilitator
    - for policy or procedure regard fees or a concern about facilities contact the Business Manager
    - for other policies or procedures contact the reception, who will direct your concern to the most appropriate person.
- If a staff member has a concern about a policy or procedure they should bring that concern to their Faculty, the most appropriate person as noted above, or to the School Executive.
- If a staff member has a concern about facilities, they should contact the Facilities Officer. Concerns can also come directly to Faculty or the Business Manager, who will pass on those concerns.

4.6 Concerns about an act or omission by the School Chair

Any complaint regarding an act or omission of the School Chair should be raised directly with the School Chair. This can be done by email communication or face to face meeting by appointment. The School Chair will acknowledge receipt of an email within three business days and be available for a discussion within a further two business days. The Chair will make every effort to understand the complaint, address the issue or explain why a particular position has been taken.

5.0 Resolving concerns that were not adequately addressed in the first instance

5.1 *Student Issues Resolution Process*

If a student's concern has not been adequately resolved by following the steps above, they could seek the support of a trusted adult. This might be their Class Teacher, another staff member or their parent. That person should guide them through the *Student Issues Resolution Process*.

5.2 *Parent and Community Issue Resolution Process*

If a teacher or staff member has not been able to adequately address a parent's concern, either party may refer it to the Education Facilitator or the School Chair. The *Parent and Community Issue Resolution Process* outlines how this and any further concern can be raised.

5.3 Staff Issues Resolution Process

If a staff member has not been able to resolve a concern regarding a colleague, the concern should then be raised with the person responsible for overseeing that staff member. This may be the Business Manager, the Education Facilitator or the School Chair. If a staff member has not been able to resolve a concern regarding a student or a parent, the matter should be referred to the Education Facilitator. The *Staff Issues Resolution Process* outlines these procedures for staff.

5.4 Process for Resolving Formal Complaints Against the School Chair,

If the School Chair has not been able to resolve a complaint about their own performance or conduct, the concerned party is able to make a formal request for review by the School Council. The *Process for Resolving Formal Complaints Against the School Chair* sets out this process.

Where the school office, the Business Manager, Education Facilitator, or School Chair receive an expression of concern, they will provide the concerned party with a copy of this policy and the appropriate *Issues Resolution Process*.

Mediation or Restorative Practice is an avenue open to complainants at any time.
All parties are welcome to have a support person at meetings.
Legal advice may be sought by a any concerned party connected to a complaint.
All details of a complaint are strictly confidential.

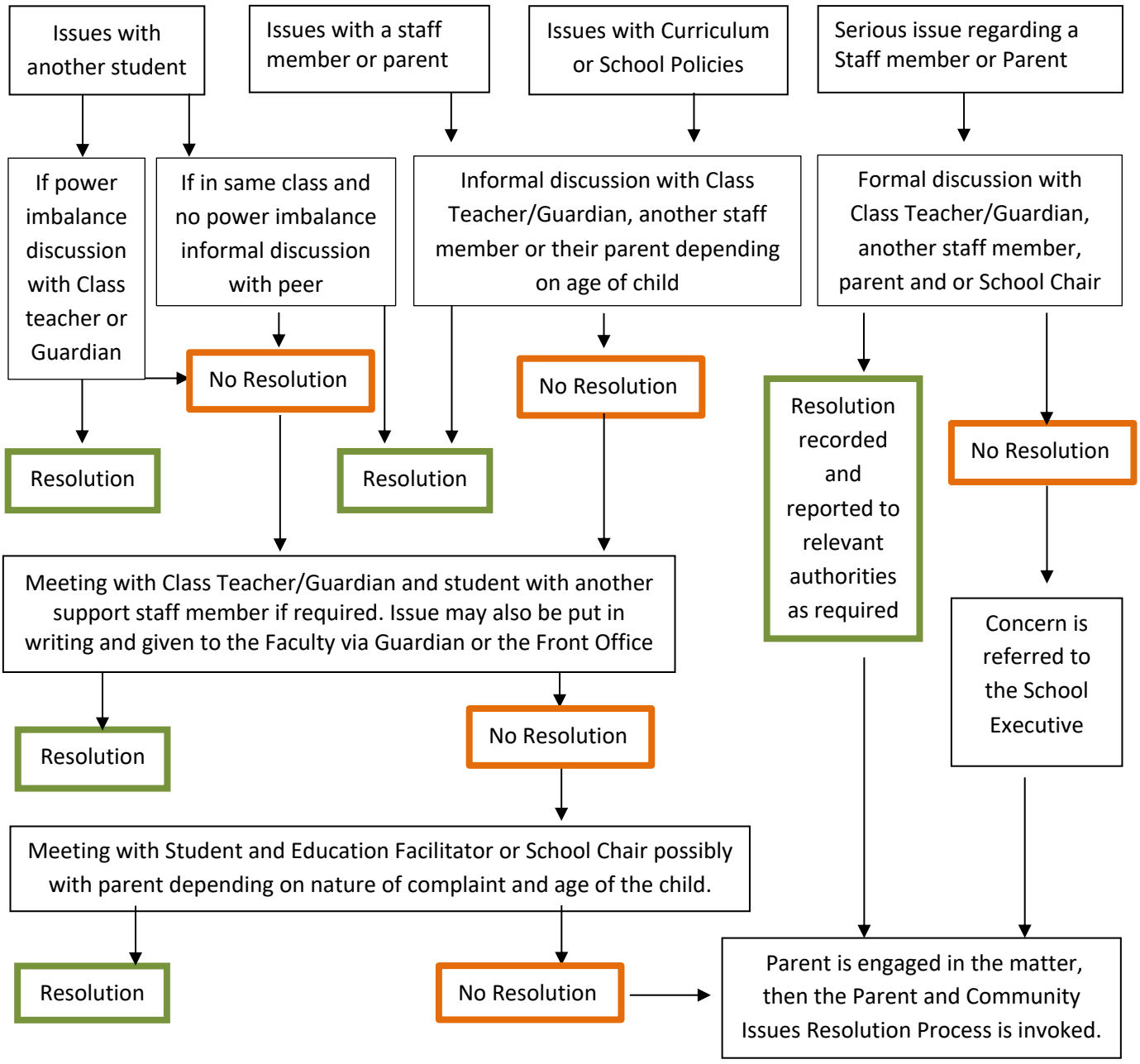
STUDENT ISSUE RESOLUTION PROCESS

For Early Childhood and Primary School students, the School expects that parents or guardians will act on behalf of the child, utilising the Parent and Community Issues Resolution Process.

For Secondary School students, the following process will apply unless the student's parents, the Class Guardian or School Chair consider the issue of major importance. In such cases the Parent Issues Resolution Process may apply. Where any concern relates to suspicion of child abuse, or may amount to child abuse, the ***Child Safety and Mandatory Report Policy*** will apply, and must be consulted.

As part of their evaluation of options for action, the School Chair and School Executive may determine that it's appropriate to appoint an independent investigation or arbitration.

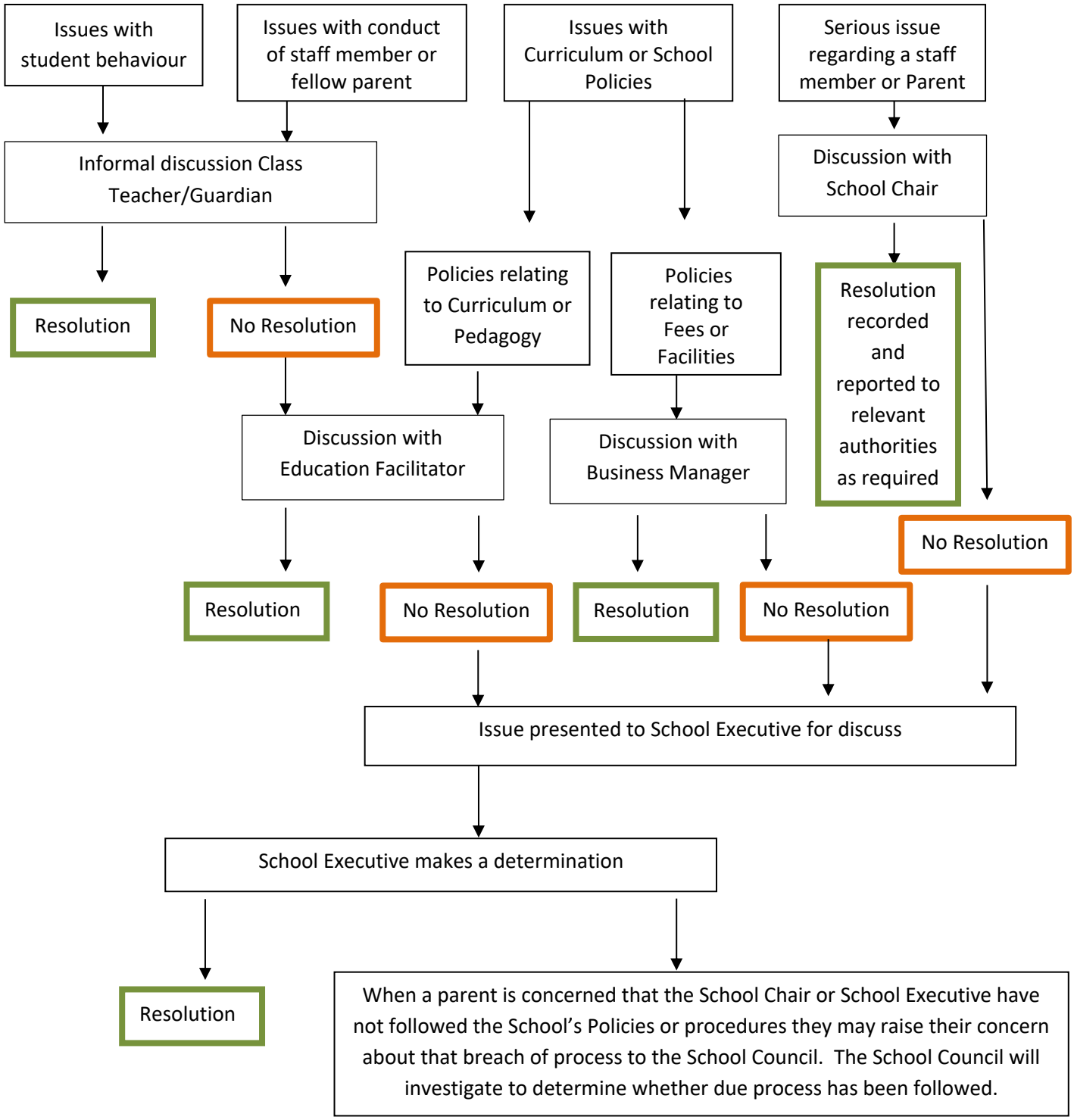
Students should consider the nature of their concern, as different pathways may apply.



PARENT AND COMMUNITY ISSUE RESOLUTION PROCESS

Parents and Community Members are encouraged to raise concerns as soon as they arise, so that they can be quickly addressed. Parents should consider the nature of their concern and who would be best to address the issue. Parents may have concern about student behaviour; staff or fellow parent conduct; or policies, procedures and facilities. Where any concern relates to suspicion of child abuse, or may amount to child abuse, the ***Child Safety and Mandatory Report Policy*** will apply, and must be consulted.

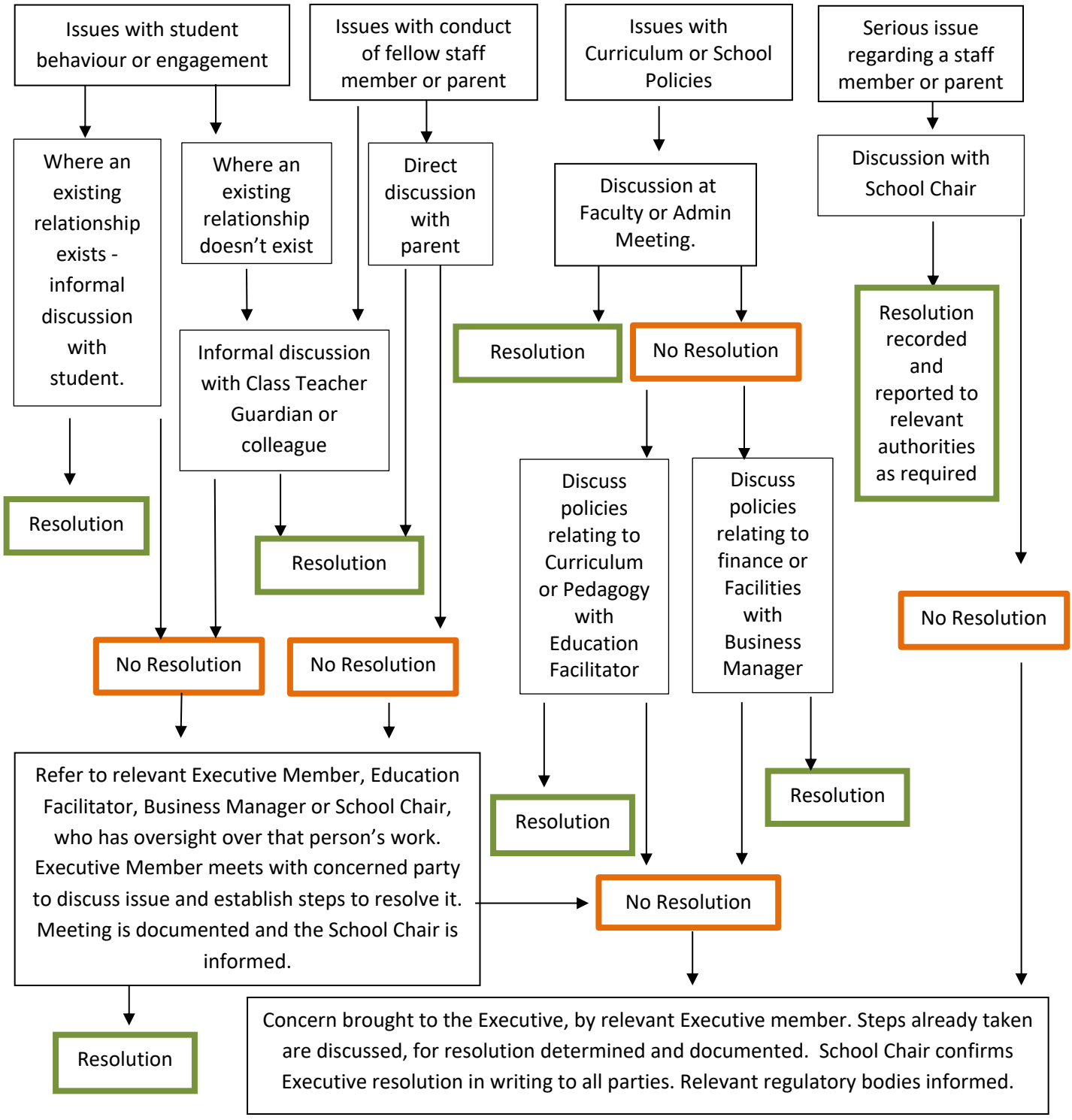
Parents should consider the nature of their concern as different pathways may apply.



STAFF ISSUES RESOLUTION PROCESS

Staff at Tarremah are committed to creating a supportive working environment. To help build and maintain relationships, staff are expected to raise concerns directly with the concerned party wherever possible. If such a discussion may involve a power imbalance, seeking the support of a colleague is recommended. If direct engagement is not successful or feels unsafe, staff will follow the following process. Depending on the nature of concern, the School Executive may request the support of an independent investigator or arbitrator. Where any concern relates to suspicion of child abuse, or may amount to child abuse, the ***Child Safety and Mandatory Report Policy*** will apply, and must be consulted.

Staff should consider the nature of their concern as different pathways may apply.



Process for Resolving Formal Complaints against the School Chair

Any concern regarding an act or omission of the School Chair should be raised directly with the School Chair. This can be done by email of by face to face by appointment. The Chair will acknowledge receipt of an email within three business days and be available for a discussion within a further two business days. The Chair will make every effort to understand the concern, address the issue or explain why a particular position has been taken.

Should this process not create a satisfactory outcome, and if the issue could amount to either Unsatisfactory Professional Conduct or Professional Misconduct, the complaint may be directed to the Chair of the School Council.

Formal Complaints against the School Chair must be made in writing, addressed to the Chair of the School Council, and marked confidential. Such a letter should be delivered to the School Office.

The Council Chair will respond to the complaint within three days, acknowledging the receipt of the complaint and confirming that an investigation will commence.

Being conscious of potential conflicts of interest, the Council Chair will form a subcommittee of Council Members who are not parents to review the complaint without delay.

Being conscious that malicious or unsubstantiated accusations have the risk of damaging the professional reputation of the School Chair, the Council will ensure that the confidentiality and integrity of the process are of the highest standard.

The Council will investigate the complaint without delay to determine whether the School Chair has breached the School's Code of Conduct. The School Chair will be asked to provide a written response to any such formal complaint, as will any relevant witnesses. The complaint will be investigated thoroughly, fairly and as quickly as possible, to the benefit of all parties. A complaint may take time to be properly processed, investigated, assessed and concluded. The length of time will depend on the complexity and/or seriousness of the complaint.

The Council Chair will provide a written response explaining the outcome of the investigation to both the School Chair and to the complainant, as soon as the investigation is complete.

6.0 Responsibilities

- Education Facilitator
- Education Administrator
- Business Manager
- School Executive
- School Chair
- School Council

7.0 Related Documents

- Staff Issue Resolution Process
- Parent and Community Issue Resolution Process
- Student Issue Resolution Process
- Process for Resolving Formal Complaints Against the School Chair
- Parent Community Code of Conduct Policy
- Code of Conduct for Employees Policy
- Children Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Parents Rights and Responsibilities Policy

8.0 Reference/Legislation

- Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988
- Freedom of Information Act 1991
- Telecommunication (Interception)Tasmania Act 1999
- Personal Information Protection Act 2004
- Right of Information Act 2009
- Education Act 2016
- Child Care Act 2001
- Tasmanian Licensing Standards for Centre-Based Child Care, Class 5
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997

9.0 Contact Point

- School Chair
- School Executive
- School Council

10.0 Authorisation

Executive: Council:

Name:

Date: