

The Dispute Resolution Process

Ministry Facilitation

Introduction

Facilitation is available as part of the Ministry of Education's Dispute Resolution Process (DRP). The DRP provides help for schools and boards of trustees, parents, caregivers and whānau, to resolve issues involving children and young people with additional learning needs.

If an issue has already been raised and discussed with the child or young person's teacher and principal, and it hasn't been resolved, those involved can ask the Ministry for help from someone trained in facilitation. It is free, informal, voluntary, locally provided and easy to access for parents, caregivers, whānau and schools.

Facilitators help schools and the child or young person's parents, caregivers and whānau talk and work together to find a practical solution. The facilitator won't be there to advocate or enforce; they're there to help facilitate the hard conversations. They support and build on parent, caregiver, whānau and school relationships and focus on outcomes for the child or young person.

They should ensure that all relevant people are involved and that the child or young person's views have been taken into account.

Facilitation is a process that:

- » focuses on resolving issues early
- » gives those involved the opportunity to discuss the issue with the help of someone from the Ministry who has been trained in facilitation
- » gives everyone the opportunity to step back and look at how the situation can be put right, and consider their own actions, as well as those of others
- » needs everyone to be committed to finding a solution that works
- » ideally results in agreed next steps
- » does not stop anyone involved from taking further steps if the issue is not resolved.

Role of the facilitator

- » The facilitator will not take sides and will work with everyone involved to help them find a practical solution.
- » They will not make any decisions but will help those involved to find their own solutions.
- » They should support and build on parent, caregiver, whānau and school relationships and focus on outcomes for the child or young person. They should ensure that all relevant people are involved and that the child or young person's views have been taken into account.
- » The facilitator is also there to provide information to those involved about the services and support available to them.

Who can attend facilitation

Those involved can bring a support person(s) to the facilitation, but they don't have to. An interpreter can also be arranged, if needed.

It is important to consider the voice of the child or young person in the facilitation process. They should have the process explained to them and be given the chance to be present, and take part, if everyone agrees.



What happens at facilitation

Step 1 - A facilitator will contact those involved to arrange a facilitated meeting.

Step 2 - At this meeting, the facilitator will introduce themselves and explain the purpose of the meeting. The facilitator will then ask those involved to summarise the issue from their point of view, usually starting with whoever originally asked for help.

The issue will then be discussed further - everyone is encouraged to play an active part in this discussion.

During this time the facilitator will actively listen to everyone involved and ask questions to get a better understanding of the issue. The facilitator will use a joint problem-solving approach and a range of techniques focused on helping those involved find a solution.

Step 3 - The facilitator will record any agreed actions and provide a copy to everyone.

If those involved can't agree on a way forward or run out of time, the facilitator may suggest a second facilitated meeting, or suggest the issue is referred to the Director of Education for review.

Collection and use of personal information under the DRP

To help the Ministry provide the right type of support under the DRP, we will need to collect personal information about those involved including the child or young person parent and school. If the issue goes to independent mediation, we will need to share this information with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment as part of the referral process. The Ministry will also use this information to review how, and how well, we provide support through the DRP.

Everyone involved will be asked to sign a form giving us authority to collect and share this information.

