

Student Suspension Meetings

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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

Arja Pinkney – Host

Learning and Innovation Specialist

Cheryl Bunker – Q&A

Regional Advisor Governance

Nick Seal – Q&A

Learning and Content Specialist

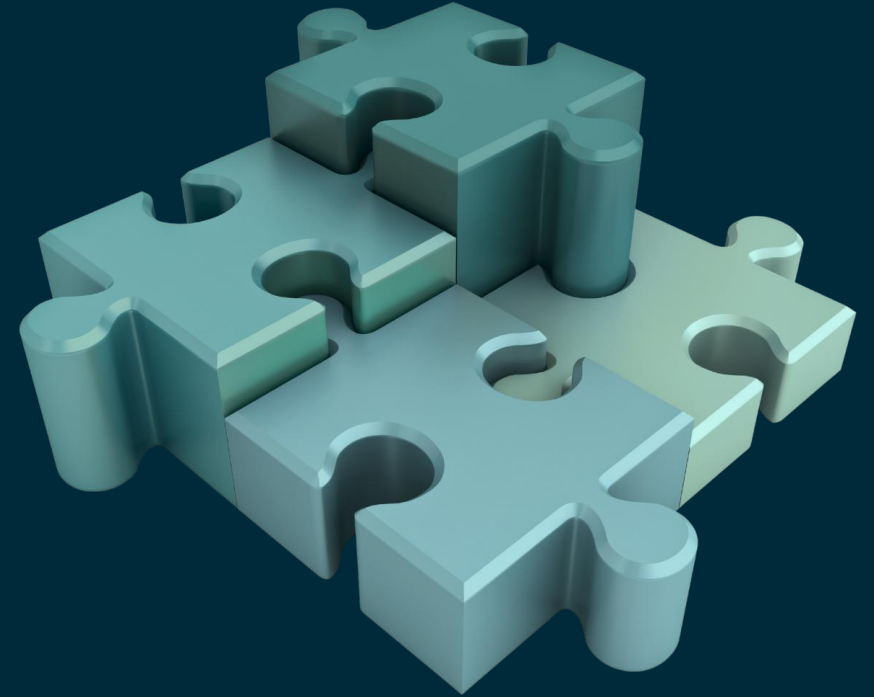
Rachael Spencer – Presenter

Regional Advisor Governance

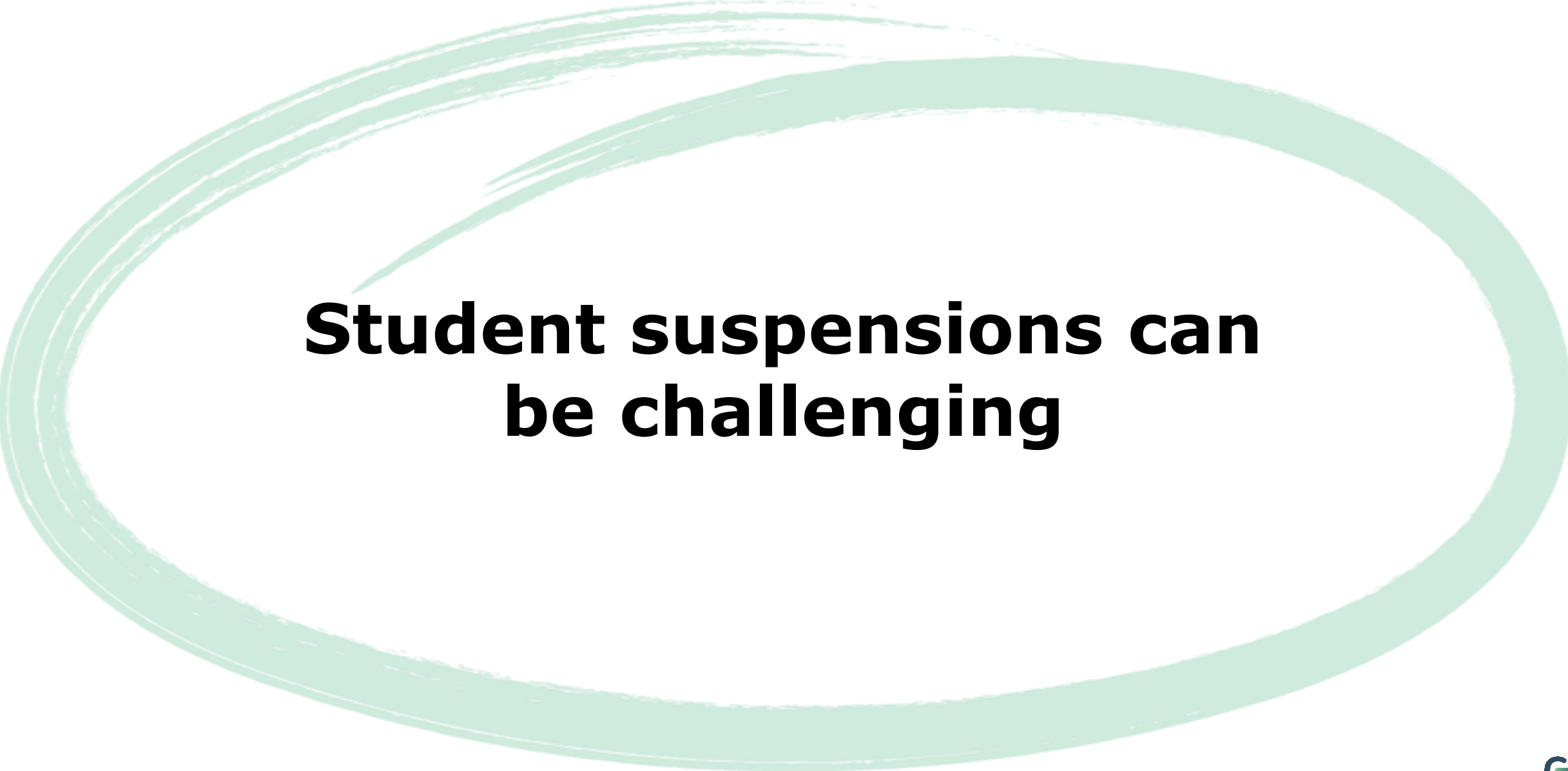


What we'll cover

- What the law says
- Before a meeting
- At a meeting
- After a meeting



Before we begin



**Student suspensions can
be challenging**

Part 1

What the law says

The legislation sets out rights and obligations for everyone involved

- Every student has a right to an education, natural justice, and freedom from discrimination
- Boards must ensure that everyone is emotionally, culturally, and physically safe and has access to guidance and counselling
- The right for principals to stand down and suspend
- The rules for the process that principals and boards must follow
- The right for parents to be informed

Stand down and suspension legislation

- Provides a range of responses that can be applied based on the seriousness of the incident
- Aims to minimise disruption to a student's attendance and, where appropriate, supports their return to school
- Ensures each case is handled fairly and in accordance with the principles of natural justice

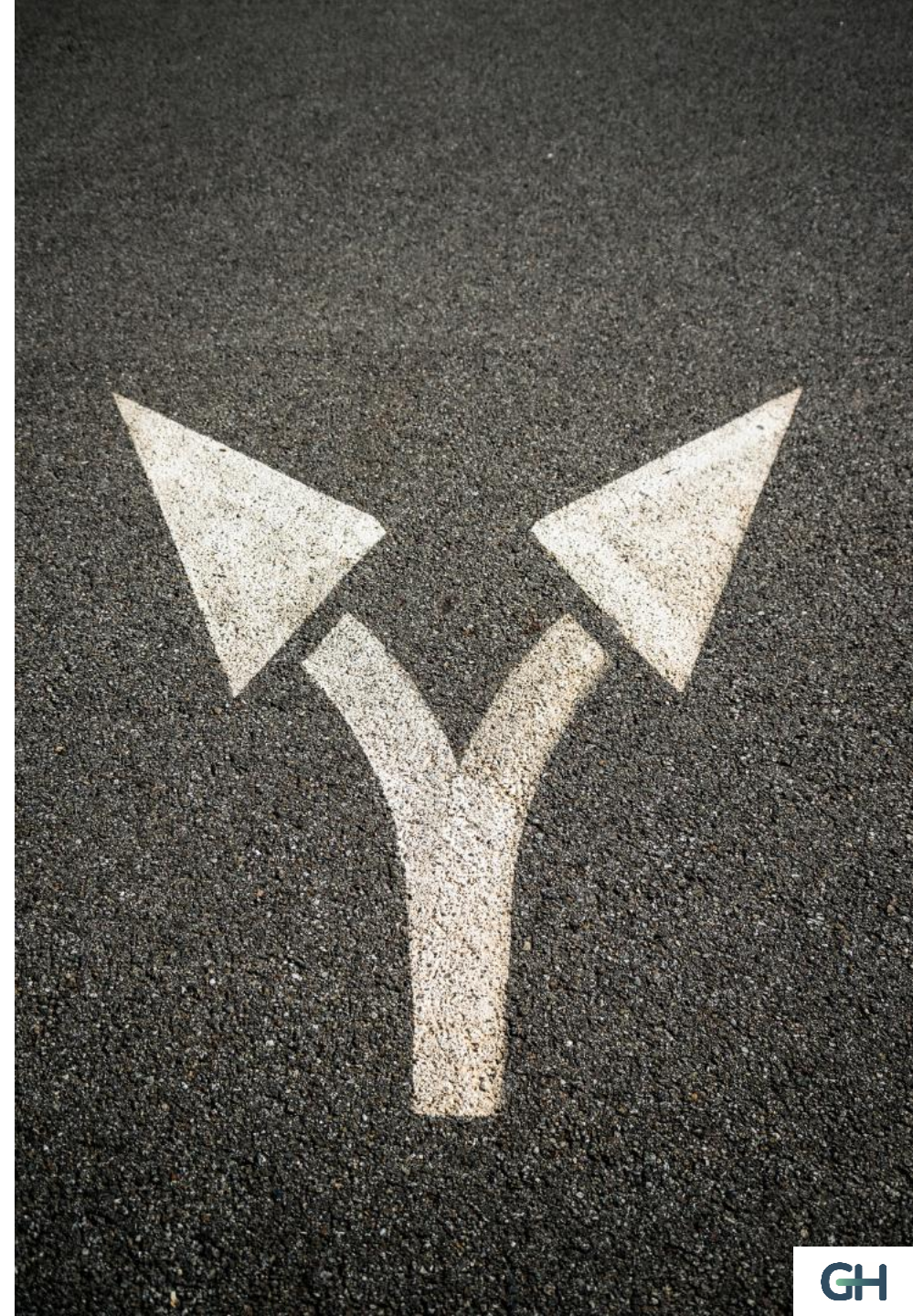
Note:

Natural justice means decision-making is fair, flexible, and unbiased. The outcome must not be predetermined.

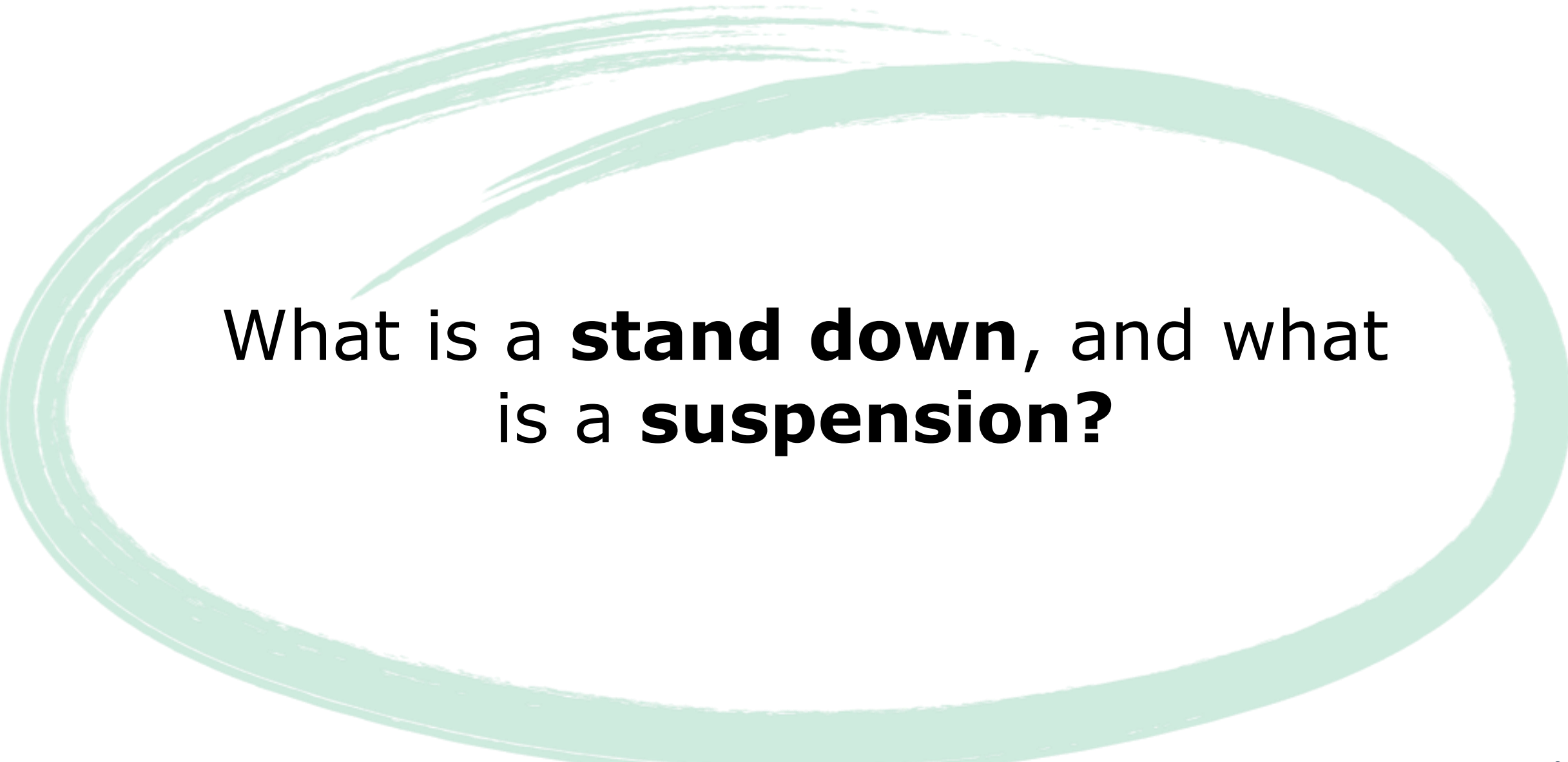
A principal can stand down or suspend a student when:

- The student's gross misconduct or continual disobedience is a harmful or dangerous example to other students
- or**
- It is likely that the student or other students would be seriously harmed if the student were not suspended.

Note: The incident or behaviour must occur while the student is under the school's care and authority. Otherwise, it is a parental/police matter.



Do you know the difference?



What is a **stand down**, and what is a **suspension**?

The Guidelines

Head to the Ministry of Education's website to access the [latest guidelines](#).

You'll find step-by-step instructions, guidance on the process, model letters, and more.

Guidelines

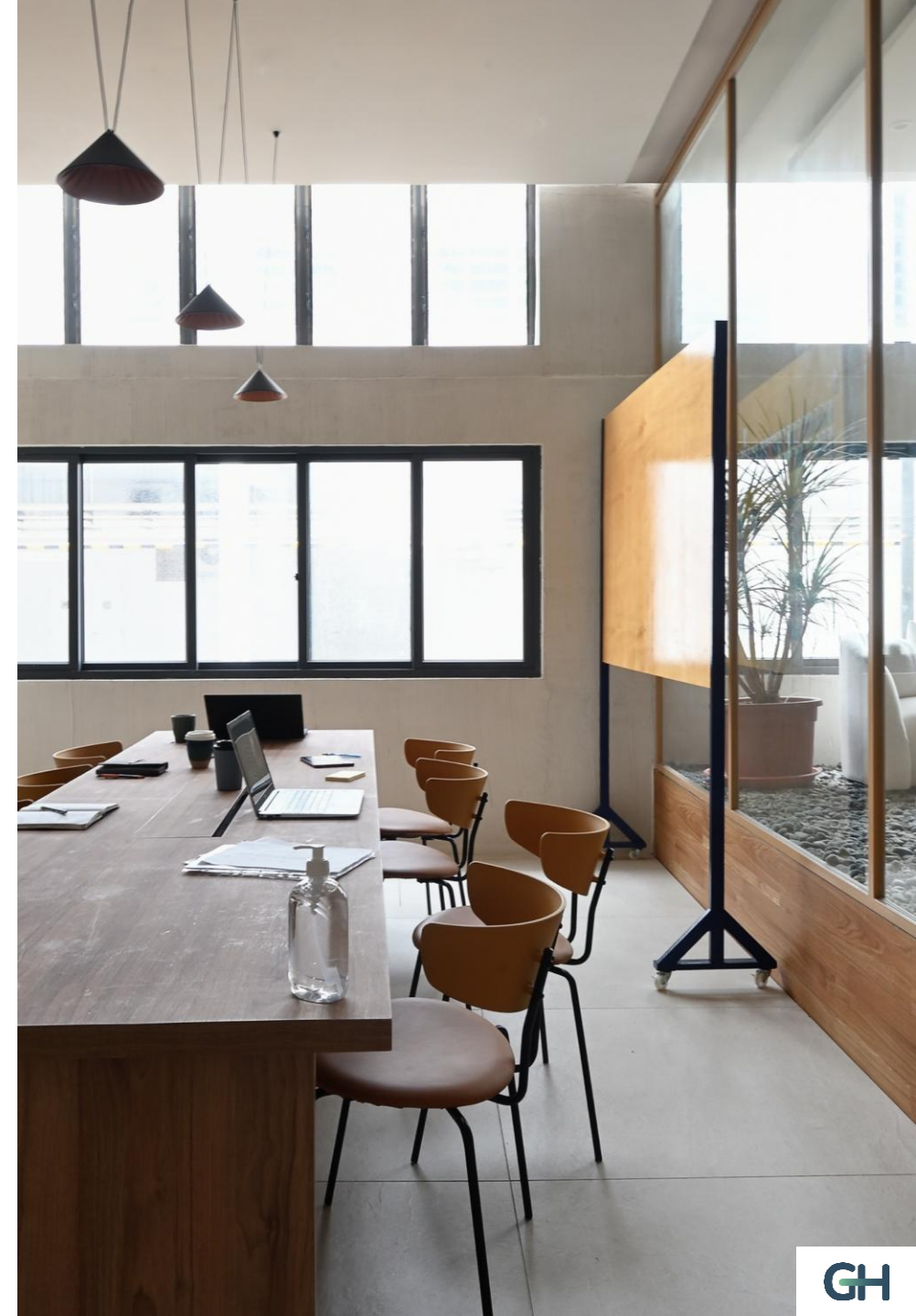
for principals and school boards on stand downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions

Part 2

Before a meeting

Who attends?

- A quorum of board members or a delegated committee
- The principal (to explain the decision)
- The student, parents/guardians, and any chosen representative(s)
- A minute taker



When a student is suspended...

- The student's parents/guardians (and the board/committee) must be notified as soon as practicable
- The meeting must be scheduled and held within 7 school days (or 10 calendar days) from the suspension, at a suitable time and location
- The principal must prepare a written report
- Parents/guardians must receive the report and any other relevant material at least 48 hours before the meeting
- The board/committee also receives all written material confidentially in advance

Information that must be provided to parents/guardians

- When and where the suspension meeting will be held
- Written information about the four decisions available to your board
- Details about the procedures of suspension meetings
- Advice that the student, their parents/guardians (and/or representative) may attend and speak at the meeting
- All material the principal will present to your board (including the suspension report)

Kōrero



Part 3

At a meeting

During a suspension meeting...

- Chair opens the meeting and confirms all information was received
- Principal presents their report
- Student, parents/guardians, and representative (if any) respond
- Board/committee asks questions throughout
- Board/committee considers information, ensures legal compliance, and makes one of four decisions

Note:

Anyone can request an adjournment to consider new information.

The final decision must still be made within the 7- to 10-day timeframe following the suspension.

Did the principal's decision meet the legislative threshold?

- Was the behaviour gross misconduct or continuous disobedience?
- Did the behaviour set a harmful or dangerous example to others?
- Did it or could it have resulted in someone being seriously harmed?



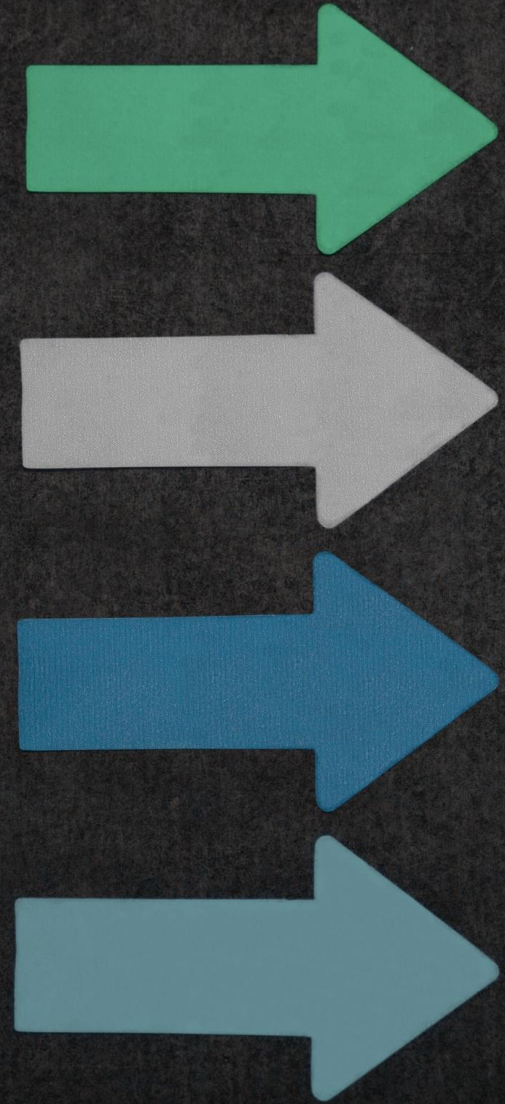
If you agree the suspension was valid, consider:

- What part did the individual circumstances of the student play?
- What is the impact on this student and on others?
- What prior advice and guidance has been provided to the student?
- What further action might be appropriate and practicable?



What are your four options?

- Lift the suspension without conditions
- Lift the suspension with conditions
- Extend the suspension with conditions
- Exclude or expel the student – student cannot return to the school



If you're setting conditions, they must be...

- Reasonable
- Aimed at returning the student to school
- Related to the incident or causes behind it
- Achievable by the student
- Defined and have a reasonable timeframe



Part 4

After a meeting

Your board must ensure...

- Written notice of the decision, reasons, and any conditions is sent to the student, parents/guardians, and the MOE (Ministry of Education)
- The minutes are filed as public-excluded business (PEB) and accurately reflect:
 - Board consideration of the four options
 - Decision made and any conditions set
 - Actions for the principal
- The principal follows through with the actions, including advice, guidance, and educational support
- The student's progress is monitored if the suspension is extended with conditions for more than 4 weeks

There might be a reconsideration meeting

- If the student is not meeting the conditions, your principal may request a reconsideration meeting
- The purpose is to review the decision made by your board
- It is not a new suspension meeting, an appeal, or a rehearing of the original evidence
- Your board/committee looks at the conditions set and considers:
 - Were they appropriate, realistic, and practicable?
 - Do they need to be amended?
 - Which of the four outcomes is appropriate?

There might be a review meeting

- Parents/guardians (or sometimes a board member) may request a review meeting if they are unhappy with the process or the outcome
- The purpose is to review your board's suspension meeting process and the decision it made as a result
- Your board looks at the reason behind the request and decides if a review is needed
- Potential outcomes are to uphold the original decision or amend it to a lesser degree

Common reasons for your decision to be challenged

- Timing
- Unfair processes
- Unreasonable conditions
- Incorrect committee delegations
- A conflict of interest



How can you stay prepared?

- Be familiar with the rules and guidelines
- Know your school's values and tikanga
- Maintain a folder with all relevant documents, including potential support options for students
- Ensure correct delegations and committee terms of reference are in place



Kōrero



Reflection and next steps

What we covered today:

- What the law says
- Before a meeting
- At a meeting
- After a meeting



Support and information

Visit Us



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Learning Library

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Help for Boards

- ▶ Student Behaviour Management
- ▶ Policies, Processes & Bylaws

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Closing the session

Unuhia, unuhia

Draw on, draw on

Unuhia ki te uru tapu nui

Draw on the supreme sacredness

**Kia wātea, kia māmā,
te ngākau, te tinana,
te wairua i te ara tangata**

To clear, to free the heart, the
body, and the spirit of mankind

**Koia rā e Rongo,
whakairia ake ki runga**

Rongo, suspended high above us

Kia tina! Tina! Hui e! Tāiki e!

Draw together! Affirm!

Ngā mihi nui!
Thank you!