St. Paul's S.N.S.



Parental Complaint Policy

Revised Parental Complaints Procedure

















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- A copy of this procedure will be available for parents/legal guardians on the school website and/or on request from the school.
 This procedure comes into effect on the 1st of January 2024.
- Under the Education Act 1998, legally, all schools are managed by the school's Board of Management, on behalf of the school patron.

Purpose/Objective

The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the management bodies of primary schools, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland, An Foras Pátrúnachta, the Muslim Primary Education Board, Educate Together and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education in 2023. It is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner.

It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time-totime concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school. It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship between the parent and school can be preserved and respected. It is expected that all parties concerned will engage proactively.

Procedural Points

The procedure is a staged procedure where every effort is made to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage. In most cases, concerns will be dealt with either informally or formally at the earlier stages of the procedure. Where it has not been possible to agree a resolution at the earlier stages, the procedure does allow for the escalation of the matter to the Board of Management. This procedure sets out, in four stages, the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed. It is expected the parties will follow each stage in sequence.

- Where the term written correspondence is used, this refers specifically to a letter or email correspondence from a parent/legal quardian(s).
- Only complaints about a teacher which are written and signed by a parent/legal guardian, and which relate to their own child, will be investigated.
- Where a complaint raised by a parent/legal guardian is deemed by the employer/board of management to relate to the following, this procedure will not apply;
 - matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
 - frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school: or
 - complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.
- In all circumstances, any form of written correspondence for the attention of the Board of Management must be supplied to the Chairperson of the board of management <u>only</u>. Any deviation from

- this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of this agreement.
- Days in this procedure refer specifically to school days. A school day is a day on which the school is in operation. Holiday periods, school closures and leaves of absences are not counted as school days for the purpose of this procedure.
- Group/collective complaints are not provided for and each parent/legal guardian raising a concern will be dealt with separately through this process.
- The procedure is a domestic forum and accordingly, neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any stage.
- Issues should be raised in a timely manner. It is in the
 best interests of the child that issues are raised to
 achieve early resolution at the earliest possible stage
 with the teacher, ideally while the pupil is in that
 teacher's class.

Formal Stage 1 Discussion

Formal Stage 2 Written

Formal Stage 3 **Board of Management**

(20 days)

Formal Stage 4 Decision

1.1 Parent/quardian meets teacher

A parent/legal guardian who

2.1 Written complaint sent to Chairperson

If the complaint has not been resolved at stage 1, the parent/ legal quardian who wishes to pursue the matter further should submit the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. This commences stage 2.

3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board If the complaint remains unresolved

following stage 2 and the parent/ legal quardian wishes to pursue the matter, they should inform the Chairperson in writing of this fact. The Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within 10 days of receipt of this written statement. At this meeting, the Board can decide to proceed to either stage 3.2 or 3.3.

3.2 Complaint concluded

Where the floard considers the

complaint, the process may

be concluded at this stage, if

the board considers that:

frivolous/vecatious-

b) The complaint has already been

appropriately dealt with through

investigated by the board:

a more relevant DE circular.

Where the Board determines the

complaint is concluded at this

should be so informed within

five days of the Board meeting.

stage, the parent/legal guardian

The complaint is more

d) where recourse to law

has been initiated.

a) The complaint is

3.3 Proceed to a hearing

- the teacher should be informed to a full hearing and the Chairperson must ensure the teacher has been supplied with all documents which are being considered by the Board.
- b) the Board should arrange a quardian if it considers such to be required. The parent/ accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting.
- the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The teacher is entitled to be represented by a friend or a union representative, who may be accompanied for the purpose
- dy the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board as the employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be
- the meeting of the Board of 10 days of the meeting referred

wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child, should, seek an appointment with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the complaint, Further meetings with the teacher can be convened as appropriate.

2.2 Chairperson provides a copy to the teacher

The Chairperson should provide a copy of the written complaint to the teacher against whom the complaint has been made, without delay.

2.3 Chairperson convenes meeting(s)

The Chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent/ legal guardian within 10 school days of the commencement of stage 2.1. This may require one or more meetings to be convened by the Chairperson with the teacher/ parent/legal guardian and other school personnel as deemed appropriate by the Chairperson

The complaint may be

Where the Roard decides to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows:

- that the complaint is proceeding
- meeting with the parent/legal legal guardian is entitled to be
- of assistance and note taking.
- shared with any third party.
- Management referred to in 3/b). (c) and (d) will take place within to in 3.1. in so far as possible.

4.1 Written decision from Chairperson

The Board will consider the complaint and the response provided and will adjudicate on the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent/legal guardian(s) within five days of the meeting held at stage 3.3.

4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

1.2 Parent/guardian meets Principals

Where the parent/legal guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the teacher, they should seek an appointment with the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Principal as appropriate.

1.3 Parent/guardian meets Chairperson

Where the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/legal quardian should seek an appointment with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Chairperson as appropriate.

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved during this stage.

Complaint resolved

resolved at this stage.

Where a complaint is received about a principal the above process commences at Stage 1, 2.

Adoption by the Board

This policy has been reviewed and updated by the staff of our school and will be available on the school website. The Board of Management reserves the right to amend this policy as needs arise.

Reviewed by staff on:

Principal)

Chairperson of Board of Management)