Revised Parental Complaints Procedure

















Note.

- 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-to-time 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 guardian(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

A parent/legal guardian who meets teacher 1.1 Parent/guardian

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

1.2 Parent/guardian

meets Chairperson 1.3 Parent/guardian

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

Complaint resolved

resolved during this stage The complaint may be

Formal Stage 2 Written

(10 days)

Board of Management Formal Stage 3

(20 days)

Decision Formal Stage 4 (5 days)

This commences stage 2

meets Principal'

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

as appropriate

sent to Chairperson 2.1 Written complaint

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

copy to the teacher 2.2 Chairperson provides a

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

2.3 Chairperson convenes meeting(s)

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

Complaint resolved

resolved at this stage. The complaint may be

3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board

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

3.2 Complaint concluded

the board considers that: complaint, the process may be concluded at this stage, if Where the Board considers the

- has been initiated.

should be so informed within stage, the parent/legal guardian complaint is concluded at this five days of the Board meeting. Where the Board determines the

- frivolous/vexatious; The complaint is
- The complaint has already been investigated by the board;
- The complaint is more a more relevant DE circular, appropriately dealt with through
- d) where recourse to law

3.3 Proceed to a hearing

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

- a) the teacher should be informed all documents which are being considered by the Board teacher has been supplied with Chairperson must ensure the to a full hearing and the that the complaint is proceeding
- b) the Board should arrange a a friend at any such meeting. accompanied and assisted by legal guardian is entitled to be to be required. The parent/ guardian if it considers such meeting with the parent/legal
- of assistance and note taking. union representative, who may the teacher should be afforded Board. The teacher is entitled to be accompanied for the purpose be represented by a friend or a presentation of their case to the an opportunity to make a
- the employer in response to the teacher should be shared with any third party. statement will be confidential the complaint. This written statement to the board as requested to supply a written to the employer and will not be
- the meeting of the Board of to in 3.1. in so far as possible. 10 days of the meeting referred (c) and (d) will take place within Management referred to in 3(b)

4.1 Written decision

from Chairperson

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

4.2 Complaint concluded

Board shall be fina The decision of the