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.

Discussion Formal Stage 1

1.1 Parent/guardian meets teacher

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

meets Principal¹ 1.2 Parent/guardian

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

meets Chairperson 1.3 Parent/guardian

as appropriate. 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)

sent to Chairperson 2.1 Written complaint

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

2.2 Chairperson provides a copy to the teacher

the Board can decide to proceed within 10 days of receipt of this should make a formal report of this fact. The Chairperson

written statement. At this meeting

to either stage 3.2 or 3.3

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

3.2 Complaint concluded

complaint, the process may Where the Board considers the

the board considers that: be concluded at this stage, if

The complaint is

frivolous/vexatious;

convenes meeting(s) 2.3 Chairperson

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

Complaint resolved

resolved at this stage. The complaint may be

> stage, the parent/legal guardian complaint is concluded at this

Where the Board determines the

five days of the Board meeting. should be so informed within

3.1 Chairperson makes a **Board of Management**

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

to a full hearing and the considered by the Board all documents which are being Chairperson must ensure the the teacher should be informed that the complaint is proceeding teacher has been supplied with

to the Board of Management

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 formal report to the Board

- the Board should arrange a a friend at any such meeting. accompanied and assisted by meeting with the parent/legal legal guardian is entitled to be to be required. The parent/ guardian if it considers such
- 0 the teacher should be afforded of assistance and note taking. be accompanied for the purpose union representative, who may an opportunity to make a be represented by a friend or a Board. The teacher is entitled to presentation of their case to the
- the teacher should be shared with any third party. to the employer and will not be statement will be confidential the complaint. This written statement to the board as requested to supply a written the employer in response to

d) where recourse to law

has been initiated

a more relevant DE circular, appropriately dealt with through The complaint is more

The complaint has already been

investigated by the board;

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)

Formal Stage 3

(20 days)

Decision

(5 days)

Formal Stage 4

from Chairperson 4.1 Written decision



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

4.2 Complaint concluded

Board shall be final. The decision of the