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## Parental Complaints Procedure

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**Rationale:** The need to know the proper procedure to follow in the event of a complaint for or against the teacher in this school.

This policy was updated in March 2024, in line with new guidelines published 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.

**Relationship to the School Vision:**

This policy reflects the overall ethos of our school, which states that it is dedicated to the care of the whole school community and it aims to provide a safe and secure environment for learning.

**Aims:**

That there would be a clear course to follow in the event of a complaint and that all teachers and parents/guardians are familiar with this. That there would be a just solution when these procedures are followed.

### **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 only. 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.

**Procedure:**

**Stage 1 Discussion**

- 1.1 Parent meets with Teacher. If the issue is not resolved, then
- 1.2 Parent meets with Principal. If the issue is not resolved, then
- 1.3 Parent meets with Chair of BoM. If the issue is not resolved, then

**Stage 2 Written (10 Days)**

- 2.1 Written complaint sent to Chair of BoM
- 2.2 Chair provides copy of complaint to Teacher
- 2.3 Chair convenes meeting(s) between Teacher and Parent to resolve matter. If the issue is not resolved, then

**Stage 3 Board of Management (20 Days)**

- 3.1 Chair makes a formal report to the BoM
- 3.2 Complaint concluded. BoM decides
  - a. Complaint is vexatious/frivolous
  - b. Complaint has already been investigated by the BoM
  - c. Complaint should be dealt with through a relevant Circular
  - d. Complaint has been referred to law
- 3.3 Proceed to a Hearing. Complaint should be investigated by the BoM

**Stage 4 Decision (5 Days)**

- 4.1 Written decision of BoM communicated to Parent and Teacher by Chair
- 4.2 Complaint concluded as decision of BoM is final

(See attached Appendix 1 for further guidelines on each stage as published by the above named school managerial bodies)

This policy was ratified and implemented on 25/5/2010 and reviewed on 07/03/24

A copy of this policy will be available for parents/legal guardians on the school website and/or on request from the school.

Signed: Marie Baggett  
Chairperson

Date: 07/03/2024

[Signature]  
Principal

Date: 7/3/24