

Parental Complaints Policy

Introduction

This policy was first drafted in March 2007. It was circulated to all parents during March and was ratified at B.O.M. meeting in May '07. This policy was again reviewed in 2011 and 2022.

Rationale

The need for this policy arises from:
Section 28, Education Act 1998- procedures for processing complaints by parents prescribed for all schools under the act.

Relationship to school ethos

The school promotes positive home –school communication and endeavours to enhance the self-esteem of everyone within the school community. The adherence to the procedures outlined in this policy will ensure the continuation of the positive parent/ teacher relationship that exists.

Complaints are infrequent but the school would wish that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly.

Aims/ Objectives

- To foster fruitful and trusting relationships between school and parents.
- To afford parents an opportunity to express opinions/grievances through the framework of the defined procedure outlined in this policy.
- To allow parents an opportunity to liaise with the class teacher.

Behaviour of all Stakeholders in the School

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all of the stakeholders e.g. the staff, parents and the wider community. Anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so. While the behaviour of children in our school is of vital importance, adults in the school community also have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children.

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It is important that all stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviours in the school. Examples include:

- All stakeholders are expected to speak to each other with respect. Shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If a stakeholder displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building. In certain cases, the Gardaí must be called
- All stakeholders will treat our children with the utmost respect while on the premises
- Staff should not be asked to speak about another parent's child. The staff of the school will respect your child's right to privacy so it is asked that parents respect other children's rights to privacy.
- When stakeholders meet, it is important to respect that the time of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected.
- Should a parent need to have a discussion or meeting, an appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties. This ensures that issues can be resolved.

Please note

This policy does not cover

1. Complaints that are being dealt with through legal channels.
2. Matters of professional competence which come under the remit of the Dept. of Education and Science.
3. Minor complaints which can be quickly resolved.

The following is the agreed complaints procedure to be followed in primary schools.

In-School Procedures

If a parent has a concern in relation to the social or academic progress of their child, the following steps are to be followed:

Stage 1

- A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.

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- Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher she/he should approach the Principal Teacher with a view to resolving it.
- If the complaint is still unresolved the parent/ guardian should raise the matter with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving it.

Stage 2

- If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further she/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management
- The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

- If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board and except in those cases where the chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board to be required:
 - (a) supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; and
 - (b) arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the Principal Teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint

Stage 4

- If the complaint is still not resolved the Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3 (b)
- If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within 3 days of the Board meeting.
- If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:
 - (a)The teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
 - (b)The teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
 - (c)The teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint;

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- (d) The teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
- (e) The Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant if it considers such to be required. The complainant would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
- (f) The meeting of the Board of Management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within ten days of the meeting referred to in Stage 3b.

Stage 5

- When the Board has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within five days of the meeting of the Board.
- The decision of the Board is final.

Success Criteria

- Swift and efficient resolution of grievances.
- Parent/Teacher satisfaction.
- Positive school community feedback.

Review

Review completed 2007 and 2022.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified at B.O.M. meeting on 24th of May 07.
It was reviewed Nov 11 and March 2022.

Date next review: 2024