

Scoil Bhríde, Ráth Chormaic

Complaints Procedure Policy

“Our vision is to create a caring school community where children actively participate, achieve their potential and are proud of their achievements”

As pupils, staff, parents and the wider community aim to uphold this vision, sometimes issues may arise. It is recommended that a school implements a complaints procedure so that everybody involved in our school is protected.

Rationale & Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that there is a happy and safe learning environment for all children who come to school. By following a complaints procedure, it is hoped that all parties involved will feel confident that a fair process is utilised in dealing with issues which arise. The procedure below is that adopted by the INTO (Irish National Teachers’ Organisation) and CPSMA (Catholic Primary Schools Management Association).

The INTO and CPSMA reached agreement in 1993 on a procedure for dealing with complaints by parents against staff. The purpose of this procedure is to facilitate the resolution of difficulties where they may arise in an agreed and fair manner. The agreement lays out in five stages the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed at each stage.

Only those complaints about staff which are submitted in written form and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the board of management, except where those complaints are deemed by the board to be:

- on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education and Science;
- frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a staff member in a school; or
- complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.

Unwritten complaints, not in the above categories, may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

Stages of Complaints Procedure

Stage 1

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

Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the staff member, s/he should approach the principal 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.

The above should be done in that order on an informal basis.

Stage 2

If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further s/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 staff member and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within five working 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 staff member with a copy of the written complaint; and
- (b) arrange a meeting with the staff member 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 staff member and the complainant should be so informed within three days of the board meeting.

If the board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation, this proceeds as follows:

- (a) the staff member should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
- (b) the staff member should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
- (c) the staff member should be requested to supply a written statement to the board in response to the complaint;
- (d) the staff member should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of his/her case to the board. The staff member is 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 is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting; and
- (f) the meeting of the board of management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3(b).

Stage 5

When the board has completed its investigation, the chairperson should convey the decision of the board in writing to the staff member and the complainant within five days of the meeting of the board.

The decision of the board shall be final.

The Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years.

In this agreement 'days' means school days.

Note: The vast majority of complaints are resolved locally and informally. However, in certain circumstances, for example, where a complaint is considered to be serious in nature,

or where the staff member is required to submit a written response to his/her board of management, the staff member should contact his/her INTO District Representative or INTO Head Office for advice and assistance.

Implementation Date

This policy will be implemented immediately.

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified at a meeting of the Board of Management on 20/04/2015. It will be communicated to all staff and will be available to parents on the school website.

Signed: _____ (Chairperson) Date: _____