



Complaints Procedure

Procedure Aims

- To set out a process by which the school can effectively deal with oral and written complaints made by parents/guardians.
- To protect staff from impromptu confrontation by parents/guardians.
- To have due regard for the needs of pupils, parents/guardians, and staff alike, so that matters can be resolved in as fair a way as possible.

Making Complaints

A complaint may be oral or written.

Class teachers are generally the first point of contact for parents/guardians in matters relating to their child/ren's participation in the school (see * below).

Oral Complaints

Where possible, complaints should be brought orally to the attention of the class teacher in the first instance*, and **Procedure Stages For Oral Complaints** as set out in **Section A** will be followed.

*Teachers are **NOT** available without appointment to address complaints.

Parents/Guardians may approach teachers between 8.40 a.m. and 8.55 a.m. with a view to making an appointment to discuss/address an issue that involves a complaint. Appointments may also be made by telephone or e-mail via the school office.

ANY PERSONAL APPROACH MUST NOT BE CONFRONTATIONAL. TEACHERS ARE ENTITLED TO PREPARE FOR A DISCUSSION REGARDING A COMPLAINT, AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD RESPECT THE FACT THAT THE TEACHER IS IN THEIR PLACE OF WORK, AND THAT OTHER STAFF, PARENTS/GUARDIANS, OR PUPILS MAY BE PRESENT AT THE TIME. IN ANY SITUATION WHERE FOR ANY REASON THEY FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT DOING SO, TEACHERS MAY REFUSE TO ENGAGE WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS.

Written Complaints

If a complaint is first made in writing (i.e. by letter or e-mail), it should be addressed to the class teacher and/or Principal, and **Procedure Stages for Written Complaints** as set out in **Section B** will be followed.

Section A - Procedure Stages For Oral Complaints

Stage 1 – Teacher

1) If a parent/guardian has an issue regarding their child/ren, and wishes to complain, they must first raise it with the class teacher in the appropriate manner with a view to resolution.

The teacher and/or parent/guardian may at this stage inform the principal of the complaint.

Where the matter is resolved between the parent/guardian and the teacher, no further escalation is necessary. The teacher and/or parent/guardian may inform the principal of the outcome and any actions that have been agreed upon.

Stage 2 - Principal

Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher, the Principal should be approached.

The Principal will discuss matters with parent/guardian, and with the class teacher, with a view to reaching a satisfactory conclusion, including the putting in place by the school and/or parent/guardian of any remedial measures that may have been agreed.

Stage 3 - Chairperson

If the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/guardian should raise the matter with the Chairperson of the Board of Management. If at this stage the parent/guardian wishes to do so in writing, **Procedure Steps For Written Complaints** apply henceforth. Otherwise the Chairperson will deal with the matter as a verbal complaint and will conduct enquiries/discussions involving Teacher, Principal, and Parent/Guardian with a view to evaluating the complaint and bringing the matter to a satisfactory conclusion.

Principal and teacher will be informed of any such conclusion. The school and/or parent/guardian will put in place/act upon any remedial measures that may have been agreed.

If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian still wishes to pursue the matter, he/she should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management, at which point **Procedure Steps For Written Complaints** will be followed.

Section B - Procedure Steps For Written Complaints

All written complaints, along with copies of all written correspondence and minutes pertaining thereto, will be kept in the Principal's office on the school's files.

Stage 1

- If a complaint is first made in writing (i.e. by letter or e-mail), to the class teacher, it will immediately be brought to the attention of the Principal. The Principal will decide if at this stage the matter needs to be notified to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- If a complaint is first made in writing (i.e. by letter or e-mail), to the Principal, the precise nature of the written complaint will be brought to the notice of the teacher. The Principal will decide if at this stage the matter needs to be notified to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- Following their discussions, the Teacher and/or Principal will make contact as soon as reasonably practicable with the parent/guardian to offer a meeting aimed at resolving the issue.
- If the complaint can be resolved at this stage a note of the outcome will be made on the school's files. Otherwise the matter will proceed to **Stage 2** as set out below.
- If a complaint is first made in writing (i.e. by letter or e-mail), to the Chairperson of the Board of Management, the precise nature of the written complaint will be brought to the notice of the teacher and the Principal and **Stage 2** procedures as set out below will be followed.

Stage 2

If the complaint is still unresolved at **Stage 1** and the parent/guardian still wishes to pursue the matter, he/she 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 concerned and the Principal and should try to resolve the matter between the parties within five school days of the written complaint or as soon as practicable.

If the complaint can be resolved at this stage a note of the outcome will be made on the school's files and those concerned will be informed of the outcome. The school and/or parent/guardian will put in place/act upon any remedial measures that may have been agreed.

Stage 3

If the written complaint is not resolved at **Stage 2**, the Chairperson should supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint and arrange a meeting with the teacher, and, where applicable, with the Principal, with a view to resolving the complaint. This meeting should take place within ten school days of receipt of the written complaint or as soon as practicable.

If the complaint can be resolved at this stage a note of the outcome will be made on the school's files and those concerned will be informed of the outcome.

The school and/or parent/guardian will put in place/act upon any remedial measures that may have been agreed.

Section C – Board of Management

If the complaint has not been resolved in **Section 2** above, the Chairperson should convene a Board of Management meeting within ten school days (if possible) of the meeting referred to in **Stage 3** in order to make a formal report to the Board on the complaint.

If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated, the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within three school days of the Board Meeting.

If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated and/or that it warrants further investigation, it should proceed as follows:

- a)The teacher and the complainant 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 of Management in response to the complaint;
- 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, where practicable, take place within ten school days of the meeting referred to in **Stage 3** above, or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter.

When the Board has completed its investigation and decided how the matter is to be concluded, the chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher, the Principal, and the complainant, normally within five days of the meeting of the Board.

A record of the outcome will be kept on the school's files.

The school and/or parent/guardian will put in place/act upon any remedial measures that may have been agreed as a result of this process.

The decision of the Board shall be final.

Notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, either the Principal or the Chairperson of the Board may, in circumstances where they deem the matter to be serious enough, decide to refer any complaint or matters surrounding any complaint directly to the Board of Management. In such a case they will observe the requirements set out in this policy for informing the parent/guardian and the teacher concerned.

This Procedure was ratified by the Board of Management on **11th May 2021**

The Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years.

Revd. Seán Hanily

11th May 2021