

Policy No. 18

Parental Complaints Procedure

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.

Cloonakilla NS promotes positive home-school contacts and endeavours to enhance the self-esteem of everyone within the school community. To afford parents the opportunity to express and address opinions and grievances, the Board has set up a framework outlined below. Through use of this framework, it is hoped to minimise the opportunity for conflict.

The purpose of the 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.

Introduction

Only those complaints about teachers which are written 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: (i) on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;

(ii) frivolous or vexation complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or

(iii) 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. Days in this procedure refers specifically to school days.

Group/collective complaints are not provided for.

In-School Procedures

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

Formal Stage 1	Formal Stage 2	Formal Stage 3		Formal Stage 4
Discussion →	Written (10 days)→	Board of Management (20)	→	Decision (5 days)
<p>1.1 Parent / guardian meets teacher A parent/legal guardian who wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child, should, seek an appointment with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the teacher can be convened as appropriate</p>	<p>2.1 Written complaint sent to Chairperson If the complaint has not yet been resolved at stage 1, the parent/ legal guardian who wishes to pursue the matter further should submit the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the BOM. This commences stage 2.</p>	<p>3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 and the parent/legal guardian wishes to pursue the matter, should inform The Chairperson should make a formal report to The BOM within 10 school days of receipt of their written statement. At this meeting, the Board can decide to proceed to either 3.2 or 3.3.</p>	<p>3.3 Proceed to a hearing Where the Board decides to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows: a) the teacher should be informed that the complaint is proceeding to a full hearing and the Chairperson must ensure the teacher has been supplied with all documents which are being considered by the Board b) The Board should arrange a meeting with the parent/legal guardian if it considers such to be required. The parent/legal guardian is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting. c) The teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The teacher is entitled to be represented by a friend or a union representative, who may be accompanied for the purpose of assistance and note taking. d) The teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board as the employer in response to the complaint. e) the meeting of the BOM</p>	<p>4.1 Written decision from Chairperson will adjudicate on the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent /guardian within 5 days of the meeting held at stage 3.3</p>

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

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

3.2 Complaint concluded
Where the Board considers the complaint, the process may be concluded at this stage, if the board considers that:
a) The complaint is frivolous/vexatious
b) The complaint has already been investigated by the board
c) The complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant DE circular, or,
d) Where recourse to law has been initiated
Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent/legal guardian should be so informed within five days of the Board meeting

referred to in 3(b), (c) & (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1 in so far as possible.



<p>1.3 Parent /Guardian meets Chairperson Where the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/guardian should seek an appointment with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened as appropriate.</p>	<p>2.3 Chairperson convenes meeting(s) The Chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent / guardian within <u>10 school days</u> of the commencement of stage 2.1. This may require one or more meetings to be convened by the Chairperson with the teacher/parent/legal guardian and other school personnel as deemed appropriate by the Chairperson</p>			
<p>Complaint resolved The complaint may be resolved during this stage</p>	<p>Complaint resolved The complaint may be resolved at this stage</p>			<p>4.2 Complaint concluded The decision of the Board is final</p>

Signed: Tommy Cormican_____ Date: January 2024

**Chairman of BOM, Cloonakilla N.S.
Date for Review: January 2027**