

# **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 BOM, 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.

## **Formal Stage 1 – Discussion**

### **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.

### **1.2 Parent/guardian meets Principal**

Where the parent/legal 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.

### **1.3 Parent/guardian meets Chairperson**

Where the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/legal guardian should seek an appointment with the chairperson of the Board of Management of the school with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Chairperson as appropriate.

### **Complaint resolved**

The complaint may be resolved during this stage.

## **Formal Stage 2 – Written (10 days)**

### **2.1 Written complaint sent to Chairperson**

If the complaint has not 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 Board of Management. This commences stage 2.

### **2.2 Chairperson provides a copy to the teacher**

The chairperson should provide a copy of the written complaint to the teacher against whom the complaint has been made, without delay.

### **2.3 Chairperson convenes meeting(s)**

The chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent/legal guardian within 10 school days of the commencement of stage 2. 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.

### **Complaint resolved**

The complaint may be resolved at this stage.

## **Formal Stage 3 – Board of Management – (20 days)**

### **3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board of Management (BOM)**

If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 and the parent/legal guardian wishes to pursue the matter, they should inform the Chairperson in writing of the fact. The Chairperson should make a formal report to the BOM within 10 days of receipt of this written statement. At this meeting the BOM can decide to proceed to either stage 3.2 or 3.3

### **3.2 Complaint concluded**

Where the BOM considers the complaint, the process may be concluded at this stage if the BOM considers that:

- a. The complaint is frivolous/vexatious;
- b. The complaint has already been investigated by the BOM;
- 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 BOM determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent/legal guardian should be so informed within five days of the BOM meeting.

### **3.3 Proceed to a hearing**

Where the BOM 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 BOM.
- b. The BOM 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 BOM. 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 BOM as the employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be share with any third party.
- e. The meeting of the BOM referred to in 3 (b), (c) and (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1 insofar as possible.