



## Complaints Procedure

**Policy Date: May 2021**

At Milltown Primary School, we take complaints very seriously. We have the best interests of all our pupils and their families at the centre of all we do. In this regard, we encourage anyone with a concern to speak to us as soon as possible.

If concerns are dealt with at an early stage, then they are more likely to be resolved and there is no unnecessary dissatisfaction.

### **Communicate with us**

Many issues can be addressed simply by communicating with the relevant staff in school who will be happy to help. Open communication and regular engagement between the school staff and the wide range of users is vital to the effective management of the school.

We welcome open communication with our staff.

### **Ways to communicate with staff;**

- If the matter can be resolved quickly, a brief chat at the beginning or end of the school day may suffice.
- Telephone the school office to make an arrangement to speak to the class teacher via telephone. The teacher will return your call after teaching duties are completed.
- Telephone the school office to arrange a face-to-face meeting with the class teacher (Face-to-face meetings must follow the school Covid-19 procedures)
- Email the Principal - Mrs Wright at [hwright575@c2kni.net](mailto:hwright575@c2kni.net) and she will forward your email to the class teacher

Teachers should ensure the Principal is kept informed of any such communication.

Concerns about matters other than in the classroom should be raised with the Principal.

We take all concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve matters as quickly as possible.

**SHOULD THIS ENGAGEMENT WITH THE CLASS TEACHER NOT RESOLVE THE ISSUE THEN WE WOULD ADVISE YOU OF THE FORMAL PROCEDURE OUTLINED BELOW IN SECTION 3.**

## **AIMS OF COMPLAINT'S PROCEDURE**

When dealing with complaints the school will;

- encourage resolution of all concerns as quickly as possible
- provide timely responses to concerns and complaints
- keep you informed of progress
- ensure a full and fair investigation of your complaint where appropriate
- have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved
- respect confidentiality
- fully address complaints and provide an effective response
- take appropriate action to rectify the issue and prevent it happening again where appropriate
- be responsive to learning from outcomes which will inform and improve practice within the school.

A copy of this Procedure is given to the families of new pupils on admission and to current families every other year. It is available from the school at any time and is on our school website: [www.milltownprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.milltownprimaryschool.co.uk). The policy is available in the parents' area of the school entrance porch and the flow chart is displayed on the parents' Information Board in the entrance porch.

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE -AT A GLANCE

### Informal Stage

#### *Speaking with Teacher or Principal.*

In the first instance, a complaint should normally be raised verbally with the teacher concerned or Principal, so that she may have an opportunity to address the issue(s). **Please observe the school's existing protocols for arranging and conducting such meetings and follow the school's policy with respect to access to members of staff.**

This approach will not prevent you from choosing to enter the formal process at a later stage, if you believe that to be an appropriate course of action.

### Formal Stage

Having first spoken to staff in an attempt to resolve the issues, the following procedure should be followed.



### Time Limit

Please contact the school as soon as possible, unless there are exceptional circumstances, complaints will normally (see guidance) only be considered within 6 months of origin of the complaint to the school.

### Stage One

When making a complaint, contact the School Principal, Mrs Wright, at school who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated. If the complaint is about the Principal, proceed to Stage Two. The school requires complaints to be made in writing, where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support you with this process. (see guidance notes for further information)

Please provide as much information as possible including;

- Name and contact details
- What the complaint is about
- What has already been done to try to resolve it and
- What you would like the school to do to resolve the complaint.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 10 school working days and a response normally made within 20 school working days of receipt of the complaint. This response will be issued in writing by the Principal and will indicate with reasons whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

**These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.**

If you remain unhappy with the outcome at Stage 1, the complaint may be progressed to Stage 2 which is overseen by the Board of Governors.

### **Stage Two**

If the complaint is unresolved after Stage One, write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors Mr Alan Mateer, (*care of the school and marked 'Private and Confidential'*). Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process. The Chairperson will convene a committee to review the complaint. Please provide as much detail as possible as indicated above.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 working days and a final response normally made within 20 working days from date of receipt of the complaint. The response will be issued in writing by the Chairperson of the committee.

***These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.***

### **Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)**

If following Stage Two you remain dissatisfied with how your complaint has been dealt with, you can refer the matter to the Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).

The Ombudsman provides a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about schools in Northern Ireland. You have the right to complain to the Ombudsman if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have received a poor service from a school and your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction.

A complaint should normally be referred to NIPSO within six months of the final response from the School. The school must advise in its concluding letter that the complaint may be referred to the NIPSO if you remain dissatisfied.

Contact details for NIPSO are:

**Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman**

Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

Progressive House

33 Wellington Place

Belfast

BT1 6HN

Freepost: FREEPOST NIPSO

Telephone: 02890 233821

Freephone: 0800 34 34 24

Email: [nipso@nipso.org.uk](mailto:nipso@nipso.org.uk)

Web: [www.nipso.org.uk](http://www.nipso.org.uk)

