



Parental Complaints Procedure

Rationale

The Board of Management of Ballinlough NS has adopted the Complaints Procedure, agreed by the teachers' union and management bodies, which provides a mechanism for dealing with parental complaints against a teacher as set out in Section 28 of the Education Act 1998. The parental complaints procedure as revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers Organisation & the Management body in 2023.

Relationship to School Ethos

It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life. The school promotes positive home – school contact and endeavours to enhance the self-esteem of everyone within the school community. The policy contributes towards those ideals.

Aims/Objectives

- To foster fruitful and trusting relationships between school and parents.
- To afford parents an opportunity to express opinions/grievances through the framework of a defined procedure.
- To minimize the opportunity for conflict by providing parents an opportunity to liaise with the class teacher.
- To provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/guardians raising concerns about their child/children in an agreed fair and transparent manner.

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:

- Matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education & Science.
- Frivolous or vexatious and which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school.
- 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.

Stage 1 Discussion

- a.1 A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.
- a.2 Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher she/he should approach the Principal Teacher with a view to resolving it.

- a.3 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.

Stage 2 Written

- 2.1 If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further she/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- 2.2 The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 10 school days of the commencement of stage 2.1

Stage 3 Board of Management

- 3.1 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:
- Supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; and
 - Arrange a meeting with the teacher 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.
- 3.2 Where the Board considers the complaint, the process may be concluded at this stage, if the board considers that:
- The complaint is frivolous/vexatious;
 - The complaint has already been investigated by the board;
 - The complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant DE circular,
- Or;**
- 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.
- 3.3 Where the board decides to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows;
- 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.
 - 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 in any such meeting.
 - 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.
 - The teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board as the employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be shared with any third party.
 - The meeting of the Board of Management referred to in 3(b)(c) and (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1 in so far as possible.

Stage 4 Written Decision from Chairperson

- 4.1 The Board will consider the complaint and the response provided and will adjudicate on the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent/legal guardian(s) within five days of the meeting held at stage 3.3.

The decision of the Board should be final.