

Scoil Naomh Iósaf, Rath Caola

Parents Complaints Procedure

Roll No.:18653V

Parental Complaints Procedure.

The Board of Management of St. Joseph's Boys' School, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick. (Roll Number: 18653V) operates the following Complaints Procedure in relation to complaints by parents/guardians against teachers.

It is the policy of the Board to promote an atmosphere of harmony in the school at all times.

We would hope that any issues that arise between parents/guardians and teachers would be resolved as quickly and as amicably as possible.

Informal stages:

1. In the first instance, we would ask parents/guardians to approach the class teacher to resolve the issue.
2. If this is not successful, then the parents/guardians are requested to approach the principal in order to resolve the issue.
3. If the issue is not resolved at this point, then the matter should be raised with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Formal stages:

If the informal stages have not been successful in resolving the issue, then the parents/guardians should lodge the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

At this point the Chairperson of the Board of Management will refer to the agreed procedure outlined in Appendix 1 for dealing with complaints

Appendix 1.

The INTO (the teachers' representative body) and Primary School Management reached agreement in 1993 on a procedure for dealing with complaints by parents against teachers. These procedures were reviewed in 2014 and again in 2023. The purpose of this 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. Please note this is a non-statutory procedure.

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:

- on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education and Skills and/ or the Teaching Council;
- frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
- 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.

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 Principal¹ 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 with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Chairperson as appropriate.
- 1.4 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 2.1. 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.

Formal Stage 3 Board of Management (20 days)

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, they should inform the Chairperson in writing of this fact. The Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within 10 days of receipt of this written statement. At this meeting, the Board can decide to proceed to either stage 3.2 or 3.3.

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.

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. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be shared with any third party.
- e) 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.

Formal Stage 4 Decision (5 days)

4.1 Written decision from Chairperson

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.

4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St Joseph's B.N.S. on 14/2/2020 and will be reviewed periodically or as the need arises.

Signed: Walter Moran Chairperson.

Date: 14/2/2020