



Parental Complaints Procedure

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation and Primary School Management reached agreement in 1993 on a procedure for dealing with complaints by parents/ guardians against teachers. 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.

The procedure covers all matters relating to the actions of staff employed in the school and the application of school procedures, where they affect individual pupils.

Please note: The Board of Management of AshbourneETNS follows the 'Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015- 19' as laid down by the Dept. of Education in all matters of business. Therefore **15(c) (Pg29) Disclosure of Interest/integrity of Board Proceedings** deems it necessary for any member of the Board who is personally subject of a matter which is before the board to withdrawn from the deliberations.

Introduction

The school will not deal with anonymous complaints (except for those concerning child protection matters) and therefore these procedures do not provide for a resolution of anonymous complaints.

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 vexatious 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 will be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

Stage 1

1.1 A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint must contact their child's class teacher outlining their concern as concisely as possible, addressing specifically the issue(s) that are of concern to you. so that he/she may have an opportunity to address the issue. Parties will confirm a mutually agreed time to meet with the class teacher and approach the meeting with a view to resolving the complaint. Please observe the school's existing protocols for arranging and conducting such meetings and follow the school's practices with respect to access to members of teaching staff.

This approach would 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.

1.2 Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher they must contact the Principal outlining their concern, receive confirmation of a mutually agreed time and approach the meeting with a view to resolving the complaint. In advance of this meeting you should inform the principal in writing , of the nature of your complaint so that s/he may be in a position to resolve the problem without further delay.

In some circumstances the Principal may not be able to deal effectively with your complaint immediately and s/he may require some time to investigate and prepare a response.

1.3 If the complaint is still unresolved the parent/guardian should proceed to Stage 2 of these procedures.

Stage 2

2.1 If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further they should lodge their 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 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

3.1 If the complaint is not resolved having given due consideration to the steps outlined above, 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:

(a) supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; and

(b) 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.

Stage 4

4.1 If the complaint is still not resolved the Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1(b).

4.2 If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within three days of the Board meeting.

4.3 If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:

(a) the teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;

(b) the teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;

(c) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint;

(d) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;

(e) the board may arrange a meeting with the complainant if it considers such to be required. The complainant would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting; and

(f) the meeting of the Board of Management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1(b).

Stage 5

5.1 When the Board has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within five days of the meeting of the Board.

5.2 The decision of the Board shall be final.

5.3 This Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years.

5.4 Primary School Management or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party three months' notice of intention to do so.

Please note;

- In this agreement 'days' means days that the school is open and pupils are in attendance.
- Complaints will only be processed by the Board of Management during school terms and not during school holidays or closures
- Correspondence to the Board of Management will only be accepted and responded to by post. All correspondence should be addressed to The Chairperson, Board of Management, AshbourneETNS, Killegland, Ashbourne, Co. Meath.
- It is a condition of enrolment of AshbourneETNS that parents/ guardians sign to accept and agree to follow this policy in its entirety

Implementation

This procedure will be implemented immediately and will be reviewed every 5 years

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Date: 07/02/2019

Noel Gildea

Lynn Hicks

Chairperson Board of Management

Principal

Ashbourne Educate Together National School