

Complaints Procedure

Section 28 Education Act (1998)

Introductory Statement: The teaching staff and BOM of Letterfrack NS were involved in reviewing this policy in Sept. 2018. It is reviewed and updated every three years.

Rationale: We are complying with legislation.

Aims: We wish to ensure the smooth running of the school where the rights of all parties are valued.

Guidelines:

- We endorse the complaints procedure as laid out in the CPSMA Handbook.
- We encourage parents and staff to deal with problems without having to use the formal complaints procedure through open communication between parties concerned and follow-up meetings, regular staff meetings, BOM meetings, annual parent/teacher meetings.
- Parents are asked to make an appointment with the relevant teacher through the Principal if they need to discuss an issue. This will allow the teacher to make adequate arrangements for supervision of pupils.
- In the case of an emergency, the parents are asked to wait in a Designated Waiting Area while the Principal talks with the class teacher in question and an appointment is fixed at a time suitable to all.

Parental Complaints Procedures:

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:

1. On matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Dept. of Education.
2. Frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school.
3. 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

1.1 A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.

1.2 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.

1.3 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

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 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

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:

(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

1.1 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 3.2 (b).

1.2 If the board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within 3 days of the Board meeting.

1.3 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;

(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 5 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 CPSMA or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party 3 months' notice of intention to do so.

(in this agreement 'days' means school days).

Roles and Responsibilities:

Principal – to steer implementation of policy.

Teachers – to comply with the policy.

BOM – to support school policy.

Pupils – to understand and respect school policy.

Parents – to comply with the policy.

Success Criteria

Success is judged on the positive atmosphere of the school.

Date of review – as necessary.

Ratification and Communication.

This policy was presented to the BOM for ratification