

Scoil Naomh Bríde, Blackwater, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford

Parental Complaints' Procedure

Introduction:

In Scoil Naomh Bríde we value, respect and encourage the important role that parents/guardians play in their child's education. Occasionally a parent/guardian may have a concern relating to their child in school.

Rationale:

This policy was formulated by the Staff, Board of Management and Parents' Association of Scoil Naomh Bríde and it provides a mechanism for dealing with parental complaints against a teacher, as set out in Section 28 of the Education Act 1988. It facilitates the resolution of concerns, when they arise, in an agreed and fair manner. All communication between the teacher and parent/guardian will take place in an atmosphere that is calm and dignified and in a climate that respects the viewpoint of any party involved in the Complaints' Procedure.

This policy was reviewed during March/April 2022 by the Staff, Board of Management and Parents' Association and amendments were made accordingly.

Relationship to School Ethos:

The school promotes positive home-school contacts and endeavours to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community. We realise the importance of treating each pupil fairly and that he/she feels valued and respected.

Aims/Objectives:

- To foster fruitful, trusting and respectful relationships between school and parents/guardians
- To afford parents/guardians the 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

Summary of Complaints' Procedure:

We request all parents/guardians to adhere to the following procedure should they have a concern:

1. A parent/guardian who has a concern about their child should, in the first instance, approach the class teacher to discuss the issue. Your child's class teacher is best placed to solve the problem for your child.
2. If the parent/guardian is not able to resolve the concern with the class teacher he/she should contact the Principal to discuss the matter further.
3. Where the concern is still unresolved, the parent/guardian may contact the Chairperson of the Board of Management to try and resolve the matter.
4. If the concern is still unresolved at this point, the parent/guardian may lodge the concern in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management. The Chairperson follows a set procedure, which is detailed below, to investigate the concern and, following this, will inform the decision to the Board of Management in writing to the teacher and the complainant within five days of the meeting of the Board.
5. The decision of the Board shall be final.

Complaints' Procedure

Unwritten complaints may be processed informally, as set out in Stage 1 of this 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:

- matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education.
- 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 existing procedure.

Stage 1

- 1.1 A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should 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 he/she should approach the Principal 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 he/she 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 a particular authorisation of the Board to be required:
 - a. supply the teacher with a written copy of the complaint; and
 - b. arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the Principal 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 3 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 the case to the Board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
 - (e) 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.

In this policy 'days' means school days.

Appealing to the Ombudsman for Children:

The Office of the Ombudsman for Children may independently investigate complaints about schools recognised by the Department of Education, provided the parent/guardian has first and fully followed the school's Parental Complaints' Procedure. The key criterion for any intervention by the Ombudsman for Children is that a child has, or may have been, negatively affected by the action of a school.

Success Criteria:

- Swift and efficient resolution of grievances
- Parent/Teacher satisfaction
- Positive school community feedback
- Reviews of school policies as issues arise

Ratification/Implementation

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Bríde, Blackwater, at a meeting held on 11.12.12-22.

Signed: 
Chairperson BOM