

St. Mary's N.S., Orila Tce., Cobh
Complaints Procedure
April 2018

In the event that you, a parent / guardian, has a complaint against a teacher, teachers or St. Mary's NS in general the following procedure should be followed. The INTO, the Primary Teachers' Trade Union and primary management, CPSMA, have agreed this procedure for dealing with complaints. The full procedure is set out in the *Management Board Members' Handbook*. This procedure has been put in place in order to ensure that complaints are dealt with in a fair manner.

Parents and staff should be aware of this procedure as it can help to resolve a complaint at an early and informal stage. Every effort should be made to resolve a complaint at the earliest possible stage. This agreement provides for a staged approach, the first two of which are informal.

Stage 1

A parent/guardian should firstly raise the matter with the class teacher with a view to resolving it and if unresolved with the principal teacher. If still unresolved it should be raised with the Board of Management (BOM) Chairperson. The school should ensure that parents are informed periodically of the policy, particularly in relation to making an appointment to see the teacher. If the complaint is against the school principal, it should be raised firstly with the principal and if unresolved, with the BOM Chairperson. This stage should be attempted with any complaint, either verbal or written.

Stage 2

If the complaint is unresolved at Stage 1, the complainant should raise the matter in writing with the BOM Chairperson who should try and resolve the matter informally within 5 days. A note should be kept of any meeting and its outcomes which should be agreed with the parties. The teacher should be given a copy of any written complaint.

Stage 3

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the Chairperson should give the teacher a copy of the written complaint and arrange a meeting within ten days with the teacher and, where applicable, the principal teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.

Stages 1-3 should be completed in advance of the BOM having sight of the details of the complaint.

Stage 4

If unresolved, the Chairperson should, within a further 10 days, make a formal report to the BOM. If the BOM decides the complaint to be unsubstantiated the teacher and the complainant are informed within three days of the BOM meeting. If the BOM considers the complaint substantiated or warranting further investigation the teacher is informed, supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint and asked to supply a written statement to the BOM. The teacher should be given an opportunity to make a presentation to the BOM within ten days and is entitled to be accompanied / assisted by a friend at this meeting, as is the complainant.

Stage 5

When the BOM has completed its investigation, the teacher and the complainant should, within five days of the meeting, be informed of the final decision of the BOM including any outcomes and

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proposed action. The Department of Education & Skills advises that a complainant unhappy with the investigation/ handling of the complaint by a BOM may bring the matter to the attention of the school patron or refer the matter to the Office of the Ombudsman for Children. The underlying principles of this procedure are that all parties are entitled to a fair and impartial determination of any out-comes. Any person with a connection to one of the parties should not investigate or decide a case that would raise concerns regarding impartiality.

BOM members should be reminded of obligations in respect of confidentiality.

In the interest of fairness, the same procedure will apply when a teacher has a complaint against a Parent / Guardian.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:

Chairperson: John Fitzpatrick

Date: April 2018