

Coralstown National School

Complaints Procedure

Complaints are infrequent but Coralstown National School would wish that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. The INTO and Primary School Management reached agreement in 1993 on a procedure for dealing with complaints by parents against teachers. 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.

Behaviour of all Stakeholders in the School

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all of the stakeholders e.g. the staff, parents and the wider community. Anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so. While the behaviour of children in our school is of vital importance, adults in the school community also have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children.

It is important that all stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviours in the school. Examples include:

- All stakeholders are expected to speak to each other with respect. Shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If a stakeholder displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building. In certain cases, the Gardaí must be called
- All stakeholders will treat our children with the utmost respect while on the premises
- Staff should not be asked to speak about another parent's child. The staff of the school will respect your child's right to privacy so it is asked that parents respect other children's rights to privacy
- When stakeholders meet, it is important to respect that the time of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected
- Should a parent need to have a discussion or meeting, an appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties. This ensures that issues can be resolved. Classes begin at 8:50 am and finish at 2:30pm and this time should not be interrupted.

Parental Complaints 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;
- 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.

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 staff he/she 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, he/she should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management
- 2.2 The Chairperson will bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the member of staff 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 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 stage 3.1(b).
- 4.2 If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated, the member of staff 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 copies 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 to the Board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied by another person to 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 another person at any such meeting.

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 The 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.)

Review

This policy will be reviewed in Term 2 2020 or earlier if required.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on February 6th 2017

Signed: Thomas Kelly
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Kena Ní Dhúinn
Principal

Date of next review: 2020