



St. Peter Apostle Junior National School

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Parent Complaint Procedure

Policy Summary Details

Policy Title:	Parent Complaint Procedure
Written/Reviewed:	January 2024
Date Ratified by BOM:	8 th February 2024
Review Date	December 2027 Or sooner if necessitated by alteration to terms or conditions issued by Circular Letter from DES.



St. Peter Apostle Junior National School

Introduction

St. Peter Apostle Junior School is a junior primary school catering for classes ranging from Junior Infants to Second class. We also have four Early Start classes, as well as three classes for children with autism spectrum order. Our staff is made up of 27 full-time teachers who endeavour to welcome all children, regardless of their medical and/or special educational needs. We pride ourselves on seeking to ensure that all children in our care have equality of opportunity to derive positive outcomes from their educational experience. In doing so, we endeavour to create an inclusive learning environment that caters for the diverse needs of all different types of learners. As such, we strive to align our practice to the Department of Education's philosophical standpoint that "effective provision for pupils with special education needs is situated within an inclusive whole-school framework which emphasises effective teaching and learning for all..."

1. Vision and mission statement

We in St. Peter Apostle Junior school believe in the potential of each child. As a staff we seek to ensure that all children in our care have equality of opportunity to derive positive outcomes from their educational experience. In doing so, we endeavour to create a safe, happy, respectful, and inclusive learning environment, where the diverse needs of all different types of learners are catered for. It is envisioned that by providing an all-inclusive approach to education that the children in our school shall reach their academic potential whilst developing the confidence and courage to be fair, kind, moral, tolerant and respectful when acting in the world.

We strive to realise vision by seeking to:

- Craft a caring, supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment in which children's social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual development is catered for,
- Develop children's interests, talents and hobbies by providing a wide range of learning experiences,
- Harness the collective talents of all staff to ensure that all children, irrespective of their medical status and/or special educational needs feel cherished and thrive in in dynamic educational settings,
- Provide tailored learning experiences for children who present with special educational needs (gifted or otherwise) by meeting children where they are at and building upon their strengths,
- Collaborate with colleagues and outside agencies to ensure focused and effective supports are in place to advance the social, emotional, and cognitive development of all the children in our care,
- Build strong and collaborative relationships with parents with a view to fine tuning and augmenting the supports that children receive in both the home and school,
- Promote a culture of inclusivity by ensuring that children across the school settings integrate as appropriate during tuition time, yard breaks and school events,



St. Peter Apostle Junior National School

- Create an environment where all have freedom and opportunity to reach their full potential.

2. Rationale for an parental complaints procedure policy

In St. Peter Apostle Junior National School, we endeavour to create a safe, happy, respectful, and inclusive learning environment. As pupils, staff, parents and the wider community strive to uphold this vision, it is possible that from time to time some concerns, queries, ambiguities and/or issues may arise. It is recommended that a school implements a complaints procedure so that everybody involved in our school is protected. By following a complaints procedure, all parties involved can feel safe in the knowledge that a fair process has occurred in dealing with issues. St. Peter Apostle Junior National School's Complaints Procedure for Parents is consistent with the Revised Parental Complaints Procedure which was agreed by the INTO and the management bodies of primary schools.

The Parental Complaints Procedure provides parents and teachers with a structured and agreed format with which to seek resolution to grievances and complaints which can arise, from time to time, in schools. Based on the principles of fair procedures, the intention at each stage of the procedure is to provide a format for both parties to explore a resolution at the earliest opportunity.

The previous Parental Complaints Procedure has been in place since 1993, it is timely to revise and review it.

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) has engaged extensively with the primary management bodies on revising the existing nationally agreed parental complaints procedure. The parties to this agreement are the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA), the General Synod Board of Education of the Church of Ireland, Educate Together, An Fóras Pátrúnachta, Muslim Primary Education Board, and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NAMBSE).

The revised parental complaints procedure agreed by the INTO and the management bodies of primary schools is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner, with a view to seeking an early resolution of the issue. The purpose of the revised procedure is for parents and legal guardian to engage constructively with schools where a concern arises and to have it addressed at local level in an efficient manner, in the best interests of all parties.

The revised procedure will come into effect for all parental complaints from January 1st 2024. The revised procedures are attached below.

The revised procedures were adopted at **Board of Management Meeting on the 8th of February 2024.**

Signed: _____ (Vivion Powney, Chairperson)

Date: _____

Revised Parental Complaints Procedure



Note:

- A copy of this procedure will be available for parents/legal guardians on the school website and/or on request from the school. This procedure comes into effect on the 1st of January 2024.
- Under the Education Act 1998, legally, all schools are managed by the school's Board of Management, on behalf of the school patron.

Purpose/Objective

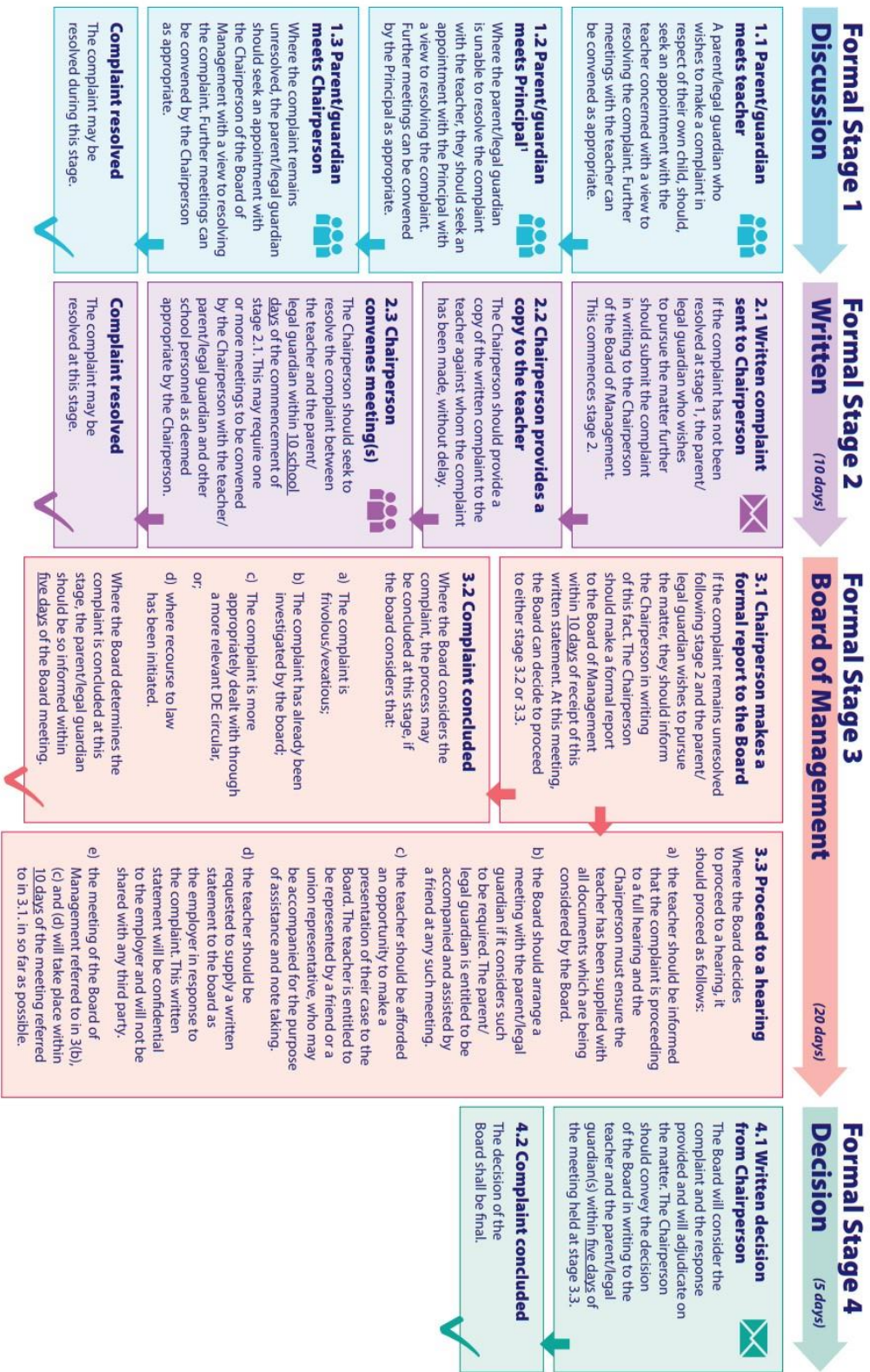
The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the management bodies of primary schools, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland, An Foras Pátrúnachta, the Muslim Primary Education Board, Educate Together and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education in 2023. It is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner.

It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time-to-time concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school. It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship between the parent and school can be preserved and respected. It is expected that all parties concerned will engage proactively.

Procedural Points

The procedure is a staged procedure where every effort is made to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage. In most cases, concerns will be dealt with either informally or formally at the earlier stages of the procedure. Where it has not been possible to agree a resolution at the earlier stages, the procedure does allow for the escalation of the matter to the Board of Management. This procedure sets out, in four stages, the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed. It is expected the parties will follow each stage in sequence.

- Where the term written correspondence is used, this refers specifically to a letter or email correspondence from a parent/legal guardian(s).
- Only complaints about a teacher which are written and signed by a parent/legal guardian, and which relate to their own child, will be investigated.
- Where a complaint raised by a parent/legal guardian is deemed by the employer/board of management to relate to the following, this procedure will not apply;
 - matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
 - 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.
- In all circumstances, any form of written correspondence for the attention of the Board of Management must be supplied to the Chairperson of the board of management **only**. Any deviation from this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of this agreement.
- **Days in this procedure refer specifically to school days.** A school day is a day on which the school is in operation. Holiday periods, school closures and leaves of absences are not counted as school days for the purpose of this procedure.
- Group/collective complaints are not provided for and each parent/legal guardian raising a concern will be dealt with separately through this process.
- The procedure is a domestic forum and accordingly, neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any stage.
- Issues should be raised in a timely manner. It is in the best interests of the child that issues are raised to achieve early resolution at the earliest possible stage with the teacher, ideally while the pupil is in that teacher's class.



Where a complaint is received about a principal the above process commences at Stage 1.2.