



Pelletstown Educate Together National School

Complaints Policy/Procedures

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2023

Review: December 2025

Introduction and Rationale

The Board of Management of Pelletstown Educate Together National School has adopted this policy following consultation with all staff members and following a newly revised document from the INTO.

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.

The vast majority of complaints are resolved locally and informally. However, in certain circumstances, for example, where a complaint is considered to be serious in nature, or where the staff member is required to submit a written response to his/her Board of Management, the staff member should contact their Union Representative or Union Head Office for advice and assistance.

Complaints Procedure

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.

Unwritten complaints, not in the above categories, may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

Stage 1 (Discussion)

1.1 Parent/carer meets teacher

A parent/carer who wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child should seek an appointment with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the teacher can be convened as appropriate.

1.2 Parent/carer meets Principal

Where the parent/carer is unable to resolve the complaint with the teacher, they should approach the principal with a view to resolving it. Further meetings can be convened by the principal as appropriate.

1.3 Parent/carer meets Chairperson

Where the complaint remains unresolved the parent/carer should seek an appointment with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the complaint.

The complaint may be resolved during this stage.

Stage 2 (Written - 10 days)

2.1 Written complaint sent to the Chairperson

If the complaint has not been resolved at Stage 1, the parent/carer who wishes to pursue the matter further should submit the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. This commences stage 2.

2.2 Chairperson provides a copy to the teacher

The Chairperson should provide a copy of the written complaint to the teacher against whom the complaint has been made, without delay.

2.3. Chairperson convenes meeting(s)

The Chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent/carer within 10 school days of the commencement of stage 2.1.

This may require one or more meetings to be convened by the Chairperson with the teacher /parent/carer and other school personnel as deemed appropriate by the Chairperson.

The complaint may be resolved during this stage.

Stage 3 (Board of Management - 20 days)

3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board

If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 and the parent/carer wishes to pursue the matter, they should inform the Chairperson in writing of this fact. The Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within **10 days of receipt** of this written statement. At this meeting, the Board can decide to proceed to either stage 3.2 or 3.3.

3.2 Complaint Concluded

Where the Board considers the complaint, the process may be concluded at this stage, if the board considers that

- a) The complaint is frivolous/vexatious
- b) The complaint has already been investigated by the board
- c) The complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant DE circular
or
- d) where recourse to law has been initiated.

Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent/carer should be informed within 5 days of the Board meeting.

3.3 Proceed to a hearing

Where the Board decided to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows:

- a) The teacher should be informed that the complaint is proceeding to a full hearing and the Chairperson must ensure the teacher has been supplied with all documents which are being considered by the board.
- b) The board should arrange a meeting with the parent/carer if it considers it to be required. The parent/carer is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting.
- c) The teacher should be afforded the opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The teacher is entitled to be represented by a friend or a union representative, who may be accompanied for the purpose of assistance and note taking.

- d) The teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board as the employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be shared with any third party.
- e) The meeting of the Board of Management referred to in 3(b), (c) and (d) will take place within **10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1** in so far as possible.

Stage 4 (Decision - 5 days)

4.1 Written decision from Chairperson

The Board will consider the complaint and the response provided and will adjudicate on the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent/carer within **5 days of the meeting held at stage 3.3**

4.2 Complaint Concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

Implementation and Review

a. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the school community have responsibility for ensuring that the guidelines as outlined in this policy are appropriately followed. This will be overseen by the Board of Management and the Principal.

b. Timeframe

This whole-school policy will be implemented from January 2024.

c. Review

The policy will be reviewed in December 2025. Should a need be identified for review prior to that date, this will be addressed.

Ratification and Communication

The attention of all newly appointed staff will be drawn to this whole-school plan upon their appointment to the school by the NQT mentor.

This policy will be published on the school website, and a copy of it will be provided to the Parent Teacher Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the Patron, if requested. Hard copies of this, and all school policies, are available at the school upon request.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 21st December 2023

Signed: 

(Acting Principal)

Signed: 

(Chairperson of BOM)

Date: 21st December 2023

Date of next review: December 2025