



**Pelletstown Educate Together National School**

# **Complaints Policy/Procedures**

Complaints Policy/Procedures

June 2019

Review: June 2022

## **Introduction and Rationale**

The Board of Management of Pelletstown Educate Together National School has adopted this policy following consultation with all staff members.

This policy sets out procedures for dealing with complaints by parents/carers against members of staff. The INTO and Primary School Management reached agreement in 1993 on a procedure for dealing with such. 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. Please note this is a non-statutory procedure.

In this agreement 'days' refers to school days.

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**

Only those complaints about staff members which are written and signed by parents/carers of pupils may be investigated formally by the Board of Management, except where those complaints are deemed by the BOM to be:

- on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education and Skills/Teaching Council;
- frivolous or vexatious complaints
- 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. A parent/carer who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, approach the class teacher or staff member concerned with a view to resolving the complaint.
2. Where the parent/carer is unable to resolve the complaint with the relevant staff member, s/he should approach the principal with a view to resolving it.
3. If the complaint is still unresolved the parent/carer should raise the matter with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving it.

## **Stage 2**

1. If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/carer wishes to pursue the matter further s/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
2. The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the staff member and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within five days of receipt of the written complaint.

## **Stage 3**

1. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board of Management and except in those cases where the Chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board to be required:
  - a) supply the staff member with a copy of the written complaint; and
  - b) arrange a meeting with the staff member and, where applicable, the principal teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

## **Stage 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(b).
2. If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the staff members and the complainant should be so informed within three days of the Board meeting.
3. If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:
  - a) the staff member should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
  - b) the staff member should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
  - c) the staff member should be requested to supply a written statement to the board in response to the complaint;
  - c) the staff member should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board. The staff member would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by another individual at any such meeting;
  - d) 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 individual at any such meeting; and
  - 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(b).

## **Stage 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.
2. 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 2018-2019 school year.

### **c. Review**

The policy will be reviewed in June 2022. 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 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

Signed: Eric Young (Chairperson, BOM)

Signed: Caitríona Ní Cheallaigh (Principal)

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Date of next review: June 2022