

RUSHEEN N.S.

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

This policy was drawn up by the staff and circulated to the Board of Management and Parents Association for observation and feedback.

Rationale

The INTO and CPSMA reached agreement in 1993 on a procedure for dealing with complaints against teachers. We need this Policy in order to clarify for parents and teachers the correct procedure for pursuing a complaint directed towards teaching staff. The purpose is to facilitate the resolution of difficulties where they may arise in an agreed and fair manner.

Relationship to School Ethos

The school promotes positive home - school contacts and endeavors to enhance the self-esteem of everyone within the school community. As our school encourages the involvement of parents, we also have an open and clear system of communication. This policy contributes towards those ideals.

Aims/Objectives

The staff and Board of Management wish to outline in writing clear and transparent procedures for parents who wish to make a complaint of any nature towards a teacher regarding their child's education.

- To foster fruitful and trusting relationships between school and parents.
- To afford parents an opportunity to express opinions/grievances through the framework of a defined procedure.
- To minimize the opportunity for conflict.
- Through affording parents an opportunity to liaise with the class teacher.

Please Note

Only complaints about teachers which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by B.O.M. except where those complaints are deemed by the Board to be:

1. Complaints that are being dealt with through legal channels.
2. Matters of professional competence, which comes under the remit of the Dept. of Education and Science.

Stage 1

The following is a list of the stages in the complaints procedure as outlined in the C.P.S.M.A.'s Management Board Members Handbook.

- 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. To avoid disruption to teaching and learning, this meeting should be by appointment at a time agreed by all.
- 1.2 Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher she/he should approach the school principal with a view to resolving it. If complaint is against school principal, it should be raised firstly with the principal and if unresolved with the BOM chairperson.
- 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 she/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- 2.2 The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher 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:
 - 3.2 (a) supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; and
 - 3.3 (b) arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the School 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 in 3.1(b).
- 4.2 If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated, the teacher 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 a copy 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 of the complaint;
 - (d) The teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at 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 a friend at any such meeting.
- (f) 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 3.1(b).

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 5 days of the meeting of the Board.
- 5.2 The decision of the Board shall be final.

In this policy 'days' means school days.

Roles & Responsibilities

Principal:

The Principal will encourage a system of open communication at all times among all members of the school community. The Principal will only be approached when the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher. The Principal will request the parent to put their complaint in writing should they wish to inform B.O.M. The Principal will then attend meeting with Teacher and Chairperson of B.O.M. with a view to resolving the complaint.

Teachers:

Class teachers at all times encourage a system of open communication with the parents of the children in their class. A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint is encouraged to approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.

Board of Management:

The B.O.M. receive complaints in writing from parents. The Chairperson will bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the class teacher and will seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint. If the complaint is then not resolved informally, it is dealt with following the guidelines above.

Parents:

Parents must put any complaint in writing having first approached the class teacher. If the complaint is unresolved the parent follows the guidelines outlined above.

Pupils:

Pupils in our school are encouraged to communicate openly with teachers and members of the school community with a view to avoiding any escalation of problems or incidents that may occur.

Success Criteria

- Swift and efficient resolution of grievances.
- Parent/Teacher satisfaction.
- Positive school community feedback.
- Reviews of school policies as issues arise.

Review

This policy will be reviewed after a 3 year cycle.

Ratification

This policy was ratified on the 25th May, 2020.