## 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. This was reviewed in September 2023 and this policy is reflective of the review. 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.

## 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

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 (Attached), 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

## 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 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

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Jozah O Mahony 05/12/2023,

## Discussion

## 1.1 Parent/guardian meets teacher

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

## 1.2 Parent/guardian meets Principal

with the teacher, they should seek an appointment with the Principal with Further meetings can be convened is unable to resolve the complaint a view to resolving the complaint. Where the parent/legal guardian by the Principal as appropriate.

## 1.3 Parent/guardian meets Chairperson

unresolved, the parent/legal guardian Management with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can should seek an appointment with be convened by the Chairperson the Chairperson of the Board of Where the complaint remains as appropriate.

# **Complaint resolved**

resolved during this stage. The complaint may be

# Formal Stage 2

# Written

## 2.1 Written complaint sent to Chairperson

X

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

## 2.2 Chairperson provides a copy to the teacher

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

3.2 Complaint concluded

Where the Board considers the

be concluded at this stage, if

the board considers that:

complaint, the process may

## convenes meeting(s) 2.3 Chairperson

by the Chairperson with the teacher or more meetings to be convened parent/legal guardian and other The Chairperson should seek to appropriate by the Chairperson. resolve the complaint between legal guardian within 10 school stage 2.1. This may require one days of the commencement of school personnel as deemed the teacher and the parent/

be accompanied for the purpose

The complaint has already been

frivolous/vexatious;

a) The complaint is

investigated by the board;

of assistance and note taking.

requested to supply a written

the teacher should be

appropriately dealt with through

c) The complaint is more

a more relevant DE circular,

or;

d) where recourse to law

has been initiated.

the employer in response to

the complaint. This written statement to the board as

presentation of their case to the

the teacher should be afforded

an opportunity to make a

legal guardian is entitled to be

accompanied and assisted by

a friend at any such meeting.

Board. The teacher is entitled to

be represented by a friend or a

union representative, who may

## **Board of Management** Formal Stage 3

3.3 Proceed to a hearing

(20 days)

Decision

Formal Stage 4

## 4.1 Written decision from Chairperson

X

provided and will adjudicate on guardian(s) within five days of the meeting held at stage 3.3. of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent/legal complaint and the response the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision The Board will consider the

that the complaint is proceeding

teacher has been supplied with all documents which are being

Chairperson must ensure the

to a full hearing and the

a) the teacher should be informed

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

If the complaint remains unresolved

following stage 2 and the parent/

legal guardian wishes to pursue

the matter, they should inform

the Chairperson in writing

ormal report to the Board

3.1 Chairperson makes a

# 4.2 Complaint concluded

meeting with the parent/legal

b) the Board should arrange a

considered by the Board.

written statement. At this meeting,

within 10 days of receipt of this

to the Board of Management

should make a formal report of this fact. The Chairperson

the Board can decide to proceed

to either stage 3.2 or 3.3.

guardian if it considers such

to be required. The parent/

Board shall be final. The decision of the

# The complaint may be resolved at this stage.

# **Complaint resolved**

(c) and (d) will take place within Management referred to in 3(b) 10 days of the meeting referred the meeting of the Board of (e) stage, the parent/legal guardian five days of the Board meeting. complaint is concluded at this should be so informed within

Where the Board determines the

to in 3.1. in so far as possible.

to the employer and will not be

shared with any third party.

statement will be confidential