

# Scoil Treasa Naofa Parental Complaints Procedure

## INTRODUCTION

The policy of Scoil Treasa Naofa is to ensure that complaints are investigated appropriately and are dealt with promptly and fairly.

The school actively promotes and encourages good communication between home and school and most concerns and complaints are resolved on an informal basis.

However, occasionally an issue cannot be dealt with in this way and in these circumstances parents/guardians can formally refer the grievance to the Board of Management.

## Rationale & Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all children come to school in a happy, safe and learning environment. By following a complaints procedure, all parties involved can feel safe in the knowledge that a fair process has occurred in dealing with issues. The procedure below has been written by the INTO (Irish National Teachers' Organisation) and CPSMA (Catholic Primary Schools Management Association).

The INTO and CPSMA reached agreement in 1993 on a procedure for dealing with complaints by parents against staff. 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.

Only those complaints about staff which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the board of management, except where those complaints are deemed by the board to be:

- on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education and Science;
- frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a staff member 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.

The following is the procedure to adhere to when you have a complaint:

## Stage One|Informal

- 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. Every effort should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage.
- 1.2 Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher she/he should approach the principal teacher with a view to resolving it.

- 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 Two|Informal**

- 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 Three|Formal

- 3.1 If the complaint is not resolved informally, the chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board and except in those cases where the chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board to be required:
- (a) supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; *and*
  - (b) arrange a meeting with the teacher 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 Four|Formal

- 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 to 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 Five|Formal

- 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 agreement 'days' means school days.