



Cahergal N.S.

Scoil Náisiúnta An Chathair Sheal

Roll No: 17807r

Parental Complaints Policy

Parental Complaints Policy

Introduction

In Cahergal National School, we value and encourage the important role played by Parents and Guardians in their child's education. From time to time, a Parent/Guardian may have a concern relating to their child at school. This policy was reviewed in March, 2021.

Rationale

This policy has been formulated by the Board of Management, Staff and Parents' Association of Cahergal N.S. to meet its obligations under the Section 28, Education Act, 1998 to provide procedures to address concerns that may be raised by Parents/Guardians. The purpose of this Parental Complaints Policy is to facilitate the resolution of concerns where they may arise in an agreed and fair manner.

Relationship to School Ethos

In Cahergal National School, we aim to treat each child fairly and with respect. We realise the importance of each of our pupils feeling valued and respected. We also strive to promote positive home/school relationships and endeavor to enhance the self-esteem of everyone within our school community. The policy contributes towards those ideals.

Aims/Objectives

- To promote positive and trusting relationships between Parents/Guardians and Cahergal N.S.
- To afford parents an opportunity to express opinions/grievances through the framework of a defined procedure.
- To assist the early resolution of Parent/Guardian concerns that may arise.
- To minimize the opportunity for conflict through affording parents an opportunity to liaise with the class teacher.

Summary of Complaints Procedure

We request Parents/Guardians to adhere to the following procedure should they have a concern:

1. A Parent/Guardian who has a concern about their child should firstly approach the Class Teacher to discuss the issue. Your child's Class Teacher is best placed to solve the problem for your child.
2. If the Parent/Guardian is not able to resolve the concern with the Class Teacher, s/he should contact the Principal to discuss the matter further.

3. Where the concern is still unresolved the Parent/Guardian may contact the Chairperson of the Board of Management to try and resolve the matter.

4. If the concern is still unresolved at this point, the Parent/Guardian may lodge the concern in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management. The Chairperson follows a set out procedure, which is detailed below, to investigate the concern and following this, will inform the decision of the Board of Management in writing.

CPSMA/INTO Parental Complaints Procedure

The Catholic Primary School Management Association (CPSMA) and the Irish National Teachers' Organization (INTO) reached agreement on the following procedure for dealing with complaints by Parents/Guardians. 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.

Only those complaints about Teachers which are written and signed by Parents/Guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the Board of Management (B.O.M.), except where those complaints are deemed by the Board to be:

1. Complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.
2. Matters of professional competence which are to be referred to the Department of Education and Science.
3. Frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school.

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

In-School Procedures

If a parent has a concern in relation to the social or academic progress of their child, or the performance of a teacher the following stages are to be followed:

Stage 1:

1. A Parent/Guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, meet with the class teacher on appointment with a view to resolving the complaint. Parents should not contact teachers at home.
2. Where the Parent/Guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher, s/he should inform the Principal of the nature of the complaint with a view to resolving it. This meeting should be made by appointment.

3. If the matter remains unresolved the Parent/Guardian should raise the matter with the Chairperson of the B.O.M. with a view to resolving it.

Stage 2:

1. If the complaint is unresolved, the Parent/Guardian may wish to pursue the matter further and should therefore, lodge a complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the B.O.M.
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:

1. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the general authorization of the B.O.M. and except in those cases where the Chairperson deems the particular authorization of the B.O.M. to be required:
 - a) Supply the Teacher with a copy of the written complaint.
 - b) Arrange a meeting with the Teacher and, where applicable, the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 school 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.
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.
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 Stage 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 5 days of the meeting of the Board.

2. The decision of the Board shall be final.

(Note: In this agreement “days” mean school days).

Appealing to the Ombudsman for Children

The Office of the Ombudsman or Children may independently investigate complaints about schools recognized by the Department of Education & Skills provided the Parent/Guardian has firstly and fully followed the school’s Parental Complaints Procedure. The key criterion for any intervention by the Ombudsman for Children is that a child has or may have been negatively affected by the action of a school.

Success Criteria

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

Review

This policy will be reviewed as appropriate

Implementation

This policy will be implemented immediately after B.O.M. consideration and ratification.

Ratified by B.O.M. on 25th March, 2021.

Signed_____ (B.O.M. Chairman)

Signed_____ (Principal)

Date_____