Kilsheelan NS

Kilsheelan, Clonmel, Co.Tipperary
Roll No: 18486F
www.kilsheelanns.com

School Complaints Procedure

Introduction
Respect and inclusion lie at the heart of our school ethos in Kilsheelan NS. Therefore, all members of our school community – our children, parents, staff and visitors – are encouraged to act towards each other in a way that makes everyone feel welcome and safe in our school. *Please note that throughout this policy, the term 'parent' or 'parents' also includes legal guardians.*

We obviously hope that any and all complaints or grievances, should any occur, are be addressed and resolved as quickly as possible to everyone's satisfaction. However, to further underpin our school's atmosphere of respect, this policy has been drafted to ensure that all members of our school community know and understand the procedures regarding how any complaints or grievances that may occur will be dealt with.

This policy seeks to outline our approach to dealing with the following:

- *Telephone complaints*
- *Complaints about the principal*
- *Complaints about teachers*
- *Complaints about Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)*
- *Complaints about pupils*
- *Complaints about parents*
- *Complaints about ancillary staff*

Telephone complaints
- If answered by a member of staff other than the principal, these will be dealt with by asking for the name of the complainant, his/her relationship to the school and what the call is in connection with.
- These details will be then passed on to the principal and the complainant will be contacted by the principal as soon as is practicable.
- The principal will decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether to talk to the complainant immediately or to investigate the matter first.

Complaints about the Principal – Made by parents or pupils
- Complaints coming from parents or pupils will be dealt with directly by the principal in the first instance, in order to resolve the issue informally and amicably if possible.
- If the complainant is unhappy or feels that the complaint has been dealt with unfairly, the complaint may be outlined in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Complaints about teachers – Made by parents

The Complaints Procedure outlined in the 'Management Board Members' Handbook' which has been agreed between the INTO and the CPSMA will be followed in relation to complaints about teachers made by parents. This five-step procedure is detailed in full in at the end of this policy. *It is important to note the following:*

- It is expected that under normal circumstances, a parent who has a complaint about a teacher should approach the teacher at a suitable time with a view to resolving the difficulty
- If the parent approaches the principal first, it will be suggested that the teacher should be approached first. However, if the principal feels that this would be unwise, due to the demeanour of the parent in question, the complaint will be listened to without prejudice, notes taken and the parent will be asked to return when the teacher has been given an opportunity to present his/her views on the issue/issues to the principal.
- The principal, having listened to both sides, will try to bring the issue to a satisfactory conclusion
- Parents must make an appointment to see the class teacher if the matter needs more than a few minutes to resolve.
- Teachers are not expected to have to deal with an angry, aggressive, threatening, intimidating or otherwise abusive parent. The support of the principal should be sought in these circumstances.
- If the principal is not available, the support of the deputy principal or another colleague should be sought.
- In the interest of teachers' personal safety, should the parent presenting a complaint deemed to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, the teacher should seek the support of the principal, deputy principal or a colleague.
- Teachers should retain a written record of any situation that arises with a parent or guardian during which the teacher is threatened, shouted at or otherwise abused. A copy of this record must be given to the principal.
- If a complaint cannot be resolved with the class teacher, parents may bring the matter to the principal.

Complaints about teachers from pupils

- If a complaint about a teacher comes from a pupil to another teacher, the teacher to whom the complaint is made will refer to the pupil's teacher. This teacher will then decide whether to deal with the matter her/himself or to refer it to the principal. In either case, the principal should be informed of the circumstances and a written record kept by both the teacher concerned and the principal.
- If the complaint about a teacher comes from a pupil to the principal, it will be listened to, notes will be taken and the pupil will be advised that the matter will be discussed with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the issue.
- In either case, if the complaint is deemed by the principal, after investigation and discussion with both the pupil and teacher, to be wrong or vindictive on the part of the pupil, the parents or guardian of the pupil may be invited to the school to discuss the matter.

Complaints about Special Needs Assistants (SNAs):

- Complaints coming from parents to the class teacher will be dealt with directly by the class teacher who will try to resolve the difficulty amicably.

- Similarly, complaints coming from parents to the principal will be dealt with directly by the class teacher who will try to resolve the difficulty amicably.
- Complaints about the SNA coming from the class teacher will be dealt with in the first instance by the teacher approaching the SNA with a view to resolving the issue. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily, it will be brought to the principal.

Complaints about Pupils

- Complaints made about pupils by other parents will be handled by the class teacher in the first instance and the principal if thought necessary, through the procedures set out in the Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying Policy. *Under no circumstances should a parent approach any child other than their own child in the school.*
- Complaints made about pupils by other pupils will be handled by the teacher to whom the complaint is made in the first instance and by referring the matter to the principal if considered necessary.

Complaints about Parents

- Teachers will follow the Complaints Procedure below by referring the complaint to the Principal in the first instance. If the teacher is unhappy about the Principal's response or recommendation, Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure may be invoked.

Complaints about Ancillary Staff

- These will be referred to the principal who will approach the staff member directly in order to resolve the issue.

Complaints about substitute teachers and visiting teachers

- These will be referred to the principal who will approach the teacher in question directly with a view to investigating and resolving the issue.

Complaints about visitors to the school

- In the case of visitors to the school, (e.g. students on work experience, students on teaching practice, visiting members of other agencies) the complainant will refer the issue to the principal in the first instance
- If not resolved at this stage, the issue will be referred to the management body dealing with the worker with a view to resolving the issue.

Internal Conflict issues

In keeping with the mission and ethos of the school, staff members will seek to resolve internal conflict issues amicably between those concerned. However, if this process fails:

- The INTO staff representative will act as liaison between staff members or between staff and management in these instances.
- Everyone involved will be listened to and respected.
- An early intervention in relation to conflict issues will be facilitated as far as possible.
- All parties will work towards a resolution of the conflict and move on.
- If necessary, an independent facilitator may be engaged to help resolve the conflict.
- If the issue is not resolved, grievance procedures may be followed.

Complaints about a Department of Education and Skills Inspector:

In the case of complaints against a school inspector, the guidelines established by the INTO in the publication: 'Procedures for Review of Inspections' and the Department of Education and Science 'Comments and Complaints' guidelines will be followed.

As stated in the guidelines, any complaint will be issued and conveyed to the Inspectorate on the day in question or by the end of the following day.

Complaints Procedure to be followed:
The following is the procedure to adhere to in the event of a complaint being made by a parent:

Stage One

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

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

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

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

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. Primary School Management or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party three months' notice of intention to do so. In this agreement ‘days’ means school days.

Review and Implementation

This policy was drafted and reviewed by staff in September 2021. This policy was reviewed in October 2024 and will be reviewed as needs dictate and formally reviewed in October 2027.

Signed: _____Date: _____

Chairperson Board of Management

Signed: _____Date: _____

Principal