

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

From the "Catholic Primary Schools Management Association Handbook 2012" pg 155-157

Section 28 Education Act: (not yet commenced)

Section Five: Parents and the School

S28.

(1) The Minister, following consultation with patrons of recognised schools, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations and recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers, may from time to time prescribe procedures in accordance with which—

(a) the parent of a student or, in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal to the board against a decision of a teacher or other member of staff of a school,

(b) grievances of students, or their parents, relating to the students' school (other than those which may be dealt with under paragraph (a) or section 29), shall be heard, and

(c) appropriate remedial action shall, where necessary, be taken as a consequence of an appeal or in response to a grievance.

(2) In prescribing procedures for the purposes of this section the Minister shall have regard to the desirability of determining appeals and resolving grievances in the school concerned.

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Only those complaints about teachers 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:

- I. on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
- II. frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school;
- III. 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.

Stage 1

- 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.
- 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 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 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 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 3.2 (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 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.
- 5.3 This Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years;
- 5.4 CPSMA or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party 3 months' notice of intention to do so. (In this agreement 'days' means school days.)