



Procedures for Dealing with Complaints by Parents against Staff

Monkstown Educate Together N.S.

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1. Introduction:

The INTO and management bodies reached agreement in 1993 on a procedure for dealing with complaints by parents against teachers.

2. Rationale:

The purpose of this procedure is to facilitate the resolution of difficulties where they may arise in an agreed and fair manner.

3. Aims and Objectives:

The policy aims to provide a clear and systematic process to be followed should a parent/guardian wish to make a complaint about a member of staff.

The objective of the policy is to list the five stages to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific time scale allocated to each stage.

Only those complaints about a staff member 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 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: or
- (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 Stage1 of this procedure.

Note: In this policy, “days” means school days



4. Procedures:

Stage 1:

- A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, approach the member of staff with a view to resolving the complaint. This can take the form of an email or if possible, arrange a meeting.
- Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the member of staff she/he should approach the Principal with a view to resolving it. (phone call, email, setting up a meeting through the office, or conversation.
- 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:

- 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.
- The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the member of staff and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within five days of the receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3:

- If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson will (subject to the general authorisation of the Board and except in those cases which 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 ten days of receipt of the written complaint.



Stage 4:

- If the complaint is still not resolved the Chairperson will make a formal report to the Board within ten days of the meeting referred to in Stage 3(b).
- If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the member of staff and the complainant should be so informed within three days of the Board meeting.
- If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:
 - (a) the member of staff will be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
 - (b) the member of staff should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
 - (c) the member of staff will be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint;
 - (d) the member of staff will be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board. The member of staff will 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; and
 - (f) the meeting of the Board of Management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within ten days of the meeting referred to in Stage 3(b).

Stage 5:

- 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 five days of the meeting of the Board.
- The decision of the Board shall be final.

Review:

- The Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years.
- The Management bodies or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party three months' notice of intention to do so.

Ratified by Board of Management, METNS in March 2020