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Complaints Procedure Policy

We trust that your child/children are happy at Glasnevin Educate Together National School and we are committed to open, transparent communication throughout our community. We strongly encourage an informal approach in dealing with any issue which may occur. However, in the event of the failure of an informal approach the following procedures will apply.

Complaints about the actions of individuals working within the classroom (teachers, SNAs, etc)

Only those complaints about staff members which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the Board of Management (BoM) 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 school;
- (iii) complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure. Unwritten complaints may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

Stage 1

- The matter should be broached with the class teacher/relevant person with a view to resolving it.
- If a satisfactory conclusion is not achieved, then it should be brought to the principal, through the school office, with a view to resolving it.
- If a satisfactory conclusion is still not reached the complainant should raise the matter with the Chairperson of the BoM with a view to resolving it.

Stage 2

- If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter she/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the BoM.
- The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the

notice of the teacher/relevant person and seek to resolve the matter within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the BoM and except in those cases where the Chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the BoM not to be required:

- supply the teacher/relevant person with a copy of the written complaint;
- and arrange a meeting with the teacher/relevant person and, where applicable, the Principal, with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 4

If the complaint is still not resolved the Chairperson should make a formal report to the BoM within 10 days of the meeting referred to in Stage 3.

If the BoM considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher/relevant person and the complainant should be so informed within three days of the BoM meeting.

If the BoM considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:

- the teacher/relevant person should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
- the teacher/relevant person should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
- the teacher/relevant person should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint;
- the teacher/relevant person should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the BoM. The teacher/relevant person would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by an authorized third party at any such meeting;
- 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 an authorized third party at any such meeting;
- the meeting of the BoM referred to above will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in Stage 3.

Stage 5

- When the BoM has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the BoM in writing to the teacher/relevant person and the complainant within five days of the meeting of the BoM.
- The decision of the BoM shall be final.
- This Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed in three years.

Complaints against the actions of BoM Members:

- Any complaint against a Board Member about their post of responsibility on the BoM should be put in writing and brought to the attention of the Chairperson of the BoM.

Complaints against the Chairperson of the Board of Management:

- Any complaint against the Chairperson should be put in writing and brought to the attention of the BoM.
- If a satisfactory conclusion is not achieved at BoM level then formal notification in writing should be made by the secretary on behalf of the complainant and the BoM to the Schools Patron Body, Educate Together

Complaints about the actions of a parent/guardian:

- Disagreements/problems/complaints between parent/guardians can arise from time to time. We strongly encourage an informal approach in dealing with issues between the parents/guardians concerned.
- In general issues that do not occur on school property are beyond the remit of the school. However, if an incident occurs that may damage or have a negative impact on the school's reputation/operation/ pupils/staff, it may become the business of the BoM of the school. The BoM will have absolute discretion in deciding if such an incident meets the above criteria.
- Where a complaint arises from incidents that occurred on school property and are of a nature that may damage or have a negative impact on the school's reputation/operation/pupils/staff, it may become the business of the BoM of the school. The BoM will have absolute discretion on deciding if such an incident meets the above criteria.
- Regarding conflict resolution, we aspire to be role models for the pupils that attend the school and the standards we set for the pupils are what we ourselves have to live by.

General Guidelines

This policy supports relationships between adults in the school community. If an issue relates to the actions of a pupil, other documents/policies may be helpful, such as our Mission Statement and The Positive Behaviour Policy.

It is hoped that issues are resolved informally and restoratively, as much as possible. We are working towards becoming a Restorative Practice School, which may be reflected more so in future reviews of this policy.

At all times it is expected that all individuals work towards a resolution:

- in a manner in keeping with the ethos of the school;
- attending all meetings as requested;
- treating all matters discussed in a confidential fashion;
- treating each other with respect and dignity.

Please note that failure to comply with this policy, will be pointed out by the school management, and may be reported by the principal to the BoM. Please read in conjunction with all policies, including Dignity at Work.

In accordance with the Ombudsman for Children Act 2002, the Office of the Ombudsman for Children provides an independent and impartial complaint handling service. Under section 9 of the Act, the Ombudsman for Children can investigate complaints relating to the administrative actions of a school recognised by the Department of Education and Skills provided the complainant has firstly and fully followed the school's complaints procedures. The key criterion for any intervention by the Ombudsman for Children is that the action complained of has or may have adversely affected the child.

More information about the Ombudsman for Children can be obtained on www.oco.ie or by contacting them at: E-mail: oco@oco.ie.

Catherine Clune Mulvaney

Signed: _____
Chairperson Board of Management

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 26th May 2021
Review: 2024