



Kildalkey N.S. Grievances/Complaints Policy



Attached to this Policy is a copy of the official <u>Complaints Procedure</u> as agreed by the primary level teacher unions and the CPSMA.

It sets out a 4-stage process which Kildalkey N.S. will follow without modification.

Introductory Statement

As a school community, we are committed to upholding the ethos of the Catholic Church, our school mission statement and our vision for the school in all our dealings with pupils, parents, one another and with the wider community in which our pupils live.

For that reason, we will try to prevent or minimise the need for complaints where this is possible. However, given that our community is made up of human beings and that mistakes can be made, we will approach these issues in a spirit of mutual respect and tolerance for the benefit of all.

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 personnel 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, before passing these details on to the principal. No further details will be sought, nor will the complainant be engaged with over the phone, except by the principal teacher. 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. It is important to note the following:

- It is expected that under normal circumstances, a parent who has a complaint about a teacher would approach the teacher at a mutually suitable time with a view to resolving the difficulty
- If the class teacher is by-passed by the parent, in favour of discussing the complaint with the principal, it will be suggested that the teacher should by 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 issues to the principal.
- The principal, having listened to both sides, will try to bring the issue to a satisfactory conclusion
- Parents will be expected to make an appointment to see the class teacher if the matter needs more than a few minutes to resolve, in view of the fact that classes must have adequate supervision at all times and that corridors are unsuitable venues for discussion purposes
- Teachers are not expected to have to deal with an angry, aggressive, threatening, intimidating or otherwise abusive parent. The support of the principal, or if unavailable, deputy principal or colleague should be sought in these circumstances
- In the interest of teachers' personal safety, parents presenting with a complaint under the influence of drugs or alcohol, should not be engaged with unless the teacher is supported by the principal, deputy principal or colleague
- Teachers should retain a written record of any altercation which arises with a parent or guardian during which the teacher is threatened, shouted at or otherwise abused. A copy of this record should be given to the principal also
- 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 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 teachers from SNAs or Ancillary Staff:

- Complaints coming from SNAs or Ancillary Staff about a teacher will first be directed towards the class teacher and both parties will try to resolve the difficulty amicably. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily, it will be brought to the principal.
- If the staff member is unhappy about the Principal's response or recommendation, Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure may be invoked.

Complaints about Special Needs Assistants (SNAs):

- Complaints coming from parents 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.

Note - SNAs are not expected to have to deal with an angry, aggressive, threatening, intimidating or otherwise abusive parent. The support of the principal, or if unavailable, deputy principal or colleague should be sought in these circumstances. Communication between school and home is primarily through teachers – thus SNAs should not be the first point of contact with parents.

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 will a parent be allowed access to a 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 (Appendix 1) 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 peripatetic 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 union staff representative (e.g. INTO, FORSA, SIPTU etc.) will act as liaison between staff members or between staff and management in these instances
- The issue will be named and communication will be facilitated with all parties involved
- 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.

Roles and Responsibilities

All stakeholders involved in the education of pupils will take responsibility for implementing the policy.



Review

The Policy will be evaluated on an ongoing basis by representatives from the whole school community and will be reviewed every three years.

Ratification and Communication

The Policy will be presented to the Board of Management for Ratification on 29th February 2024.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:

Chairperson: Many Reidy Date: 29-02-24

Principal: Nodlag O'Neill-Forde Date: 29-02-24

Log of Actions:

- Reviewed by teaching staff on 13/02/24
- Reviewed by SNA staff on 14/02/24
- Reviewed by Parents' Association in February 2024
- Ratified by BOM on 29th February 2024



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Appendix One:

Formal Stage 1 Discussion 1.1 Parent/quardian meets teacher A parent/legal guardian who

wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child, should, seek an appointment with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the teacher can be convened as appropriate.

1.2 Parent/guardian meets Principal1

Where the parent/legal guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the teacher, they should seek an appointment with the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Principal as appropriate.

1.3 Parent/guardian meets Chairperson

Where the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/legal guardian should seek an appointment with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Chairperson

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved during this stage.

Formal Stage 2 Written

2.1 Written complaint

If the complaint has not been

resolved at stage 1, the parent/

sent to Chairperson

legal quardian who wishes

to pursue the matter further

should submit the complaint

in writing to the Chairperson

of the Board of Management.

2.2 Chairperson provides a

The Chairperson should provide a

has been made, without delay.

copy of the written complaint to the

teacher against whom the complaint

This commences stage 2.

copy to the teacher

2.3 Chairperson

convenes meeting(s)

Formal Stage 3 **Board of Management**

3.1 Chairperson makes a

formal report to the Board

following stage 2 and the parent/

legal guardian wishes to pursue

the matter, they should inform

the Chairperson in writing

to either stage 3.2 or 3.3.

of this fact. The Chairperson

should make a formal report

to the Board of Management

within 10 days of receipt of this

the Board can decide to proceed

3.2 Complaint concluded

Where the Board considers the

complaint, the process may

be concluded at this stage, if

the board considers that:

frivolous/vexatious;

c) The complaint is more

d) where recourse to law

has been initiated.

b) The complaint has already been

appropriately dealt with through

investigated by the board;

a more relevant DE circular.

Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this

stage, the parent/legal guardian

should be so informed within

five days of the Board meeting.

a) The complaint is

written statement. At this meeting,

If the complaint remains unresolved

3.3 Proceed to a hearing

to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows:

- a) the teacher should be informed that the complaint is proceeding to a full hearing and the Chairperson must ensure the teacher has been supplied with all documents which are being considered by the Board.
- the Board should arrange a meeting with the parent/legal quardian if it considers such to be required. The parent/ accompanied and assisted by
- an opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The teacher is entitled to be represented by a friend or a union representative, who may be accompanied for the purpose of assistance and note taking.
- d) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board as the employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be shared with any third party.
- the meeting of the Board of to in 3.1. in so far as possible.

(20 days)

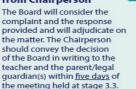
Where the Board decides

- legal guardian is entitled to be a friend at any such meeting.
- the teacher should be afforded

Management referred to in 3(b), (c) and (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred

Formal Stage 4 Decision





4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final

as appropriate.

The Chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent/ legal guardian within 10 school days of the commencement of stage 2.1. This may require one or more meetings to be convened by the Chairperson with the teacher/ parent/legal guardian and other school personnel as deemed appropriate by the Chairperson.

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved at this stage.