



Scoil Cholmcille COMPLAINTS POLICY

INTRODUCTION:

At Scoil Cholmcille we undertake to provide a friendly and safe environment in which pupils will be helped to achieve their potential, both academically and socially. We recognise that sometimes parents or carers may need to make a complaint or raise concerns that they have with the school. The majority of issues raised by parents are concerns rather than complaints. Scoil Cholmcille is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the school's formal complaints procedure. For the school to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made within the academic year of the incident occurring.

AIMS

The primary aim of Scoil Cholmcilles' Complaints Policy is to resolve a complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Scoil Cholmcille will adopt the Complaints Procedure agreed between the Irish National Teacher Organisation on behalf of the teachers and the Catholic Primary School Managers Association on behalf of the Board of Management of Catholic schools. The first element of the complaints procedure mentions informality and more often than not the complaint can be adequately dealt with in an informal manner.

POLICY

The Scoil Cholmcille policy has **five main stages**, and lays out the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed at each stage. 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:

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



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2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher s/he should approach the principal with a view to resolving it.
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

1. If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further s/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the BoM.
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 with five days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 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:
 - supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint and
 - 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

1. 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 3(b).
2. If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within three days of the Board meeting.
3. If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:
 - the teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
 - the teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
 - the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint;
 - 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;



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- 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
- the meeting of the BoM referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3(b).

Stage 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 five days of the meeting of the Board.
2. The decision of the Board shall be final.
3. The Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years.
4. CPSMA or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party three months' notice of intention to do so.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Cholmcille on

Date

7/5/17

Signed:

P. C. Hay
