

Parental Complaints Policy

Harold's Cross N.S.

Reviewed and amended on Tuesday, 13th of December, 2016

Signed: _Teresa Leahy

Chairperson, Board of Management

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS POLICY FOR

Introductory Statement:

This policy has been formulated to comply with the terms of Section 28 of the Education Act, 1998- which focuses on procedures for processing complaints made by parents against members of staff. It is based on an agreement reached between the CPSMA and INTO in 1993.

The procedure covers all matters relating to the actions of staff employed in the school and the application of school procedures, where they affect pupils. The procedures are designed to be easily accessible, simple to understand and use; impartial; non-adversarial; and publicised.

Relationship to the school Ethos:

In Harold's Cross N.S. we strive to promote positive home-school links and endeavor to enhance the relationships between the parent and the school to the best of our ability.

Aims/Objectives:

To afford parents an opportunity to express concerns/grievances through the framework of a defined procedure

To foster fruitful and trusting relationships between school and parents

To minimize the opportunity for conflict by providing parents an opportunity to liaise with the class teacher.

To encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;

To allow swift handling of a complaint within established time-limits for action

Please Note:

Where it becomes evident at an early stage that a matter should be dealt with according to other established procedures or appeals mechanisms, this Complaints Procedure will be set aside in favour of the agreed procedure such as **Child Protection, Special Education, Admissions, Suspensions and Expulsions, Grievance, Discipline, Code of Behaviour, Bullying and Harassment or Unsatisfactory Teaching Procedure, Teaching Council regulations.**

The school will not deal with anonymous complaints (except for those concerning child protection matters) and therefore these procedures do not provide for a resolution of anonymous complaints.

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:

- matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education & Science
- frivolous or vexatious and 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.

Implementation:

In operating this Complaints Procedure we aim to:

- ensure a full and fair investigation;
- have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved;
- respect confidentiality;
- address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress,
- where necessary provide information to the school's Senior Management Team and Board of Management so that services can be improved.
- provide reasons for our decisions.

Stage 1 (Informal)

1.1 A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should approach the class teacher, by appointment, with a view to resolving the complaint.

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

1.3. If the complaint is still unresolved the parent/guardian should raise the matter verbally 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 five days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3 (Formal)

3.1 If the complaint is not resolved informally, the chairperson should, subject to the general authorization of the Board and except in those cases where the chairperson deems the particular authorization 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 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(b).

4.2 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.

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 (parent) 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 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3(b).

Stage 5

5.1 When the Board has completed its investigation, the Chairperson will convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within five working days of the meeting of the Board.

5.2 The decision of the Board is final.

Record Keeping:

The Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management shall maintain a record of all correspondence, conversations and meetings concerning the parent's complaint. These records shall be held confidentially in the school and shall be kept apart from pupil records. All such records will be destroyed three years after the date of the last correspondence on the issue.

A copy of the procedures will be placed on the school's website or available on request from the school.

Success Criteria: Swift and efficient resolution of grievances.

Review: This policy will be reviewed every three years or as the need arises by the Board.

It should be noted that CPSMA or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party three months notice of intention to do so.

This policy was originally drawn up in 2013. It was reviewed and updated in December, 2016 by members of the Board.

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at a Board meeting on 13/12/16