

POLICY OF SCOIL MHUIRE CBS MARINO

Document Title: Parental Complaints Procedure
Effective Date: March 2023

Document No: 14

Revision No:3

No. of pages: 4

1. Purpose

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire CBS, Marino has adopted the Complaints Procedure – agreed by teachers’ unions and management bodies – which provides a mechanism for dealing with parental complaints against a teacher as set out in Section 28 of the *Education Act* (1998).

The purpose of this Parental Complaints Procedure document is to provide a framework for the process of recording, acknowledging, addressing, and resolving any complaints received from a pupil’s parent(s) or guardian(s).

This policy has been developed in consultation with the Board of Management and the staff of Scoil Mhuire CBS.

2. Scope

The Board of Management and the staff of Scoil Mhuire CBS are committed to fostering fruitful and trusting relationships between the school and its community. This policy contributes towards that endeavour, and seeks to:

- minimise the opportunity for conflict by providing families an opportunity to liaise with relevant teaching staff, and
- afford families an opportunity to express opinions and grievances through an agreed framework.

Only those complaints about teachers which are written and signed by parent(s) or guardian(s) of a pupil 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 & Skills
- 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.

The school will not deal with anonymous complaints, except for those concerning child safeguarding matters. Therefore, the process outlined in this document does not provide for a resolution of anonymous complaints.

3. Principles

In drawing up this policy, the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire CBS is cognisant of the strong, positive home-school links that exist in the school. Therefore, wherever possible, the resolution of problems by informal means is encouraged.

Should a grievance or complaint require further examination, the five-stage procedure outlined in this document is designed to be simple to understand and use, impartial, and non-adversarial. The purpose of this procedure is to facilitate the swift and efficient resolution of grievances.

A copy of this policy will be published on the school’s website, and will be available on request from the school office.

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4. Key Terms

In the context of this Parental Complaints Procedure document, the following key terms will be understood as follows:

Concern	An expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction, made orally or in writing, about actions taken or a lack of action.
Vexatious Complaint	A vexatious complaint can be, but is not limited to, a groundless complaint that causes distress, detriment or harassment to the subject of the complaint; or a complaint that is unduly repetitive, burdensome, or unwarranted when compared to its merits.
Day	In the context of this procedure, day will mean school day.

5. Policy

RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONS MAKING A COMPLAINT

In dealing with your concerns and complaints the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire CBS will ensure that you receive: fair treatment; courtesy; a timely response; accurate advice; and respect for your privacy – complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible, allowing for the possibility that we may have to consult with other appropriate parties about your complaint; and reasons for our decisions.

Where the complaint is justified the school will acknowledge this and address the complaint you have raised. If, after investigation, it is judged there are no grounds for the complaint, you will be advised accordingly.

In raising a concern or making a complaint we would expect that families: raise issues in a timely manner; treat our staff with respect and courtesy; provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issues you raise; and use these procedures fully and engage in them at the appropriate levels.

STAGE ONE

- 1.1 A parent or guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, in the first instance, approach the teacher directly with a view to resolving the concern or complaint. Families are urged to observe the school's existing protocols with respect to initiating contact with members of staff, and the Board request that calls and emails come via the school office. Similarly, with respect to arranging and conducting meetings, the school's existing protocols will be followed: all meetings should be scheduled in advance at a time convenient for both the family and teacher concerned. These meetings should also be arranged via the school office.
- 1.2 Where the parent or guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the teacher in question, they should approach the Principal with a view to resolving it.
- 1.3 If the complaint is still unresolved, the parent or guardian should raise the matter with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving it.

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STAGE TWO

- 2.1 If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent or guardian wishes to pursue the matter further, they should lodge the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. The name of the Chairperson is published on the school website, and families can contact the Chairperson via email (through the school office) or post (to the school address).
- 2.2 The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher concerned, and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

STAGE THREE

- 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:
 - 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 FOUR

- 4.1 If the complaint is still not resolved, the Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1 (b).
- 4.2 If the Board of Management considers that the complaint is not substantiated, the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within 3 days of the Board meeting.
- 4.3 If the Board of Management 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 of Management in response to the complaint;
 - d) The teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of the case to the Board of Management. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
 - e) 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 3.1 (b).

STAGE FIVE

- 5.1 When the Board of Management has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board, in writing, to the teacher and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board.
- 5.2 The decision of the Board of Management shall be final.

Through the operation of this procedure, particularly in cases whereby the complaint reaches Stage Four, teachers are encouraged to contact their INTO District Representative for advice.

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6. Approval & Review

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire CBS in February 2023 and will be reviewed after three years.

Initial Approval

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal

7th February, 2023

Date

1st March, 2023

Effective Date

January 2026

Review Date

