



. Scoil Chuimhneacháin Pheadair Mhic Fhlannchadha, An Chrannaigh.

Peadar Clancy Memorial School, Cranny.

Tel: 065 6832345

Cranny, Ennis, Co. Clare

Email: crannyns@gmail.com

Principal: Edel McMahon

Deputy Principal; Patricia Cunningham

Parental Complaints Procedure

Rationale

The Board of Management of Cranny National School has adopted the Complaints Procedure, agreed by the teachers' union and management bodies in 2023, which provides a mechanism for dealing with parental complaints against a teacher as set out in Section 28 of the Education Act 1998. It is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner.

It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time to time concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school. It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship between the parent and school can be preserved and respected. It is expected that all parties concerned will engage proactively.

Relationship to School Ethos

The school promotes positive home – school contacts and endeavours to enhance the self-esteem of everyone within the school community. The policy contributes towards those ideals.

Aims/Objectives

- To foster fruitful and trusting relationships between school and parents
- To afford parents an opportunity to express opinions/grievances through the framework of a defined procedure
- To minimize the opportunity for conflict by providing parents an opportunity to liaise with the class teacher.

Procedural Points

The procedure is a staged procedure where every effort is made to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage. In most cases, concerns will be dealt with either informally or formally at the earlier stages of the procedure. Where it has not been possible to agree a resolution at the earlier stages, the procedure does allow for the escalation of the matter to Board of Management. This procedure

sets out, in four stages, the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed. It is expected the parties will follow each stage in sequence.

- Where the term written correspondence is used, this refers specifically to a letter or email correspondence from a parent/legal guardian.
- Only complaints about a teacher which are written and signed by a parent/legal guardian and which relate to their own child, will be investigated.
- Where a complaint is raised by a parent/legal guardian is deemed by the employer/board of management to relate to the following, this procedure will not apply;
 1. Matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
 2. Frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school or;
 3. Complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.
- In all circumstances, any form of written correspondence for the attention of the Board of Management must be supplied to the Chairperson of the board of Management only. Any deviation from this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of this agreement.
- Days in this procedure refer specifically to school days. A school day is a day on which the school is in operation. Holiday periods, school closures and leaves of absences are not counted as school days for the purpose of the procedure.
- Group/collective complaints are not provided for and each parent/legal guardian raising a concern will be dealt with separately through this process.
- This procedure is a domestic forum and accordingly neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any stage.
- Issues should be raised in a timely manner. It is in the best interests of the child that issues are raised to achieve earliest resolution at the earliest possible stage with the teacher, ideally while the pupil is in that teacher's class.

Stage 1 (Discussion)

- 1.1 **Parent/guardian 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 Principal:** Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher, they should seek an appointment with the Principal Teacher 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/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 as appropriate.

Stage 2 (Written)

- 2.1 **Written complaint sent to Chairperson:** If the complaint has not been resolved at stage 1 and the parent/guardian 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 copy to the teacher:** The Chairperson should provide a copy of the written complaint to the teacher against whom the complaint has been made, without delay.
- 2.3 **Chairperson convenes meeting(s)** 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.

Stage 3 (Board of Management)

- 3.1 **Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board** If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 the parent/legal guardian wishes to pursue the matter, they should inform the Chairperson in writing of this fact. The Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within 10 days of receipt of this written statement. At this meeting the Board can decide to proceed to either stage 3.2 or 3.3.
- 3.2 **Complaint concluded** Where the Board considers the complaint, the process may be concluded at any stage, if the board considers that:

- a) The complaint is frivolous/vexatious
- b) The complaint has already been investigated by the Board
- c) The complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant DE circular,
- or;
- d) where recourse to law has been initiated

Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parents/legal guardian should be so informed within five days of the Board meeting.

3.3 Proceed to a hearing

Where the Board decides 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.
- b) the Board should arrange a meeting with the parent/legal guardian if it considers such to be required. The parent/legal guardian is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting
- c) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The teacher is entitled to be 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 employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be shared with any third party.
- e) the meeting of the Board of Management referred to in 3(b) (c) and (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1 in so far as possible.

Stage 4 written decision from the Chairperson

4.1 The Board will consider the complaint and the response provided and will adjudicate on the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent/legal guardian(s) within five days of the meeting held at stage 3.3.

4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

Success Criteria

- Swift and efficient resolution of grievances
- Parent/Teacher satisfaction
- Positive school community feedback
- Reviews of school policies as issues arise.

Implementation

This policy was updated in January 2024 and will be updated again in 2028/2029.



¹Where a complaint is received about a principal the above process commences at Stage 1.2.