

## ST. MARYS NS, KNOCKBRIDGE PARENTAL COMPLAINTS

### POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The purpose of this policy is to facilitate the resolution of difficulties between parents and members of staff where they may arise in an agreed and fair manner. This policy lays out in five stages the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed at each stage. Please note this is a non-statutory procedure.

Only those complaints about staff members 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 Skills;
- frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a member of staff in a school; or
- 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 arrange an appointment to meet with the particular staff member with a view to resolving the complaint.
2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the member of staff he/she 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 board of management.
2. The chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the staff member and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 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:
  - a) supply the staff member with a copy of the written complaint; and
  - b) arrange a meeting with the staff member 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 board within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3(b).
2. If the board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the member of staff 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:

- a) the staff member should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
- b) the staff member should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
- c) the staff member should be requested to supply a written statement to the board in response to the complaint;
- c) the staff member should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the board. He/she would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
- d) 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
- 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(b).

### **Stage 5**

1. When the board has completed its investigation, the chairperson should convey the decision of the board in writing to the staff member and the complainant within five days of the meeting of the board.
2. The decision of the board shall be final.

In this policy 'days' relates to 'school days'.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Signed: Rev. Fr. Gerard McGinnity  
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Brian McDonnell  
Principal

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015