

## Grievance Procedure Policy



Boolavogue N.S.

### **Introduction**

It is in the interest of pupils, parents and teachers that good relations exist between home and school. Teachers are willing to discuss any problems which may occur from time to time. With mutual respect and goodwill, most problems can be resolved readily. This Policy aims to clarify the procedure used to deal with general complaints by or against School Staff (Principal/Teachers/Ancillary Staff) or internal staff grievance issues.

### **Rational**

We accept that grievances and complaints are a natural and normal part of the school workplace and we wish to promptly, fairly and effectively deal with issues as they arise. We aim to protect our employees from unsubstantiated, malicious and untrue allegations. The INTO and Primary School Management reached agreement in 1993 on a procedure for dealing with complaints by parents/guardians. The purpose of this procedure is to facilitate the resolution of difficulties where they may arise in an agreed and fair manner. The agreement lays out in five stages the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed at each stage.

### **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.
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 board of management.
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

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 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 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:
  - 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 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 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 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. Primary School Management or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party three months' notice of intention to do so. In this agreement 'days' means school days.

Note: In this procedure, "Days" means school days. The vast majority of complaints are resolved locally and informally. However, in certain circumstances, for example, where a complaint is considered to be serious in nature, or where the a Boolavogue N.S. teacher is required to submit a written response to his/her board of management, the teacher should contact his/her INTO District Representative or INTO Head Office for advice and assistance. In advising a teacher, the INTO will be anxious to ensure that there is due process and fair procedures applied, which generally include: that the teacher is fully apprised of all matters being considered by the board of management, including being provided with copies of all relevant documentation; the right to respond and adequate time to prepare a response; entitlement to be represented by the INTO, if necessary. Where a teacher contacts the INTO in relation to a complaint(s) made against him/her, the officials involved will generally meet with the teacher and require him/her to provide detailed written information and documentation on the matter. The officials will assess the case and decide if additional specific legal advice or a legal consultation is required. Specific legal advice is obtained for members in accordance with the Rules of the INTO and the conditions prescribed by the CEC

Appendix:

- It is important to note that the Parent's Association is not a forum for complaints.
- The parent's nominees on the Board of Management cannot act as a medium for complaints on behalf of individual parents, groups of parents and/or the Parents Association.
- Openness and transparency is ensured through our website, information booklet and regular reporting on 'Matters open for discussion' by the Board to the Parents Association.
- Members of the Board of Management are bound by confidentiality on all issues taking place at board meetings including complaints. Only information that is deemed for open discussion by the Chairperson of the Board will be communicated with the wider school community.
- The stages of the grievances procedure should be made clear to any parents/guardians by members of the Board/Parents Association in the event of being approached with a grievance.

A copy of this policy will be available on the school website. A copy of the full policy will be available on request from the principal.

This Grievance Procedure will be brought to the attention of Staff, the Parents' Association and the Board of Management.

This Policy was developed by the school following consultation with Staff, Parent Association and the School Board.

It was Ratified by the B.O.M on \_\_\_\_\_. It will take effect immediately from time of ratification. The Policy will be reviewed regularly.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson Boolavogue N.S.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_