



Complaints Procedure

St. Brigid's NS, Clonegal wants the children in our care to achieve their full potential and to be happy. We recognise that parents or guardians play an important part in making this happen. We aim to provide as many opportunities as possible to keep parents informed and involved in the education of their children. Therefore annual reports and Parent/Teacher meetings are organised and visits by parents to the school are encouraged. Questions and concerns can be dealt with quickly and helpfully – see Communications Policy.

However, we recognise there are times when things go wrong, when concerns continue and differences of opinion develop. These can usually be resolved by speaking to the right person. Most concerns can be settled without too much trouble. Whatever the issue, even where parents are seriously concerned about their child's future at the school, it's always important to try to find an answer. Disruption to a child's education would be the most damaging result of all.

What a Parent can do first

Take a few minutes to read this policy. Then, think the complaint through

- What actually happened? Remember there is often more than one view about an incident or situation. For example, your child may well be telling the truth but it may not be the whole story.
- What do you want to complain about?
- What do you hope will happen as a result of your complaint?

It might help to talk this through with a friend or relative. When you make a complaint, remember that although you want to change a situation, you want it to end on a positive note with no bad feelings. In order to do this you should try to follow the procedures carefully and always try not to put yourself or anyone else into a corner.

What to do next

When you are clear in your own mind as to what you believe has happened, you then need to speak to someone at the school. If the issue concerns the class teacher it is recommended that you first arrange a meeting with the child's teacher. If it is a more general issue or complaint you may either talk to the class teacher or the principal. It is always best to try to make an appointment where you can sit and talk things through calmly and without interruption.



Investigating complaints does take time and the answers aren't always readily available, but you will at least be able to decide whether the action taken (or not taken) was reasonable and whether any further steps taken by the teacher would solve the problem. If you are not happy with the outcome of this meeting you should contact the Principal.

If you are still unhappy

In most cases, the problem will have been solved by this stage. However, if you are still unhappy, then you should contact the Chairperson of the Board of Management, who may help to resolve the problem informally, possibly by arranging a meeting between those involved. Once again, you'll have the opportunity to talk through your concerns with an independent party who is there to listen and to discuss what is being said. If, after this, you are still not satisfied with the answer, then you should ask to make a formal complaint to the Board of Management.

Complaints to the Board of Management

As this is a serious step to take, it is important that you have thought things through carefully and that every possible attempt has been made to solve your concerns by other means.

Normally, a meeting of the Board of Management will be called to hear your case and all sides will be asked to submit a written statement. You will also be invited to attend any hearing that is held, to present your side of the story. The decision of the Board of Management will then be sent in writing to all parties.

And, if you are still unhappy

If after the Board of Management has dealt with your complaint, you are still unhappy with the decision that was taken, you can contact the Department of Education and Skills or National Parent's Council Primary for advice on what to do next. For example, if you feel that the Board of Management has acted unreasonably, you can consider complaining to the Department of Education and Skills.

Steps to resolving your concerns

1. Ask yourself what really happened?
2. Decide what you want to complain about.
3. Make an appointment to see the appropriate person – the teacher involved.
4. Make an appointment to speak to the Principal.
5. If you are still not happy – write to the chairperson of the Board of Management.
6. Make a formal complaint to the Board of Management.
7. If you are not satisfied after you have taken the steps above you can contact the Department of Education and Skills.



Sequence of Complaints Procedure

It is important that the sequence of the Complaints Procedure is followed. This will give an opportunity to solve differences before they become a major issue.

- Speak to the class teacher or teacher involved in the issue.
- Speak to the Principal.
- Contact the Chairperson, Board of Management.
- Make a written complaint to the Board of Management.
- Contact Department of Education and Skills.