



Parent/Teacher Communication Policy

Introductory statement

This policy was developed by the staff of Bunscoil Bhríde in consultation with the Board of Management and the Parents' Association. Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and teachers on parent/teacher meetings and parent/teacher communication in Bunscoil Bhríde. The family and home are central to the development of the child and the nurturing of Christian values. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other so that the child's education can be effective.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with the school
- Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children
- Share the responsibility of seeing that the school remains true to its ethos, values and distinctive character
- Become actively involved in the school's Parents' Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them

Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with parents

- All parents are asked to download the Aladdin Connect app, allowing two-way communication between school and home, and facilitating the sharing of information relating to attendance, school reports etc with parents.
- Meeting for parents of incoming Junior Infants in the spring preceding their enrolment
- Meeting for incoming Junior Infants and their parents in mid-June
- Meeting for parents of Junior Infants in September
- One-to-one Parent/Teacher Meetings in November
- Parents receive school report of each pupil in mid-June, allowing time for contact to be made with regard to any concerns/queries arising before the end of the year
- Termly Support Plan Meetings with parents whose children have special educational needs
- Consultation throughout the year
- Written communication
- Through the Parents' Association, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of all school policies. Decisions taken to change current policies and procedures or to introduce new ones will be made known to all parents in written format via the school newsletter
- Fortnightly newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns
- The Homework Diary, used in 1st to 6th classes serves as a medium to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers. Parents are requested to sign the Diary each night to certify that homework has been completed

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- Parents are invited to family masses, school celebrations/events and school concerts
- Involvement of parents in the religious education Grow in Love section for parents.
- Volunteer parents (who are Garda vetted) from the Parents' Association are sometimes asked, where needed, to accompany classes on school tours / outings
- Parents are encouraged to participate in paired reading initiatives and Ready Set Go Maths programme in infant classes.

It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to your child and therefore may adversely affect her education.

In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians named on the enrolment form will be consulted by the teachers.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

The aim of Parent/Teacher Meetings is:

- To let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- To inform teachers on how children are coping outside school
- To establish an ongoing relationship and communication with parents
- To help teachers/parents get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realise that home and school are working together

Informal Parent/Teacher Meetings

Communication between parents and teachers is to be encouraged. Arranging parent/teacher meetings within the school day while children are in school is difficult. However parents are welcome to speak to the Principal or teacher(s) at an appointed time. Meetings with the class teacher at the class door / school gate to discuss a child's concern/progress is discouraged on a number of grounds:

- The teacher cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent
- It is difficult to be discrete when so many children are standing close by
- It can be embarrassing for a child when her parent is talking to the teacher at a classroom door

Occasions may occur where a parent needs to speak to a teacher urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will facilitate such meetings, if appropriate, making every effort to ensure that the children in the class do not lose out on any of the teaching/learning time.

If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear etc, this can be done through the secretary's office.

Parents are strongly discouraged from taking pupils out of school during term time for family holidays.

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Formal Meetings

Formal timetabled Parent/Teacher Meetings take place in November. However, if a parent wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by prior appointment.

All communication sent from the school will be sent via the Aladdin app, which all parents are asked to download. Communication may also be sent to the parents' email addresses or child's home address as given on the enrolment form, unless otherwise requested by parents. In the case of separated parents, requests can be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings.

School Ethos

In accordance with the school's ethos and in line with Department of Education guidance, all communication between parents/guardians and school staff should be conducted in a respectful, courteous and constructive manner, with the best interests of the child as the central focus. The school does not accept any form of abusive, threatening or inappropriate behaviour towards staff. Where such behaviour occurs, the school reserves the right to terminate any meeting or engagement and to require the parent/guardian to withdraw. The school is committed to fostering positive and solution-focused communication, and all parties are encouraged to work collaboratively to address any concerns in a manner that supports the wellbeing and education of the child.

Procedures for Addressing Concerns and Complaints (See Appendix 1 for Parental Complaints Procedure)

The school acknowledges the right of parents/guardians to raise concerns and is committed to dealing with such matters in accordance with the agreed **Parental Complaints Procedure (2023)**. The purpose of this procedure is to facilitate the resolution of difficulties in an agreed and fair manner, at the earliest possible stage.

The procedure operates on a **staged basis**, and it is a fundamental requirement that **each stage of the process is completed before proceeding to the next stage**. This ensures that issues are addressed, where possible, at local level and that all parties have the opportunity to resolve concerns in a constructive and respectful manner.

- **Stage 1 (Informal):** A parent/guardian should first raise the concern with the class teacher, with a view to resolving the matter informally.
- **Stage 2:** If the concern remains unresolved, it may be brought to the attention of the Principal.
- **Stage 3:** Where the matter is still unresolved, it may be referred in writing to the Board of Management for consideration.

Progression through the stages must occur in sequence. **A matter will not be considered at a subsequent stage unless it has first been raised and addressed at the preceding stage**, in line with the agreed procedure.

At all stages of the process, parents/guardians and staff are expected to engage in a courteous, respectful and solution-focused manner. Complaints should relate to the parent's/guardian's own child and be raised as soon as possible to facilitate timely resolution.

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The school is committed to ensuring that all concerns are addressed in a manner that is fair, consistent and mindful of the need to maintain positive relationships between home and school, in the best interests of the child.

Appendix 1

Revised Parental Complaints Procedure



Note:

A copy of this procedure will be available for parents/legal guardians on the school website and/or on request from the school. This procedure comes into effect on the 1st of January 2024.

Under the Education Act 1998, legally, all schools are managed by the school's Board of Management, on behalf of the school patron.

Purpose/Objective

The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the management bodies of primary schools, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland, An Foras Pátrúnachta, the Muslim Primary Education Board, Educate Together and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education in 2023. 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.

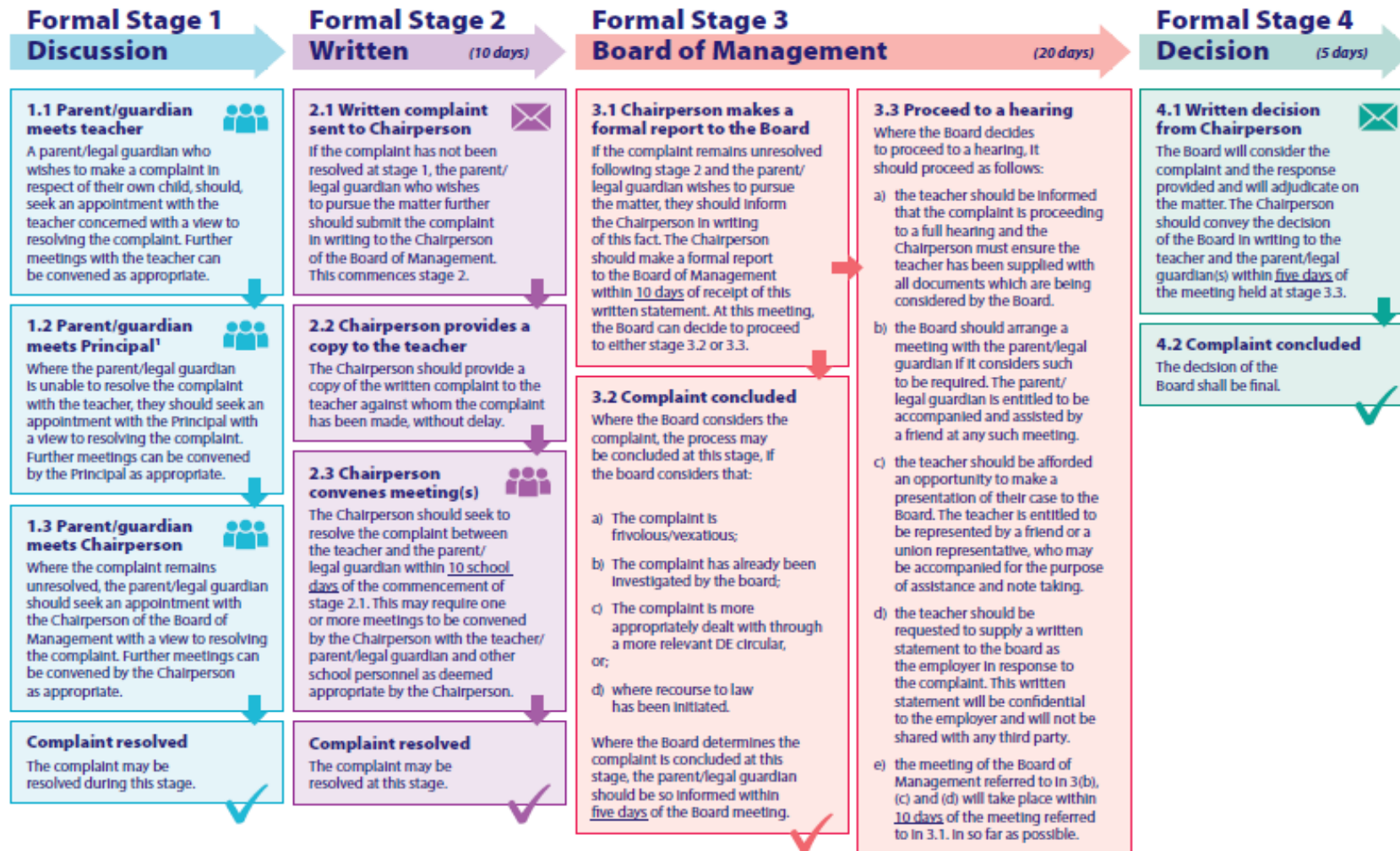
It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time-to-time concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school. It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship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

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 the 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(s).
- 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 raised by a parent/legal guardian is deemed by the employer/board of management to relate to the following, this procedure will not apply;
 - matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
 - frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
 - 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 this procedure.
- Group/collective complaints are not provided for and each parent/legal guardian raising a concern will be dealt with separately through this process.
- The 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 early resolution at the earliest possible stage with the teacher, ideally while the pupil is in that teacher's class.

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