

Gorey Central N.S. **Parental Complaints Policy**

Rationale:

The need for this policy arises from:

Section 28, Education Act 1998 – procedures for processing complaints by parents prescribed for all schools under the Act.

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.
- Through affording parents an opportunity to liaise with the class teacher.

Please note:

This policy does not cover:

1. Complaints that are being dealt with through legal channels
2. Matters of professional competence which come under the remit of the Dept. of Education and Science.
3. Petty complaints which do not relate to the work of a particular teacher.

Complaints Procedure

The correct order of approach by the Complainant is:

1. Teacher (verbal)
2. Principal (verbal)
3. Chairperson (verbal)
4. Chairperson (written)

The Chairperson then brings the complaint to the attention of the staff member and the Board of Management.

NB: Parents/Guardians who do not follow the procedure above **in the correct order** will be advised to return to the appropriate stage of the process in order to follow all stages clearly and correctly.

Please see below for specific details of each stage.

Stage 1

1. A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, firstly 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 he/she should approach the Principal teacher 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, he/she should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management
2. The Chairperson will bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 working days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

1. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the authorization of the Board:
 - 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 working 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 working days of the meeting referred to in Stage 3b above.
2. If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated, the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within 3 working days of the Board meeting
3. If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation, the following steps should be followed:
 - a. The teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage.
 - b. The teacher should be supplied with copies of any written evidence in support of the complaint.
 - c. The teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the BOM in response to the complaint.
 - d. The teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of the 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.
 - f. The meetings of the BOM referred to in Stage 4 d and e will take place within 10 working days of the meeting referred to in Stage 4 Point 1.

Stage 5

1. Following the Board's investigations, the Chairperson shall convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within 5 working days of the meeting of the Board. The decision of the Board shall be final.