

Complaints Procedure of St. Louise de Marillac Primary School, Drumfinn Rd., Ballyfermot, Dublin 10

Our school adopts the INTO/Management Complaints Procedure as outlined below:

The INTO and Primary School Management have an agreed procedure for dealing with complaints in schools. Parents and staff should be familiar with this procedure as it can often help to resolve a complaint at an early and informal stage. In St. Louise's, every effort will be made by school staff and management to resolve a complaint at the earliest possible stage.

The purpose of this procedure is to facilitate the resolution of difficulties where they may arise in an agreed and fair manner. The agreement provides for a staged approach, the first two of which are informal.

Stage 1

1. A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should 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 (BOM) with a view to resolving it.

It would be important for parents to make an appointment to meet the teacher at a mutually agreed time in the first instance and so that adequate supervision can be organised for the class involved if necessary.

If the complaint is against the school principal, it should be raised firstly with the principal and, if unresolved, with the BOM chairperson.

This stage should be attempted with any complaint, either verbal or written.

Stage 2

1. If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further s/he should raise the matter in writing with the chairperson of the board of management.
2. The chairperson should try and resolve the matter between the parties informally within five days of receipt of the written complaint.

A note should be kept of any meeting and its outcomes which should be agreed with the parties.

Stage 3

1. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the chairperson should,
 - a) supply the teacher/principal with a copy of the written complaint; and
 - b) arrange a meeting with the teacher 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.

Stages 1-3 should be completed in advance of the BOM having sight of the details of the 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;
- c) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the board within ten days. The teacher is 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.

Stage 5

1. When the board has completed its investigation, the chairperson should convey the final decision of the board, including any outcomes and proposed action, in writing to the teacher and the complainant within five days of the meeting of the board.

Notes:

In this agreement 'days' means school days.

Only those complaints about teachers 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 teacher 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.

The underlying principles of this procedure are that all parties are entitled to a fair and impartial determination of any outcomes. Anyone with a connection to one of the parties that would raise concerns regarding impartiality should not investigate or decide a case. BOM members should be reminded of obligations in respect of confidentiality.

St. Louise de Marillac Primary School has an agreed systematic cycle of review of policies whereby new policies are reviewed after one year and subsequently every three years. This policy will be reviewed in autumn 2016.

The Board of Management reserves the right to add to or amend this policy before that time if deemed necessary.

This policy was discussed by the staff and parents in October 2013 and ratified by the Board of Management on 19th November 2013.

Signed on behalf of B.O.M. by Chairperson: *Sr. Claire McKiernan*

Date: 19/11/2013