

Parent/Guardians Teacher Communication

Introductory statement

This policy was developed by the staff of Scoil Aodán Naofa Carnew in consultation with the Board of Management and the parents council. Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and teachers on parent/teacher meetings and parent/teacher communication in Scoil Aodán Naofa. 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/parent association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them

Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents

- Meeting for parents of new Junior Infants - prior to new term (August)
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November
- Parents receive school report of each pupil at the end of each school year
- Meetings with parents whose children have special needs
- Consultation throughout the year. Teachers available formally and informally
- Written communication
- Through the parents' council, 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
- Regular newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns
- Text-a-parent service used to keep parents updated
- It is school policy not to deny any child the opportunity to ring home for any reasonable request, thereby negating the need for children to have mobile phones in school.
- Home work diary 1st - 6th class, used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers. Parents requested to sign diary each night to certify that homework has been completed
- Parents are invited to school Masses and School Concerts
- Involvement of parents in the 'Religion Alive O Programme' section for parents.
- Participating in paired reading project every spring term

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 his/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

1. Communication between parents and teachers is encouraged
2. 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
3. Meetings with the class teacher at the class door to discuss a child's concern/progress is discouraged on a number of grounds
 - a. A teacher cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent
 - b. It is difficult to be discrete when so many children are standing close by
 - c. It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to the teacher at a classroom door

Occasions 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 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 as it is important to keep class interruptions to a minimum.

Parents are strongly discouraged from taking pupils out of school during term time in order to facilitate family holidays.

Formal Meetings

Formal timetabled parent/teacher meetings take place annually usually 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 to the 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.

Complaints Procedure

A Copy of the school's complaints procedure is attached to this policy as Appendix 1.

Reviewed and ratified by Board of Management

Date:

24th March 2011

Signed:

Martin Casey

Chairperson B. of M.

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Complaints Procedure

The following is the agreed complaints procedure to be followed in primary schools

Communication With School -

Best Practice



Introduction

Good communication between home and school is very important in the development of your child's education, character and values. It is our goal in Scoil Aodán Naofa to keep the lines of communication between school and home open, transparent and positive.

In order to do this and assist us in maintaining a good consistent learning environment we ask that you take time to read the following information.

These 'Questions and Answers' may help in establishing good, effective practice in communicating with school, in a timely manner which gives due regard to everyone concerned.

Q. An issue has come up which affects my child. How do I bring this to the attention of the teacher?

A. Issues are best discussed when there is sufficient time and space to do so. Make an appointment with teacher through the secretary's office. In this way, arrangements can be made for the class to be properly supervised whilst the teacher and parent(s) discuss the matter in hand. Informal meetings at the classroom door are disruptive for all children in that particular class and should always be avoided.

Q. I need to drop off a lunch/copy/pencil-case for my child at the school. How do I go about this?

A. All such materials can be dropped off at the secretary's office and will be passed on to the children from there. Anyone entering the school building between 9.00am and 2.40pm must report to the secretary's office to state their business. This is for the safety and welfare of the children and staff and to minimise disruptions during the day.

Parental Complaints Procedure

Rationale

The Board of Management of *Scoil Aodán Naofa Carnew* has adopted the Complaints Procedure, agreed by the teachers' union and management bodies, which provides a mechanism for dealing with parental complaints against a teacher as set out in Section 28 of the Education Act 1998.

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 by providing parents an opportunity to liaise with the class teacher.

Introduction

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:

- matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education & Science
- frivolous or vexatious and which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school
- 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.

Stage 1

- 1.1 A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.
- 1.2 Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher she/he should approach the Principal Teacher with a view to resolving it.
- 1.3 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

- 2.1 If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further she/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- 2.2 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 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

- 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 teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

INTO/Management Complaints Procedure

The INTO and Primary School Management reached agreement in 1993 on a procedure for dealing with complaints by parents against teachers. 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. Please note this is a non-statutory procedure.

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.

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 teacher 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 board 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
 - e) 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: 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 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.

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 appraised of all matters being considered by the board of management, including being provided with copies of all relevant documentation;