



Scoil Naomh Lorcán O'Tuathail

(St. Laurence O'Toole's National School)

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Communication with the School

The school recognises that communication between home and school is vitally important to ensure that there is consistency and understanding in relation to a child, their needs and their education. A culture of partnership between home and school ensures that information is shared which enhances a child's educational experience and allows them to reach their potential.

The school encourages parents/guardians to contact the school with any concerns or worries that they might have in relation to their child and/or their education.

The **class teacher is always the first point of contact** for any queries relating to a child in school. If your query is in relation to special education - the relevant SET will be the first point of contact.

If you have a Child Protection concern the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is the Principal, Ms Sinéad Sharkey.

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) are not the point of contact in relation to a child - parents/guardians must pass on all new and relevant information to the class teacher in the first instance.

Communication from school to parents:

- Weekly newsletters emailed to families and posted on school website
- Emails - information regarding events, tours, school activities etc
- Text alerts - school closures, reminders, absences
- Aladdin Connect App - epayments, attendance notes, access school reports, school notices, edit profile (address etc)
- Website - regular updates of school activities, school information, policies, calendar, booklists etc available to view
- Social Media - updates of what is happening at class and school level to parents

- Parent-Teacher meetings - these are held once a year
- Junior Infant Welcome meeting - held in June for parents of new entrants
- Junior Infant Curriculum meeting - held in Term 1 for parents of Junior Infants

Communication from parents to school:

- Phone or email the school office and request a call back / meeting with teacher
- Complete contact form on school website and relevant teacher will contact you
- Write note in child's journal to teacher

Parental Complaints Procedure

Purpose/Objective

The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the INTO and the management bodies of primary schools, the CPSMA, 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.

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 as 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 with 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 one in which the school is in operation. Holidays, 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.

Formal Stage 1 - Discussion

1.1 Parent/guardian meets teacher

A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should seek an appointment with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the teacher can be convened as appropriate.

1.2 Parent/guardian meets the Principal *

Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the teacher, they should seek an appointment with the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Principal as appropriate.

**Where a complaint is received about a Principal the process commences at Stage 1.2.*

1.3 Parent/guardian meets Chairperson

Where the complaint remains unresolved the parent/guardian should seek an appointment with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Chairperson as appropriate.

Formal Stage 2 - Written (10 days)

2.1 Written complaint sent to the Chairperson

If the complaint has not been resolved at stage 1, the parent/guardian who wishes to pursue the matter further should submit the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management. This commences Stage 2.

2.2 Chairperson provides a copy to the teacher

The Chairperson should provide a copy of the written complaint to the teacher against whom the complaint has been made, without delay.

2.3 Chairperson convenes meeting(s)

The Chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent/legal guardian within 10 school days of the commencement of stage 2.1. This may require one or more meetings to be convened by the Chairperson with the teacher/parent/legal guardian and other school personnel as deemed appropriate by the Chairperson.

Formal Stage 3 - Board of Management (20 days)

3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board

If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter, they should inform the Chairperson in writing of this fact. The Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within 10 days of receipt of this written statement. At this meeting, the Board can decide to proceed to either stage 3.2 or 3.3.

3.2 Complaint concluded

Where the Board considers the complaint, the process may be concluded at this stage, if the board considers that:

- a) The complaint is frivolous / vexatious;
- b) The complaint has already been investigated by the board;
- c) The complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant DE circular,

Or;

- d) Where recourse to law has been initiated

Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent/legal guardian should be informed within five days of the Board meeting.

3.3 Proceed to a hearing

Where the Board decides to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows:

- a) The teacher should be informed that the complaint is proceeding to a full hearing and the Chairperson must ensure the teacher has been supplied with all documents which are being considered by the Board.
- b) The Board should arrange a meeting with the parent/legal guardian if it considers such to be required. The parent/legal guardian is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting.
- c) The teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The teacher is entitled to be represented by a friend or a union representative, who may be accompanied for the purpose of assistance and note taking.
- d) The teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board as the employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be shared with any third party.
- e) The meeting of the Board of Management referred to in 3(b), (c) and (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to 3.1 in so far as possible.

Formal Stage 4 - Decision (5 days)

4.1 Written decision from Chairperson

The Board will consider the complaint and the response provided and will adjudicate on the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent/legal guardian within five days of the meeting held at stage 3.3..

4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 24th January 2024.

Signed: *James Quinke*
Chairperson of the BOM