

APPENDIX 50

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Important note: Revised procedures for processing complaints by Parents will be prescribed for all schools under Section 28 of the Education Act 1998. When available, the revised procedures will be sent to each school and will replace the procedures printed here. Please ensure that the correct and up to date Procedures are used. At the time of going to print these procedures are still the only agreed procedures.

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:

- i. on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
- ii. frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school;
- iii. 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, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, 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.

Stage 4

- 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 3.2 (b).
- 4.2 If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within 3 days of the Board meeting.
- 4.3 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 teacher 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;
- (f) 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 3.1 (b).

Stage 5

- 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 5 days of the meeting of the Board.

5.2 The decision of the Board shall be final.

5.3 This Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years;

5.4 CPSMA or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party 3 months' notice of intention to do so.

In this agreement 'days' means school days.

Cf. Section 29 of Education Act

APPENDIX 51 DELIVERING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN SCHOOLS (DEIS)

The New Action Plan – Introduction

This new action plan will put in place an integrated strategic approach to addressing the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second-level education (3 to 18 years). It will build on the success of existing measures for tackling educational disadvantage, while identifying and effectively addressing the issues that reduced their overall effectiveness in the past.

This plan is one element of a wider continuum of interventions to address disadvantage, which include second-chance education and training and access measures for adults to support increased participation by under-represented groups in further and higher education. A further element of this continuum is the ongoing development of provision for pupils with special educational needs in light of the enactment of the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act (2004) and the establishment of the National Council for Special Education.

Why do we need a new approach?

While considerable progress has been made through the implementation of a wide range of measures to address educational disadvantage, rates of educational under-achievement and early school leaving remain much higher for pupils from disadvantaged communities than for other pupils. This situation is a primary motivating factor for the action now being taken.

Particular priority must be given to addressing the following issues:

Strengthening Early Education supports

Investment in early education provision supporting the most vulnerable can be a powerful intervention yielding life-long educational benefits.

Improving Literacy and Numeracy standards

Research has shown that those with low levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy are significantly more likely to experience educational failure and to leave the education system without qualifications.

Placing a renewed emphasis on the involvement of parents, family members and the community in children's education.

Parental, family and community involvement, especially in areas of socio-economic deprivation, does not just benefit the children and the school – it is a crucial dimension of life-long learning.

Enhancing attendance, educational progression, retention and attainment

There is a clear link between pupils' attendance and their educational attainment.

Successful progression by pupils from primary to second-level is of particular importance.

Children and young people at risk of early school leaving can benefit from extra supports, both academic