

# Scoil Mhuire Allenwood



## Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures Policy

### Rationale

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Allenwood 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.

### Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures for Parents:

#### 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.

**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 3.1 (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 the case to the Board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
  - 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 3.1 (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.

## **Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures for Staff:**

### **Teachers**

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a mechanism for the resolution of a grievance which a Teacher in a national school, including a Principal Teacher, has against:

1. The Board of Management in respect of the exercise of any of its responsibilities for the governance of the school; or
2. The Chairperson of the Board in an individual capacity; or
3. The Principal Teacher in respect of his/her duties and responsibilities for the organisation, conduct and day to day activities of the school.

The grievance procedure shall generally relate to breaches of school rules, policies, procedures or practices. The grievance procedure shall not deal with curricular matters.

### **Stage 1: The Principal:**

1. The aggrieved teacher shall give notice in writing to the Principal that the grievance procedure is being invoked.
2. The teacher shall discuss the grievance with the Principal Teacher with a view to resolving it.
3. If the grievance is not resolved within ten school days, the teacher shall be entitled to invoke stage 2, within a further ten school days.

### **Stage 2: The Chairperson:**

1. The aggrieved teacher shall give notice in writing to the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management that stage 2 of the grievance procedure is being invoked.
2. The teacher shall discuss the grievance with the Chairperson of the Board with a view to resolving it. Both parties need to be understanding.
3. The Chairperson shall immediately take such steps as she/he considers appropriate to have the grievance resolved informally.
4. If the grievance is not resolved within ten school days the teacher shall be entitled to invoke stage 3, within a further ten school days.

### **Stage 3: The Board of Management**

1. The aggrieved teacher shall give notice in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of management that stage 3 of the grievance procedure is being invoked. The teacher shall make a written submission which shall include the details of the grievance(s) and the redress being sought. The submission shall be presented to the Chairperson for consideration by the Board of Management.
2. Where the grievance involves the Principal Teacher, she/he shall be requested by the Chairperson to prepare a written response to the submission. The written response shall address all of the points made in the aggrieved teachers' submission and shall be furnished to the aggrieved teacher(s) within 10 school days of the date of the written submission. Similarly, where the grievance is against the Chairperson of the Board of Management or the Board itself, the aggrieved teacher shall be entitled to a written response from the Chairperson of the Board, as the case may be. Such response shall also be furnished within 10 school days.
3. The Chairperson shall invite the aggrieved teacher to be in attendance at a hearing of the board, which shall be held within ten school days of the date of the written response. The hearing shall afford each party an opportunity to hear at first hand, what the other party has to say and also to question and/or respond to the other party.

4. In circumstances, where the grievance is against the Principal Teacher, he/she shall attend at the board hearing in an individual capacity and not as a member of the board of management. Similarly, where the grievance is against the Chairperson of the Board of Management (in an individual capacity) he/she shall also attend at the board hearing in an individual capacity and an acting Chairperson shall be appointed. Further, the Principal Teacher or the Chairperson, as the case may be, shall withdraw from the board's deliberations and decision making on the matter.
5. Where appropriate, the parties shall be entitled to bring witnesses. The same principles of due process apply to hearing witnesses.
6. The Board shall try to resolve the grievance by conciliation and if the grievance is resolved the matter is concluded. If the Board is unable to resolve the grievance by conciliation it shall make a decision on the matter, except as provided under paragraph 9 below.
7. In cases where the grievance is against the board itself, the board shall hear the grievance as outlined above, shall try to resolve the matter by conciliation, but failing resolution, the matter may proceed to Stage 4 in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 11 below .
8. The Chairperson shall convey the outcome in writing to the parties within 5 school days of the hearing specified at stage 3 / paragraph 5 above.
9. The teacher shall have the right to invoke stage 4 of the procedure:
  - if the board fails to give a hearing to the aggrieved teacher;
  - if the Chairperson fails to convey the outcome of the hearing within the specified period; or
  - if the teacher is unwilling to accept the outcome of stage 3.

#### **Stage 4: An independent tribunal**

1. The teacher who wishes to proceed with an appeal to stage 4 shall give notice of same, by letter, to the Chairperson of the Board of Management, within ten school days of receiving the written outcome of stage 3 (or at the end of the period specified in stage 3 / no. 5, if the board fails to arrange a hearing). The date of that letter shall be referred to as the "date of appeal" and the teacher may include, in the letter, any additional arguments he/she wishes to put forward.
2. On receipt of the letter of appeal, the Chairperson of the Board of Management shall notify the patron (or a designated representative of the patron) and the General Secretary of the INTO (or a designated representative of the INTO) and invite these parties:
  - to select an agreed independent person to act as Chairperson of a tribunal;
  - each to appoint a person who is not associated with the school to serve on the tribunal;
  - to arrange a meeting of the tribunal within 15 school days of the date of appeal.
3. The Chairperson of the Board of Management shall also furnish each member of the tribunal, prior to its first meeting:
  - with a report on the proceedings at each of the previous stages;
  - a copy of the aggrieved teacher's letter of appeal;
  - a copy of the aggrieved teacher's submission;
  - a copy of any written response;
  - Any other relevant documentation.
5. The tribunal shall arrange a hearing(s) for the parties and shall ensure that the normal rules of due process and fair procedures apply, which include:

- a. that the parties shall be given reasonable notice of the hearing by the tribunal. When notifying parties of the date of the hearing(s), the tribunal should indicate to the parties concerned that in the event of failure to appear, without reasonable cause, the tribunal may proceed to decide the case if considered appropriate;
- b. that each party shall be afforded an opportunity to access and respond to relevant documentation, including the letter of appeal;
- c. that the parties shall have an opportunity to hear at first hand, what each has to say and also to question or respond to the other party through the chairperson of the tribunal;
- d. that witnesses may attend as appropriate; that the tribunal itself, shall be entitled to question each party or seek further information;
- e. that where appropriate, the tribunal shall afford each party an opportunity to provide further information, on the clear understanding, that the other party shall have an opportunity to access and respond to same;
- f. and that if necessary, the tribunal shall agree to adjournments.

6. The tribunal shall be considered a domestic forum and accordingly, neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any hearings.
7. The tribunal shall be empowered to conciliate with a view to reaching a friendly settlement.
8. Failing such a settlement the tribunal shall determine the issue by unanimous or majority vote.
9. The tribunal's decision shall be conveyed in writing by the chairperson of the tribunal to all the parties and shall be final and binding.

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In this policy 'days' means school days.

#### **Success Criteria**

- Swift and efficient resolution of grievances
- Parent/Teacher satisfaction
- Positive school community feedback
- Reviews of school policies as issues arise.

#### **Implementation**

This policy has been in operation since December 2021 and is next due for review in December 2026

#### **Ratification and Communication**

This policy was ratified by the Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Principal

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**Chairperson  
Board of Management**

**Date**

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**Principal**

**Date**