Lár Scoil Mhuire,
Cill Náile
Dúrlas
Co.Thiobraid Árann

St. Mary's Central N.S.,
Killenaule,
Thurles,
Co.Tipperary.

Parent/Staff Communication Policy

Introductory statement
This policy was revised and developed in January 2026 in line with new Parental Complaints Procedures (Appendix A), by the staff of Killenaule NS, the Board of Management and the Parents Association.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and parent/staff communication in Killenaule NS. The family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the child and the nurturing of good, moral 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. All the stakeholders aim to work for the benefit of the child and their learning.

Parents are encouraged to:
- Develop close links with the school
- Participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of the staff and all staff members in 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
- Orientation for parents of new Junior Infants in late May/June
- Parent/teacher meetings in November
- Parents receive school report of each pupil at the end of each school year
- Regular meetings with parents whose children have additional needs
- Consultation throughout the year
- Written communication - **Aladdin** is the school's primary platform for communication between parents/guardians and school staff. All general school information, notices, reminders and updates will be issued via the Aladdin app. Parents/guardians are expected to monitor the app regularly to remain informed of school communications. Aladdin may be used, where appropriate, to facilitate communication between parents/guardians and class teachers or school management. Messages sent via Aladdin should be of a routine nature. Matters of a sensitive, confidential or complex nature are not suitable for discussion via the app and should instead be addressed through a scheduled meeting or telephone call. While every effort will be made to respond to messages in a timely manner, parents/guardians should be aware that staff may not be in a position to respond immediately. Messages will be responded to within a reasonable timeframe during normal school working hours.
- Through the parents' association, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of all relevant 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 text or note home.
- Regular newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns

- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Cumann na mBunscol games, informal tea/coffee gatherings, school masses and Christmas Performances

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the school secretary to arrange a suitable time.

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 well-being and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians named on the enrolment form will be consulted by staff.

Parent/Teacher meetings
Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes (Circular 14/04). Where possible, they will be held in the first term, mid-November for all classes. Parents will be given the opportunity to select preferred times using Aladdin Connect. The school will attempt to coordinate times where siblings are concerned. Meetings may take place in classrooms and support rooms. The teachers use prepared guidelines for the meetings and collaborate in advance about the progress of individual children.

The purpose of the Parent/Teacher meeting is:

- To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents
- To let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- To help teachers/parents get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realise that home and school are working together.
- To meet demands for accountability
- To share with the parent the problems and difficulties the child may have in school
- To review with the parent the child's experience of schooling
- To learn more about the child from the parent's perspective
- To learn more about parental opinions on what the school is doing
- To identify areas of tension and disagreement
- To identify ways in which parents can help their children
- To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education
- To inform the parents of standardised test results according to school policy.

Circular 56/2011 Initial Steps in the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy Strategy has been adopted by the Board of Management. References to parent/school communication are:

Reporting to parents
Parents have the primary responsibility for their children's learning and development. Schools can strengthen the capacity of parents to support their children in this way by sharing meaningful information with parents about the progress children are achieving in the education system. This information needs to draw on the different sources of evidence that staffs use, such as conversations with the learner, data-collection and documented progress on objectives and milestones reached in their short and long-term planning, examination of students' own self-assessment data, documented observations of the learner's engagement with tasks, outcomes of other assessment tasks and tests, and

examples of students' work. In turn, parents will often be able to enrich staff's knowledge of their student's progress by providing further information about their learning at home.

Report card templates
Schools should help parents to fully understand the evidence of learning that the school reports to them, especially information from any standardised tests. The NCCA has provided a range of standard report templates to assist schools in reporting information about the progress of primary pupils to parents, including information from standardised tests. The NCCA report card templates were developed through a process of consultation with schools and parents can take account of research commissioned by the NCCA.

The report cards provide for reporting in four key areas:

- The child's learning and achievement across the curriculum
- The child's learning dispositions
- The child's social and personal development
- Ways in which parents can support their child's learning

All primary schools must use one of the report card templates for reporting to parents on students' progress and achievement at school with effect from the date of this circular.

Formal Meetings
Formal timetabled parent/teacher meetings usually take place 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 home to the child's 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.

Formal Meetings - SEN
Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings on the subject of the **Student Support Plan** will take place in October. Reviews take place in February and June to evaluate the progress of any child receiving additional support, meetings may or may not be necessary mid year, but will be facilitated if there are major changes to the child's plan. 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.

Informal Parent/Staff Meetings
The School encourages communication between parents and staff, occasions occur when a parent needs to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will aim to facilitate such meetings making every effort to ensure that the children in the class do not lose out on any 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.

Complaints Procedure

Complaints are infrequent but the school would wish that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. The following is the agreed complaints procedure to be followed in primary schools.

Formal Stage 1
Discussion

1. A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should first approach the **staff member** with a view to resolving the complaint
2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class staff he/she 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.

Formal Stage 2 Written

1. If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further, he/she should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management
2. The Chairperson will bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the staff member and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.
3. The Chairperson should seek to resolve the Complaint between the teacher and the parent 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/guardian and other school personnel as deemed appropriate by the chairperson.

Formal Stage 3 Board of Management

1. If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 and the parent/legal Guardian wishes to pursue the matter they should inform the chair in person 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.

2. Where are 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 is 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. 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 teachers 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 teachers 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 stage 3(b), (c) and (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1 in so far as possible.

Formal Stage 4
Decision
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.
The decision of the board shall be final.

***These procedures are in line with the Revised Parental Complaints Procedures as of 1st Jan 2024, Appendix A**

Behaviour of all Stakeholders in the School

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all of the stakeholders e.g. the staff, parents and the wider community. Anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so. While the behaviour of children in our school is of vital importance, adults in the school community also have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children.

It is important that all stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviours in the school. Examples include:

- All stakeholders are expected to speak to each other with respect. Shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If a stakeholder displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building. In certain cases, the Gardaí must be called
- All stakeholders will treat our children with the utmost respect while on the premises
- Staff should not be asked to speak about another parent's child. The staff of the school will respect your child's right to privacy so it is asked that parents respect other children's rights to privacy
- When stakeholders meet, it is important to respect that the time of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed upon beforehand and these should be respected
- Staff members are generally available to listen to a quick issue in the morning and after school. However, should a parent need to have a discussion or meeting, an appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties. This ensures that issues can be resolved. Classes begin at 9:20 am and finish at 3:00 pm (2.00 pm finish for Infant Classes) and this time should not be interrupted.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act became operative on 1 November 1989. It is an important piece of legislation for BoMs and for those who work in schools, as schools and colleges were brought under the scope of safety legislation for the first time.

It is recognised that school staff may be at risk from violence in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation. This behaviour may come from pupils, parents, guardians, other staff members or intruders.

In this respect, all staff should be aware of **DES Circular 40/97** which deals with the procedures to follow if they feel they have been subjected to any of the above behaviours. A copy of this circular is available online.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Appendix A

Revised Parental Complaints Procedure

Note:
- *A copy of this procedure will be available for parents/legal guardians on the school website and/or on request from the school. This procedure comes into effect on the 1st of January 2024.*
- *Under the Education Act 1998, legally, all schools are managed by the school's Board of Management, on behalf of the school patron.*

Purpose/Objective

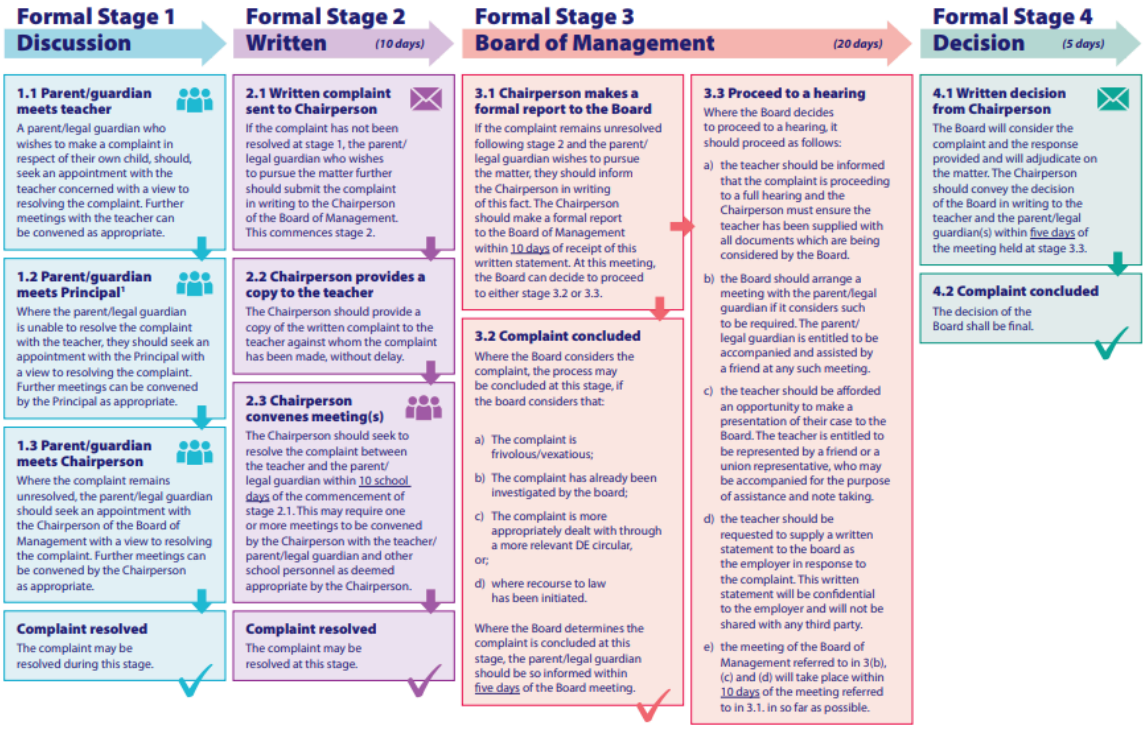
The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the management bodies of primary schools, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland, An Foras Pátrúnachta, the Muslim Primary Education Board, Educate Together and 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.

It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time-to-time concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school. It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship between the parent and school can be preserved and respected. It is expected that all parties concerned will engage proactively.

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 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 which 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 a day on which the school is in operation. Holiday periods, 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.



[1]Where a complaint is received about a principal the above process commences at Stage 1.2.