



## Policy & Procedure for Processing Complaints made by Parents / Guardians against a Staff Member

### PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

#### Introduction

Only those complaints about School staff members which are in writing and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the Board of Management, (the “Board”)

Unwritten complaints not in the above categories may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

A parent/guardian should make a complaint in a timely manner and the School should respond to complaints in a timely manner.

#### 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 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 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 staff member and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 school 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 staff member with a copy of the written complaint; *and*
  - (b) arrange a meeting with the staff member 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 school days of the meeting referred to in 3.1(b).
- 4.2** If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the staff member and the complainant should be so informed within three school 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 staff member should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
  - (b) the staff member should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
  - (c) the staff member should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint;
  - (d) the staff member should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board. The staff member would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a work colleague 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
  - (f) the meeting of the Board referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1(b).
  - (g) it is foreseeable that a complaint may be referred to the Board which in the view of the Board is of such a serious nature that it requires to be investigated under the disciplinary procedures. Should that situation arise the staff member will be advised of the fact that the complaint is being investigated by the Board of Management at Stage 4 of the disciplinary procedures rather than under the complaints procedure

## **Stage 5**

- 5.1** When the Board has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the staff member and the complainant within five school 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 by the Board after three years.

Ratified by Board of Management October 2015

Donal Brennan, Chairperson, MAMJS Board of Management

Policies will be reviewed on a regular basis and in line with changes in legislation or as circumstances dictate change.