



# Marymount N.S.

## Parent/School Partnership

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### Parent/School Partnership

#### **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT:**

This policy was developed in January 2023. It was reviewed by the Parent Association and revised complaints procedure attached and in place from 1st of January 2024.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and communication in Marymount N.S.. 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.

#### **STAFF ARE ENCOURAGED TO:**

- Establish good communication with parents/guardians of pupils in their class.
- Keep parents/guardians informed of their child's progress and behaviour both positive and negative.
- Listen to what parents/guardians have to say and encourage them to bring any concerns to you at an early stage to avoid situations escalating.
- Be aware of the role of parents/guardians as primary educators and emphasise that all parties are working together for the child's benefit to help her reach her potential.
- Value and respect the input of parents as they know their child best.

## **STRUCTURES IN PLACE TO FACILITATE OPEN COMMUNICATION & CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS:**

- Aladdin Connect App acts as a central system for communication (emails, noticeboard notifications)
- Google classroom is in place for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> classes / Seesaw platform is in place for Junior Infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> class.
- Meeting for parents of new Junior Infants – mid June
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November
- Parents receive school report of each pupil at the end of each school year
- Meetings with parents whose children have special needs with resource teachers
- Consultation throughout the year where necessary – via email, letter, phone calls
- Written communication (monthly emails, regular texts/reminders/Aladdin noticeboard notifications)
- Regular updated website (marymountns.ie) Twitter account @therowerns
- Through the parents' council, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of 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.
- Regular notifications keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns
- Homework diary communication sheets 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class, used to relay messages between parents and teachers. Parents requested to sign diary regularly to certify that homework has been completed
- Parents are invited to share their expertise with their class in a structured way
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. school masses and school concerts

### **It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that causes anxiety to the child and therefore may adversely affect her education.**

In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing 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, towards the end of November for all classes. They will be initiated by the school staff and details regarding time, etc will be worked out by the class teacher, in consultation with parents. Parents will be given the opportunity to select preferred dates on a note from the class teacher. The school will attempt to co-ordinate times where siblings are concerned. Meetings may take place in classrooms and resource 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 all positives about the child
- 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 about the progress that their children are achieving in the education system. This information needs to draw on the different sources of evidence that staff 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 learners 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 students' progress through providing further information about the students' 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

Marymount N.S. uses standard report card templates for reporting to parents on students' progress and achievement at school.

#### **FORMAL MEETINGS:**

The school encourages good parent/teacher communication. When parents wish to speak to a teacher they are asked to please make an appointment through the secretary or email the teacher directly at the teachers email address outlining the reason for meeting. This will ensure that the teacher has the opportunity to provide the parent with all relevant information.

Formal timetabled parent/teacher meetings take place in November.

- All communication sent from the school will be sent via Aladdin Connect, unless otherwise requested by 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-School Support:-**

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings on the subject of the **Continuum of Support File Plan** will take place in September/October. 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**

- Unscheduled meetings with the class teacher to discuss concerns is discouraged on a number of grounds:
  1. Staff would not have all relevant information to hand.
  2. Interrupts preparation / teaching time.
  3. Staff cannot adequately supervise a class while at the same time speaking to a parent.
  4. It is difficult to be discreet.

Occasions occur where a parent needs to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The school will aim to facilitate such meetings where possible.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE:**

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.

See appendix 1.

## **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 beforehand and these should be respected.
- Communications between parents and staff should be carried out during working hours as set out by school (8:30 am – 4:00 pm).

## **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 the BOM 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 can be found in the school's Health and Safety folder.

**Ratified by the Board of Management**

**Chairperson:**   
Liam Mulholland

**Date:** **11/01/2024**

**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE:**

Please see the revised parental complaints procedure attached.

# 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).  
this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of this agreement.
- 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.
- **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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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  
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/legal guardian who wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child, 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 Principal<sup>1</sup>

Where the parent/legal 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.



### 1.3 Parent/guardian meets Chairperson

Where the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/legal 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.



### Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved during this stage.



## Formal Stage 2 Written (10 days)

### 2.1 Written complaint sent to Chairperson

If the complaint has not been resolved at stage 1, the parent/ legal guardian who wishes to pursue the matter further should submit the complaint in writing to 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.



### Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved at this stage.



## 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/ legal 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:

- The complaint is frivolous/vexatious;
  - The complaint has already been investigated by the board;
  - The complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant DE circular,
- or;
- where recourse to law has been initiated.

Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent/legal guardian should be so 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 in 3.1. in so far as possible.

## Formal Stage 4 Decision (5 days)

### 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(s) within five days of the meeting held at stage 3.3.



### 2. Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.



<sup>1</sup>Where a complaint is received about a principal the above process commences at Stage 1.2.