AN FORAS PÁTRÚNACHTA

How to address an issue in school

Information for parents

Table of Contents

Introduction 4

Internal Procedures 5

External Procedures 6

Introduction

We understand that from time to time issues may arise in schools. Information is provided in this document relating to how to go about addressing that issue. There are two main parts in question; internal procedures and external procedures. We recommend parents follow these procedures only. These procedures have been agreed to and are recognised by the main education partners in Ireland including An Foras Pátrúnachta. All schools under our patronage will follow these procedures.

We hope that the information in this booklet will be of assistance to you and that the issue in question will be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. If the issue relates to a school under another patron body, the matter should be addressed with that body.

Please note that the scope of anonymous complaints is limited.

The Irish language version of this booklet is available on the Irish version of the same webpage.

Internal Procedures

It is important that an issue is addressed at the right level. For example, a classroom issue should first be raised with the relevant teacher instead of addressing it with the Board of Management as a first step.

a) If you're worried about your child at school or you have a complaint about the school, your child's class teacher is the best person to approach first for an informal discussion. To do this, contact the school office and organise an appointment or phone call for an informal discussion. If you are not happy with their response, you can talk to the principal of the school (depending on your complaint, a school's own procedures may ask you to speak to another member of staff before speaking with the principal).
b) If your complaint is about a staff member (who is not the principal), you should contact the school principal. Contact the school office to make an appointment with the principal. If you are not happy with the response of the principal you can address the issue with the Board of Management.
c) Complaints regarding the principal should be directed to the Board of Management by sending a letter addressed to 'An Cathaoirleach' at the school address. Please note that correspondence will come to you after the next Board of Management meeting and this may be a number of weeks.

If the issue has not been resolved having followed the above steps, you can look to resolve the issue by using the External Procedures.

External Procedures

An Foras Pátrúnachta

An Foras Pátrúnachta may be able to investigate the issue on condition that the Internal Procedures have been followed or if the issue relates to the Board of Management itself. To do this, send a letter to:

An Foras Pátrúnachta, Block K3, Maynooth Business Campus, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

The Teaching Council

The Teaching Council provides a formal process for issues relating to registered teachers to be investigated. The below document 'How to make a complaint about a registered teacher' gives detail on this process and is available at: http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Publications/Fitness-to-Teach/Making-a-Complaint.pdf. Further information on this and on how to proceed with a complaint is available on The Teaching Council website at: http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Fitness-to-Teach/Complaints-about-Registered-Teachers/

Office of the Ombudsman for Children

The Office of the Ombudsman for Children provides an independent and impartial complaint handling service. The Ombudsman for Children can investigate complaints relating to the administrative actions of a school recognised by the Department of Education and Skills provided the complainant has firstly and fully followed the school's complaints procedures. The key criterion for any intervention by the Ombudsman for Children is that the action complained of has or may have adversely affected the child. More information about the Ombudsman for Children can be obtained on www.oco.ie or by calling them on 1800 20 20 40.