



PARENT DISPUTE POLICY

Rationale:

- A timely and professional response to parent complaints is an effective means of encouraging communication, building trust and resolving issues for the betterment of all concerned.

Aims

- To develop and implement a process by which parents can confidently raise concerns in the knowledge that they will be listened to and their concerns will be professionally managed in a timely, confidential and appropriate manner.

Implementation

- Relationships with parents are important to us. We take complaints raised by parents seriously.
- Parents making complaints should ascertain the facts as best they can and contact the school at their earliest convenience.
- The procedure for making a complaint is detailed on our school website and is available in pamphlet form in the administration foyer of the school.
- Parents with complaints should contact the school by phone, in person or in writing. Parents are discouraged from making complaints by email as it can be impossible to authenticate the identity of the person writing the email.
- Parents visiting the school to make a complaint are advised that it is unlikely that staff will be immediately available to investigate the complaint. However, details regarding the complaint can be taken by the office staff. Alternatively, the office staff can make an appointment for the parent to meet with an appropriate person to discuss their concerns.
- Parents making complaints are to be well-behaved, confidential and courteous. Parents who are unreasonable, threatening or discourteous can expect their discussion with staff to be terminated until such time as an alternative discussion time is arranged by the school.
- The school will record the details of all complaints including the name and contact details of the persons making the complaints. The school will then refer the complaint to the most appropriate person to investigate. There will be many occasions that this will be someone other than the principal.
- The principal will determine whether or not an anonymous complaint will be investigated.
- The investigating staff member may conduct a preliminary investigation of communicate with the parent to discuss the matter further.
- If the scope of the investigation is beyond the capacity or jurisdiction of the school, the matter will be referred to the appropriate authority and the parent will be informed of the referral.
- Parents discussing complaints with staff may be accompanied by an advocate if they wish.
- Any investigation conducted by the school will be done so in a timely, efficient and confidential manner, ensuring the fair principles on natural justice are applied for all. Parents will be provided with an anticipated time-frame for a resolution.
- The investigating staff member will record the details of the investigation.

- Following the investigation, the investigating staff member will communicate with the parent to provide their findings and an appropriate course of action, if any.
- If in the view of the parent the matter remains unresolved, the parent will be provided with details as to how they can refer the matter to the Department of Education's regional office.
- Similarly, the school, the parent or other involved parties may seek to involve a mediator to try to resolve any unresolved complaint.
- All records of parent complaints, subsequent investigations and outcomes will be stored in the principal's office.
- All staff will be made aware of our school's complaints handling procedures and will be supported with training on how to minimise, respond to, and manage parent complaints.

Ratified February 2020

Review February 2022