

# Parent/Legal Guardian School Communication Policy Our Lady of Hope School Armagh Road Crumlin Dublin 12 D12 V6RK

Rolla: 20555K RCN: 202206506

#### 1. Introductory Statement

The family and home are central to the social, physical, intellectual, spiritual and emotional 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 and aim to work for the benefit of the child and their learning so that the child's educational progress will be maintained.

The Parental Complaints Procedure contained in this policy provides a clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child in an agreed, fair and transparent manner, with a view to seeking an early resolution of the issue.

#### 2. Rationale

Our Lady of Hope School recognises the importance of clear and effective communication with parents/legal guardians and is committed to being open and accessible for all parents/legal guardians. We believe pupils achieve their best in an environment where they feel secure and valued. Furthermore, Our Lady of Hope School values working in partnership with parents/legal guardians and believe the mutual support will be of great benefit to the pupils.

#### 3. Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to provide procedures and guidance for parents/legal guardians and staff in relation to home/school communication to enhance each child's educational progress thereby fostering trusting relationships between the school and parents/legal guardians.

#### 4. Parents/legal guardians are encouraged to:

- develop close links with the school that are based on trust and respect
- participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of staff
- ensure parental expectations of the school and their child's educational progress is in line with their child's developmental ability and their diagnosis of special needs
- keep informed of school developments

- respond to written communications sent by the school promptly, if required
- prioritise and attend school meetings when arranged for their child's education
- attend whole school events, i.e. Christmas Concert and other school events as they arise.

### 5. In School Structures to facilitate open communication and consultation with parents/legal guardians

Communication between the school and parents/legal guardians operates in the following ways. Emails sent from the school will be sent to the email address provided at enrolment, unless otherwise requested by parents/legal guardians. All paper communication sent from the school will be sent to the child's home address as given on the enrolment form, unless otherwise requested by parents/legal guardians.

Parents should regularly monitor all communication to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

#### 5.1 Email

The school uses email to parents/legal guardians to inform them about the following:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures
- Class activities or teacher requests

#### 5.2 Text Messages

The school will text parents/legal guardians about:

- Short-notice changes
- Quick message
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to inclement weather)

#### 5.3 Phone calls

- Some parent's/legal guardian's consultations may be conducted by telephone
- > Teachers will call parents/legal guardians at a convenient time on request
- Teachers may call parents/legal guardians to discuss a concern/query regarding the child's learning/progress

#### 5.4 ClassDojo

ClassDojo is a secure platform administered by the class teacher to further link parents/legal guardians with their child's learning and progress at school. Teachers use this tool for reinforcing particular skills they are focusing on in the classroom. In addition, teachers use the platform to share the good work of the child with the parent/legal guardian.

The aim of ClassDojo is to ensure greater connectivity between the parent and the classroom. Furthermore, ClassDojo enhances the learning opportunities and expands conversation of learning between the parent/legal guardian and the child at home.

ClassDojo is operated when class teachers are in the school building only. It is not operated at weekends.

#### 5.5 End of Year Reports

Our Lady of Hope School aims to help parents/legal guardians to understand fully the evidence that the school reports to them. An End of Year Report is issued to parents/legal guardians via Aladdin Connect annually in June. The template provides for reporting in the following key areas:

#### **Primary Cycle**

- The child's learning and achievement across the curriculum
- The child's engagement in learning and how they relate to the learning process
- The child's social and personal development
- Ways in which parents can support their child's learning

#### **Junior Cycle**

- Priority Learning Units
- Short Courses
- Well-Being
- Others Areas of Learning

#### 5.6 Parent/Teacher Meetings

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes in accordance with Circular 14/04. These meetings usually take place in the first term towards the end of November.

In order to facilitate the operation of the school and the needs of pupils and other parents/legal guardians, it is important that meetings should be kept to the allocated time. Times of meetings are agreed beforehand and should be adhered to so that all parents/legal guardians are seen on time in so far as is possible.

The purpose of the parent/teacher meeting is:

- ✓ To establish and maintain good communication between the home and school
- ✓ To inform parents/legal guardians of their child's progress at school
- ✓ To review the child's experience of school with the parent/guardian

- ✓ To learn more about the child from the parent's/guardian's perspective
- ✓ To identify ways in which the parent/legal guardian can help their child
- ✓ To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education

#### 5.7 Student Support Plan

The Student Support Plans are reviewed at regular intervals with parents/legal guardians. If a parent/guardian wishes to arrange an additional meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child's learning and progress, they may do so by contacting the school secretary to arrange a suitable time.

#### 5.8 Aladdin

The school uses the Aladdin Schools Software Service (<a href="www.aladdin.ie">www.aladdin.ie</a>) for administrative and communication purposes. In addition, the school utilises a parent portal called *Aladdin Connect*. This *ena*bles parents/legal guardians to stay connected and informed about their child's education via secure login from an internet browser or the Aladdin Connect App.

Aladdin Connect assists the school community by:

- Keeping parents/legal guardians up to date on school and classroom news via the noticeboard messages
- Ensuring that the school has each pupil's most up-to-date contact information
- Keeping parents/legal guardians appraised of their child's attendance
- Giving parents/legal guardians online access to their child's report card
- Facilitating online payments of school requisites
- Allowing parents/legal guardians to use the App to give permission for their child to go on school trips

#### 5.9 Calendar

The school calendar for the academic year is issued to parents in the third term annually. The school calendar for the relevant year is also available on the school website.

#### 5.10 Newsletter

Newsletters will be issued to families at regular intervals during the school year containing details of pupil activities and school events.

#### 5.11 The School Website

The school website is the school's main platform for disseminating relevant information to parents/legal guardians and the wider community. The website outlines the following:

- o Information on the school
- o Policies and procedures
- o Information on Admissions

- o School Calendar
- o Contact information
- o Events and announcements

#### 5.12 Board of Management

Communication between the Board of Management and the school community takes place via an agreed report at the end of each meeting. This report is made available to parents and staff by email.

#### 6 Parent/Legal Guardian - School Communication

The quality of the pupil's education is based on the quality of the relationship between parents/legal guardians and the teacher. We believe that a courteous, collegial and collaborative approach to a child's education is paramount in determining success and progress for each pupil.

A parent/legal guardian who wishes to meet with a teacher and/or Principal should contact the school secretary in advance and request a meeting. Parents/legal guardians who arrive at the school without an appointment should not expect that the class teacher and/or Principal will meet with them. The class teacher and/or Principal may choose to do so, but this is at their discretion.

A class teacher may request the Principal and/or Deputy Principal to accompany them at meetings with a parent/legal guardian.

The school appreciates that some meetings put the participants into contrary positions. The class teacher will remain professional in such situations and focus on a constructive outcome. If a parent/legal guardian becomes aggressive or abusive, the class teacher shall close the meeting and report the matter to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal.

Furthermore, it is perfectly acceptable to call a meeting to a close in order to allow time for further investigation.

### 6.1 Communication that interferes with teaching and learning and the smooth running of the school

- Showing up before school and/or during the school day without an appointment
- Discussing issue(s) with a member of staff at arrival/dismissal times, school event(s) and/or during class contact time
- Discussing issue(s) with a staff member at any time that could result in impeding the safety and/or the wellbeing of the school community
- Speaking to a member of staff disrespectfully or angrily, particularly in front of pupils, staff and parents
- Discussing issues with other parents/legal guardians rather than discussing them directly with the school

#### 6.2 To ensure mutual respect, remember

- Use appropriate language on the school grounds and at the school gate
- Recognise that we won't always agree, but we promise to listen
- Speak positively in front of your child
- Staff have their own families and lives, respect their privacy
- We are all on the same team Your Child's Support Team

#### 6.3 Behaviour of all adults in the school

Positive and respectful communication is essential in the school. All stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviour in the school and the environment.

- All adults are expected to speak to each other with respect. Shouting or other aggressive tones, including passive aggressive behaviour are not acceptable.
- If an adult displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building and/or school site. In some instances, and if required, the Gardaí will be called.
- The school will respect all children and parents/legal guardians right to privacy, hence, staff shall not speak about any child except their own.
- The school will always respond to polite, reasonable and respectful communication promptly and thoroughly but will consider the response if these basic standards are not upheld.
- Information provided and issues discussed should be based on fact and not assumption. Gossip, hearsay or second hand information is often incorrect and misleading.
- The time of meetings will be agreed beforehand and these should be respected.

#### 7. Complaints

At Our Lady of Hope School, we aim to work closely with parents/legal guardians in supporting all aspects of the child's development and wellbeing. We have the best interests of all pupils and their families. If a parent/legal guardian has an issue, then they should speak with the class teacher in the first instance.

If concerns are dealt with at an early stage, then they are more likely to be resolved and there is no unnecessary dissatisfaction. Many issues can be addressed simply by talking to the class teacher who will be happy to help. In some instances, it might be appropriate for a parent/legal guardian to raise their concern directly with the Principal. We take all concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve matters as quickly as possible.

#### 7.1 Parental Complaints Procedures

Complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the agreed Parental Complaints Procedure (January 2024). Based on the principles of fair procedures, each stage of the procedure provides a format for both parties to explore a resolution at the earliest opportunity.

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(s)/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 <u>only</u>.
  Any deviation from this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of
  this agreement.
- Days in this procedure refer specifically to <u>school days</u>. 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.

#### Formal Stage 1 Discussion

#### 1.1 Parent/legal 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/legal Guardian meets Principal

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/legal 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 to the 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 during 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:

- a) The complaint is frivolous/vexatious;
- b) The complaint has 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 so informed within <u>five days</u> of the Board meeting.

#### 3.3 Proceed to a hearing

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 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.
- d) 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.
- e) 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)

4.1 Written decision from the 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 <u>five days</u>
of the meeting held at stage 3.3

4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

A copy of the Revised Parental Complaints Procedure is available at Appendix 1

#### 7.2 Unreasonable Complaints

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. There will be occasions when, despite all stages of the complaints procedure having been completed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If a parent/legal guardian tries to re-open the same issue, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed. If the complainant repeatedly continues to contact the school with the same issue, the school may choose not to respond.

### 7.3 Dealing with unreasonably persistent, harassing, vexatious, unreasonable or abusive complaints

The school ethos promotes open communication with parents/legal guardians and encourages continuing dialogue between home and school throughout a pupil's education. The goal is to always try to resolve issues through respectful, polite and reasonable dialogue. Therefore, the school respectfully asks that all communications with the school are polite, respectful and reasonable. The Revised Parental Complaints Procedure provides the structure for parents to use if they wish to make a complaint.

Sometimes, however, parents pursuing complaints or other issues treat staff and others in a way that is unacceptable and/or behave in an unacceptable manner. Whilst the board of management recognises that some complaints may relate to serious and distressing incidents, the board of management will not accept threatening, inappropriate, aggressive or harassing behaviour.

#### 7.4 What do we mean by 'unreasonable complainant'?

An unreasonable complainant is an individual who engages in unreasonable behaviour when making a complaint. This will include parents/legal guardians who pursue complaints in an unreasonable manner towards school staff.

Unreasonable behaviour may include actions which are:

- Out of proportion to the nature of the complaint
- Making malicious and/or unfounded allegations
- Persistent when the complaints process is underway and even when the complaints procedure has been exhausted, or personally harassing, or unjustifiably repetitious or objective, harassing or prolific
- Prolific correspondence or excessive emails or telephone contact about a concern or complaint
- Repetitious complaints where the complainant has no view about what would satisfy them and/or no intention to resolve the complaint
- Acting in a way not in line with the school aim of reaching a resolution and working with the school
- ➤ An insistence on pursuing unjustified or unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes to unjustified complaints
- > An insistence on: -
  - ✓ pursuing justifiable complaints in an unreasonable manner, e.g. engaging in the use of abusive or threatening language
  - ✓ making complaints in public and/or on social media
  - ✓ refusing to attend appointments to discuss the complaint
  - ✓ refusing to discuss relevant issues during meetings

#### 7.5 What is 'harassment'?

Harassment is defined in section 14A (7) of the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 ("EEA") as any unwanted conduct related to any of the prohibited grounds that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity at work and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

Harassment is the unreasonable pursuit of issues or complaints, particularly, if the matter appears to be pursued in a way intended to cause personal distress rather than seek a resolution.

#### 7.6 Behaviour will fall within the scope of harassment if:

 It appears to be deliberately targeted over a significant period of time at one or more members of school staff or others

- The way in which a complaint or other issues are pursued (as opposed to the complaint itself) causes ongoing distress to school staff or others
- It has a significant and disproportionate adverse effect on the school community
- Actions that are pursued aggressively or in a manner not appropriate to an effective resolution.

#### 7.7 What can parents/legal guardians expect from the school?

Parents/legal guardians who raise informal or formal issues and/or complaints with the school can expect the school to:

- Adhere to the agreed procedures
- Respond with a reasonable timeframe
- Be available for consultation within a reasonable time limit, bearing in mind the needs of pupils in the school, the nature of the complaint and what is practicably possible to facilitate within school structures
- Openness and transparency in the use of agreed communication/complaints procedures as outlined within this policy
- Respond with courtesy and respect
- Attempt to resolve problems using reasonable means in accordance with the complaints procedure, other policies and practice and legislative requirements
- Keep those involved informed of progress towards a resolution

#### 7.8 What the school expects of parents?

The school expects parents/legal guardians who wish to raise concerns with the school to:

- Treat all staff with courtesy and respect
- Use the recommended/appropriate means of communication (email, call to secretary, etc.)
- Respect the needs of pupils and staff within the school
- Never to use violence (including threats of violence) towards staff or property
- Judgement on outcomes of any discussion or complaint should be reserved until the school has an opportunity to respond and resolve

- Recognise that some problems may not be resolved in a short time
- Speak politely and respectfully using appropriate language and avoid any aggression or verbal abuse
- To engage truthfully and with honesty with school staff
- Raise concern(s)/complaint(s) in an appropriate place and at an appropriate time
- Formal complaint(s) must follow the correct procedures
- Keep the school updated on any relevant development(s) that may have implications on concern(s)/complaint(s)
- Be prepared to work towards a resolution and in partnership with the school

### 7.9 School response to unreasonably persistent, harassing, vexatious, unreasonable or abusive complaints

In cases of unreasonably behaviour, malicious and/or unfounded allegations or persistent complaints or harassment, the school may take any or all of the following steps, as appropriate:

- Inform the complainant informally that his/her behaviour is now considered by the school to be unreasonable and/or unacceptable, and request a changed approach
- Inform the complainant in writing that the school considers his/her behaviour to be unreasonably persistent and is considered to be harassment
- Require all future meetings with a member of staff to be conducted with a third person present. In the interests of all parties, minutes of these meetings may be taken
- Inform the complainant that, except in emergencies, the school will respond only to written communication
- Inform the complainant in writing that as a result of his/her behaviour the complaint will not be investigated further until it is pursued in a manner the school considers to be reasonable
- Place restrictions on the individual's access to school and/or school staff
- Cease all correspondence and communication with the complainant other than that necessary for the health and safety of the child or adult in school
- Involve the Gardaí

 The school has a duty of care to staff and pupils and will take emergency measures should these become necessary in extreme cases.

#### 7.10 Physical/Verbal Aggression

The school will not tolerate any form of physical or verbal aggression or personal harassment against school staff. If staff are subject to this type of aggression the school may:

- Prohibit the individual from entering the school site, with immediate effect
- Inform the individual that communication with them will cease other than in an emergency
- Involve the Gardaí
- Set a timeframe and review

If a complainant's harassing/persistent behaviour is modified, communication may be resumed at a later date within a reasonable period of time. However, if the complainant's behaviour deteriorates again, the school may resume the process identified above.

If a complainant's harassing/persistent complaining behaviour is modified and the complaint still lies within the time limit specified within Revised Parental Complaints Procedure, the school will use its discretion and may resume the investigation of the complaint. The school will review as appropriate, and at a minimum of once a year, any sanctions applied in the context of this policy.

Legitimate new complaints, if not pursued in a harassing or unreasonable way, will still be considered, even if the parent/legal guardian making them is (or has been) engaging in vexatious or unreasonably persistent complaints. The school nevertheless reserves the right not to respond to communications from parent/legal guardian who have engaged in this type of behaviour.

#### 8. Reference to Other Policies

The following policies should be read in conjunction to this policy: -

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Data Protection Policy
- Dignity in the Workplace Policy and Charter
- Revised Parental Complaints Procedure (January 2024)
- Safety Statement

#### 9. Safety, Health and Work Act

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act became operative on 1 November 1989. It is an important piece of legislation for Boards of Management 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 DE Circular 0040/97 which outlines the procedures to follow if they feel they have been subjected to any of the above behaviours.

#### 10. Implementation and Review

The Principal is responsible for the implementation of this policy. The policy will be reviewed every two years.

#### 11. Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management ratified this policy at a meeting of the Board of Management on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Copies of the policy will be circulated and communicated to all members of the staff, parents/legal guardians.

Signed:

Chairperson, Board of Management

**Date:** 05.03.2024

**Next Review Date March 2026** 

APPENDIX 1	Revised Parental Complaints Procedure (January 2024)

### 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 <u>only</u>. 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.

#### Formal Stage 1 Discussion

#### Formal Stage 2 Written

#### (20 days)

### Formal Stage 4

Decision

#### 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.

#### sent to Chairperson

If the complaint has not been legal quardian 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.

#### 2.1 Written complaint

resolved at stage 1, the parent/

### 1.2 Parent/guardian meets Principal<sup>1</sup>

Where the parent/legal quardian 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.

#### 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 quardian 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.

#### 3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board

Formal Stage 3

**Board of Management** 

If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 and the parent/ legal quardian 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 Manager 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:

- a) The complaint is
- b) The complaint has already been investigated by the board;
- c) The complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant DE circular,
- d) where recourse to law

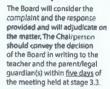
Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent/legal guardian should be so informed within five days of the Board meeting.

#### 3.3 Proceed to a hearing

Where the Board decides to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows:

- 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 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.
- d) 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.
- e) 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.

#### 4.1 Written decision from Chairperson



#### 4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

'Where a complaint is received about a principal the above process commences at Stage 1.2.

#### **APPENDIX 2**



## PROMOTING DIGNITY AT WORK CHARTER

Our Lady of Hope School community commit ourselves to working together to maintain a workplace environment that encourages and supports the right to dignity at work.

All who work here are expected to respect the right of each individual to dignity in their working life.

All will be treated equally and respected for their individuality and diversity.

Bullying in any form is not accepted by Our Lady of Hope School and will not be tolerated.

All individuals whether employed by Our Lady of Hope School or contracted by Our Lady of Hope School have a duty and a responsibility to uphold this Dignity at Work Charter.

Respecting dignity in Our Lady of Hope School also applies to our whole school community – students, parents, guardians, contractors and visitors.