



# Ballycraigy Primary School

## Interim School Complaints Procedure

<b>Date reviewed</b>	November 2017
<b>Date ratified by governors</b>	20/11/2017
<b>Next review due</b>	August 2018

## **Contents**

Forward

Aims of Complaints Procedure

School Complaints Procedure – at a glance

Scope of Complaints Procedure

What to expect under this Procedure

Making a Complaint

## Forward

Our staff and pupils are eager to develop a sense of loyalty to the school and to each other. Our school provides a welcoming, attractive and stimulating environment conducive to learning and we celebrate both academic and non-academic achievement. The positive morale of staff and pupils promotes a collaborative culture. This culture supports realistic, achievable expectations and is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Parental involvement is encouraged and welcomed. Parents receive clear information about curriculum, pupil progress and the day to day running of the school. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their children's education and in the life of the school.

The school has a nurturing ethos and all the staff members show a strong commitment to the care and welfare of the pupils. The school has comprehensive policies in line with DE guidelines, and all staff members adopt practices that ensure that these policies are implemented fully.

Here at Ballycraigy Primary School, we take complaints very seriously. We have the best interests of all our pupils and their families at the centre of all we do. In this regard, we encourage anyone with a concern to speak to us as soon as possible. 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 relevant staff in school who will be happy to help. Open communication and regular engagement between the school staff and the wide range of users is vital to the effective management of the school.

We welcome open communication with our staff; you can speak to staff by:

- Telephone: 028 9446 2450
- Email: [info@ballycraigyps.antrim.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@ballycraigyps.antrim.ni.sch.uk)

If you have any concerns please talk to the class teacher. Concerns about matters other than in the classroom should be raised with the Key Stage Coordinators, Mrs Little and Mrs Fowler, before contacting the Principal, Dr Edwards. We take all concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve matters as quickly as possible.

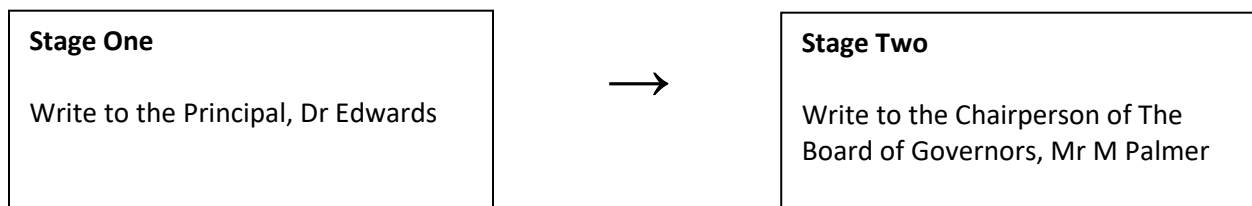
## Aims

When dealing with complaints the school will:

- Encourage resolution of all concerns as quickly as possible
- Provide timely responses to concerns and complaints
- Keep you informed of progress
- Ensure a full and fair investigation of your complaint where appropriate
- Have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved
- Respect confidentiality
- Fully address complaints and provide an effective response
- Take appropriate action to rectify the issue and prevent it happening again where appropriate
- Be responsive to learning from outcomes which will inform and improve practice within the school

A copy of this Procedure is available on the school's website or is available from the school office on request.

### Complaints Procedure – At a glance



#### Time Limit

Please contact the school as soon as possible, unless there are exceptional circumstances, complaints will normally only be considered within 6 months of origin of the complaint to the school.

#### Stage One

When making a complaint, contact the school Principal, Dr Edwards, who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated. *If the complaint is about the Principal, proceed to Stage Two.* The school requires complaints to be made in writing, where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support you with this. (see guidance notes for further information)

Please provide as much information as possible including:

- Name and contact details
- What the complaint is about
- What has already been done to try and resolve it and
- What you would like the school to do to resolve the complaint

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 10 school working days and a response normally made within 20 school working days of receipt of the complaint. This response will be issued in writing by the Principal and will indicate with reasons whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

**These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.**

If you remain unhappy with the outcome at Stage 1, the complaint may be progressed to Stage 2 which is overseen by the Board of Governors.

#### Stage Two

If the complaint is unresolved after Stage 1, write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Mr M Palmer (*care of the school and marked 'Private and Confidential'.*) Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school to make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process. The Chairperson will convene a committee to review the complaint. Please provide as much detail as possible as indicated above.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 10 school working days and a final response made within 20 school working days from the date of receipt of the complaint. The response will be issued in writing by the Chairperson of the committee.

**These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.**

**Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)**

If following Stage Two you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can refer the matter to the Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).

The Ombudsman provides a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about schools in Northern Ireland. You have the right to complain to the Ombudsman if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have received a poor service from a school and your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction.

A complaint should normally be referred to NIPSO within six months of the final response from the school. The school must advise in its concluding letter that the complaint may be referred to the NIPSO if you remain dissatisfied.

Contact details for NIPSO are:

**Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman**

Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman  
Progressive House  
33 Wellington Place  
Belfast  
BT1 6HN

Freepost: FREEPOST NIPSO

Telephone: 028 9023 3821  
Freephone: 0800 34 34 24

Email: [nipso@nipso.org.uk](mailto:nipso@nipso.org.uk)  
Web: [www.nipso.org.uk](http://www.nipso.org.uk)

## 1. SCOPE OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

**1.1** The Complaints Procedure sets out how any expression of dissatisfaction relating to the school will be managed. By taking concerns raised seriously at the earliest possible stage, it is hoped that issues can be resolved quickly and effectively.

**Some examples of complaints dealt with:**

- Not following school policy
- Communication delays/lack of communication
- Difficulties in staff/pupil relationships

### 1.2 Complaints with separate established procedures

Some examples of statutory procedures and appeal mechanisms are listed below. The list is not exhaustive. The Principal, Dr Edwards and the Chair of Governors, Mr Palmer, will advise on the appropriate procedure to use when the complaint is raised.

**Matters may still be referred to NIPSO, if it is felt that maladministration has occurred.**

Exceptions	Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions/Expulsions/Exclusion of children from school</li> </ul>	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Operations and Estates, Sara Long
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)</li> </ul>	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Children and Young People’s Services, Dr Clare Mangan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Development proposals</li> </ul>	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Education, John Collings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Protection/Safeguarding</li> </ul>	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Children and Young People’s Services, Dr Clare Mangan

**1.3** The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints, unless deemed by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Mr M Palmer, to be of a serious nature. The decision of whether to deal with such complaints will be at the discretion of the Board of Governors. (see guidance notes for further information)

## **2. WHAT TO EXPECT UNDER THIS PROCEDURE**

### **2.1 Your rights as a person making a complaint**

In dealing with your complaint we will ensure:

- Fair treatment
- Courtesy
- A timely response
- Accurate advice
- Respect for privacy – complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible allowing for the possibility of consultation with other appropriate parties about the complaint and
- Clear reasons for decisions

### **2.2 Your responsibilities as a person making a complaint**

In making a complaint it is important to:

- Raise issues in a timely manner
- Treat our staff with respect and courtesy
- Provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issues raised
- Use these procedures fully and engage with them at appropriate levels

### **2.3 Rights of parties involved during the investigation**

Where a meeting is arranged the complainant may be accompanied but not represented by another person.

This Procedure does not take away from the statutory rights of any of the participants.

### **2.4 Timeframes**

Where concerns are raised with the relevant Teacher or Principal, a response will normally be provided during the meeting or within an agreed timeframe.

**Stage1** – Normally acknowledged within 10 school working days, response normally within 20 school working days

**Stage 2** - Normally acknowledged within 10 school working days, response normally within 20 school working days

If, for any reason, the review of a complaint takes longer to complete, you will be informed of revised time limits and kept updated on progress.

***These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.***



## **2.5 Equality**

The school requires complaints to be made in writing. Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this progress.

## **2.6 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 and the complaint having been reviewed by the Ombudsman, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If they try to re-open the same issue, the Chair of Governors, Mr M Palmer, 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 it may choose not to respond.

**A full set of guidance materials to support this procedure is currently being developed. It will be helpful to consult this to understand the scope of the complaints procedure.**