



OMAGH INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY

Omagh Integrated Primary & Nursery school are committed to providing a happy, secure and caring environment in which our children can learn. We look to the education of the whole child, so that each of their needs may be met and their full potential developed. We look to do this not on our own, but in partnership with our parents.

COMMENTS / COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy has been written in accordance with the recommended Model Policy from the Education Authority Western Region

A comment is a statement on the part of any member of the school community, either verbal or written, which:

- Tells the staff when they are doing things right.
- Cannot be described as a complaint, according to the next definition.

A complaint is:

- An expression of dissatisfaction which requires response or investigation.

A comment or complaint may be verbal, written or emailed.

All anonymous complaints shall be treated as comments, given that there is no recourse for response.

PRINCIPLES

- To facilitate the school in pursuance of commitment to its vision.
- To be accessible, uncomplicated and respectful of confidentiality.
- To be courteous.
- To treat individuals and groups with openness and honesty.
- To identify and respond to the needs of our school community.
- To provide a mechanism within which any issue identified can be quickly and effectively addressed.
- To ensure that all stakeholders know that this policy is in place.

PURPOSES

- To address all issues arising from a complaint in a fair, respectful and confidential manner within the time scales outlined in this policy.
- To inform the complainant of progress and the final outcome of any investigation.
- To enhance satisfaction and confidence in the school.
- To provide guidance and protection for all members of the school community – teachers, non-teachers, pupils, parents and governors

PRACTICES

- To endeavour to deal with all comments or complaints in a respectful, fair and courteous manner
- To endeavour to resolve complaints before they reach a formal stage
- To acknowledge complaints within 5 working days.
- To respond to a complaint within 3 weeks of the acknowledgement.
- If necessary, complaint heard by the Board of Governors within 10 working days, with outcome communicated to the Principal and the complainant, in writing, within 5 working days of the meeting.

WHO DEALS WITH COMMENTS/ COMPLAINTS?

- Informal matters are best dealt with at an early stage by the class teacher. Failure to reach agreement may result in a formal complaint. **It should be noted that all conversations and dialogue MUST be entered into in a courteous and solution focussed spirit. Aggression, verbal or physical assault or abuse will not be tolerated.**
- A formal complaint should be made in the first instance to the Principal, Mr Anthony Bradley. The Chairperson of the Governors, or any other Governor, should not be approached by the complainant unless it is a grievance against the Principal. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors is Mrs Pauline McKenna.
- If the complaint relates to other agencies the complaint will be formally transferred to that body and the school will undertake to inform the complainant.

RESPONDING TO COMMENTS/ COMPLAINTS

- Written replies will, as far as possible, be in jargon-free language.
- All points and issues raised will be addressed.

If the Principal does not hear from the complainant regarding the complaint within 15 working days of the response being issued, the matter will be deemed closed.

If the complainant strongly disagrees with outcome or the decision of the Principal then it is at this stage that an appeal may be made in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

CHILD PROTECTION

The school acknowledges its responsibility under the Children (NI) Order, 1995 to promote and safeguard the welfare of children.

If the school receives a complaint which may be a child protection issue it will be dealt with in accordance with our Child Protection Policy. The complaint may also be passed to the Western Education and Library Board, who will decide on the appropriate course of action.

ACCESS TO THE POLICY

- The Policy is available from the school on request or can be downloaded from the school website.

MONITORING

- The policy shall be reviewed on a regular basis.
- The Principal shall report all complaints and their outcomes to the Board of Governors as an agenda item as the need arises.

UNRESOLVED COMPLAINTS

If the complaint has not been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction by the Board of Governors, the complainant can complain to the Commissioner for Complaints at:

Office of the Ombudsman
Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN

The Commissioner for Complaints is independent and investigates complaints of maladministration against public bodies. The Commissioner will normally expect complainants to have made full use of the procedures set out in this Comments/ Complaints Policy before carrying out any investigation.

Signed _____

(Chair of the Board of Governors)

Signed _____

(Principal)

Date _____