

Clounagh Junior High School



COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Date Ratified by BoG:

November 2025

Date for Review:

November 2027

1. Introduction

At Clounagh Junior High School, we take complaints very seriously. We aim to develop healthy partnerships with all stakeholders. Success of our pupils is directly linked to how they are supported and encouraged both in school and at home and in keeping with our Mission Statement and School Ethos we have the best interests of all our pupils and their families at the centre of all we do. Whilst it is uncommon, there may be occasions when you may wish to discuss your dissatisfaction with school. In these circumstances, it is important that we are made aware as soon as possible so that we can focus on progressing the situation to everyone's satisfaction – most importantly for the pupil.

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT:

The School Vision is stated in the following terms:

Core Purpose:

“Empowering pupils for a world of change”.

As part of the school Mission:

“An active and supportive partnership with the local community.”

The School Complaints Procedure is aimed at improving collaborative processes with pupils, parents and the local community.

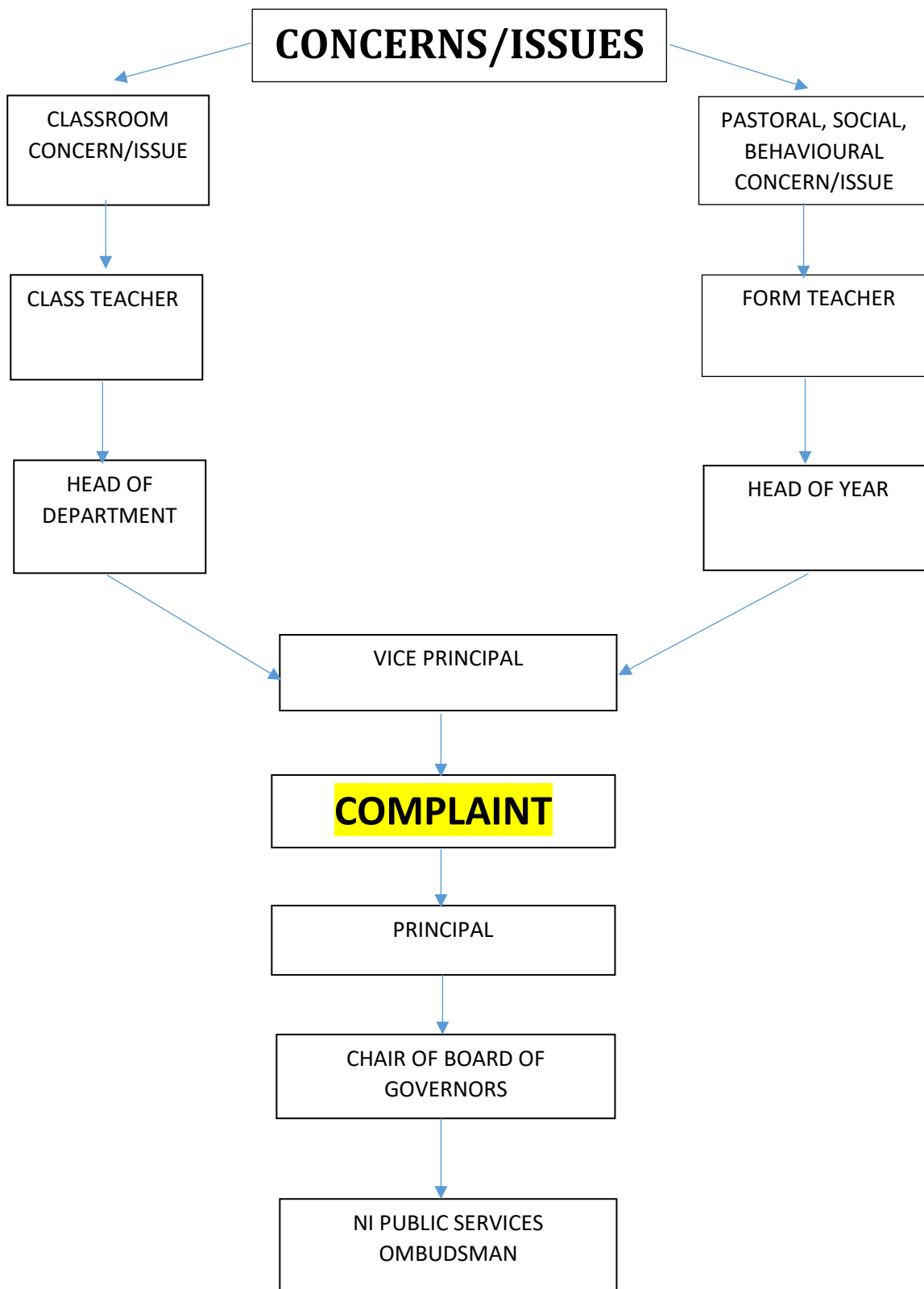
2. Aims of the Complaints Procedure

Most concerns/issues from parents/carers or any other school user should be addressed, by simply talking to the relevant staff member in school. Clounagh JHS has an open-door policy and welcomes this type of engagement.

- Classroom concerns/issues should be raised with the **Class teacher**. If the concern/issue remains, it will be referred to the **Head of Department**.
- Pastoral, social and behavioural concerns/issues should be raised with the **Form Teacher**. If the concern/issue remains the issue will be referred to the **Year Head**.
- Where the concern/issue remains after dealing with Head of Department/Year Head, the concern/issue will be referred to the respective **Vice-Principal**.
- If the concern/issue still remains, it will be deemed a **Complaint** and will be dealt with by the **Principal** and will come under the remit of this **Complaints Procedure**.

This referral structure exists so that concerns/issues can be shared by a range of professionals and cause least disruption to the Teaching and Learning process, allowing the child to continue to gain maximum benefit from his/her time in school.

3. Complaints Procedure



When dealing with concerns, issues, and formal complaints, Clounagh Junior High School will:

- aim to resolve the issue as quickly as possible
- aim to respond as soon as possible
- keep all parties informed
- ensure a full and fair investigation
- respect the rights of teacher, pupils, parents or other parties
- respect confidentiality
- take appropriate action
- review and adapt if necessary, practice within school, as a result of findings
- best ensure that all parties communicate in a respectful manner with each other.

Time limit: Unless there are exceptional circumstances, complaints will only be considered within 6 months of the origin of the complaint.

STAGE 1

Write to the Principal

STAGE 2

Write to the Chair of the
Board of Governors

Stage One

When making a complaint, contact the school Principal who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated. *If the complaint is about the Principal, proceed directly to Stage Two.* The school requires complaints to be made in writing. However, where this is not possible the school will make reasonable arrangements to support you.

Please provide as much information as possible including:

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

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within **5 school working days** and a response normally made within **20 school working days** of receipt of the complaint. This response will be issued to you by the Principal. These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.

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

Stage Two

If the complaint is unresolved after Stage One, write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors (care of the school and marked 'private and confidential'), who will convene a sub-committee to review the complaint. Please provide as much detail as possible as indicated above.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within **5 school working days** and a final response normally made within **20 school working days** from date of receipt of the complaint. The response will be issued to you by the Chairperson of the sub-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 **6 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.

The 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: 02890 233821
Freephone: 0800 34 34 24

Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk
Web: www.nipso.org.uk

4. Scope of the Complaints Procedure

This sets out how any expression of dissatisfaction relating to the school will be managed. By taking concerns raised by parents or others seriously at the earliest possible stage, we hope to resolve issues quickly and effectively.

Examples of complaints dealt with might be:

- Not following school policy
- Communication delays / lack of communication

Complaints with separate established procedures

Some examples of statutory procedures and appeal mechanisms are listed below. The list is not exhaustive. The Principal and/or Chair of Governors will advise you on the appropriate procedure to use when you first raise your complaint. Matters may still be referred to NIPSO, if it is felt that maladministration has occurred.

Exceptions	Contact
Admissions / Expulsions / Exclusion of children from school	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Operations and Estates Sara Long
Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Children and Young People's Services Claire Mangan
School Development Proposals	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Education John Collings
Child Protection / Safeguarding	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Children and Young People's Services Dr Clare Mangan

The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints, unless deemed by the Chair of the Board of Governors to be of a serious nature. The decision of dealing with such complaints will be at the discretion of the Board of Governors.

5. What to expect under this procedure

Your rights as a person making a complaint

In dealing with your complaint, we will ensure that you receive:

- Fair treatment;
- Courtesy;
- A timely response;
- Accurate advice;
- Respect for your privacy – complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible allowing for the possibility that we may have to consult with other appropriate parties about your complaint; and
- Clear reasons for our decisions.

Your responsibilities as a person making a complaint

In making your complaint, you should:

- Raise issues in a timely manner
- Treat our staff with respect and courtesy
- Provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issues you raise

- Use these procedures fully and engage with them at the appropriate levels

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.

6. 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.

- **Stage 1:** Normally acknowledged within **5 school working days**, and response normally within **20 school working days**
- **Stage 2:** Normally acknowledge within **5 school working days**, and response normally within **20 school working days**

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

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

7. Equality

The school requires complaints to be made in writing. However, where this is not possible, please contact the Principal who will make reasonable arrangements.

8. 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 has been reviewed by the Ombudsman, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If they try to re-open the same issue, the Chair of Governors 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, we may choose not to respond.