

Complaints Procedure



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1. FOREWORD

Enniskillen Royal Grammar School (ERGS) takes all complaints very seriously and this document sets out how the school normally deals with them.

We have the best interests of all our pupils and their families at the centre of everything we do. However, we recognise that there will be occasions when our actions do not meet the reasonable expectations of the members of our school community or members of the public. Our complaints procedure is designed to enable due consideration to be given to each and every complaint in a fair and transparent manner.

Many issues can be resolved by initially talking to the relevant member of staff in school who will be happy to help -the school encourages open lines of communication and regular contact.

If you have any issue in relation to a pupil please direct your query to the Pastoral Leader or Head of Year in the first instance – they can be contacted through the school office on the relevant site: Cooper Crescent 028 66322165 or Lough Shore 028 66322658. Any query which is not in relation to Teaching & Learning should firstly be directed to the Principal.

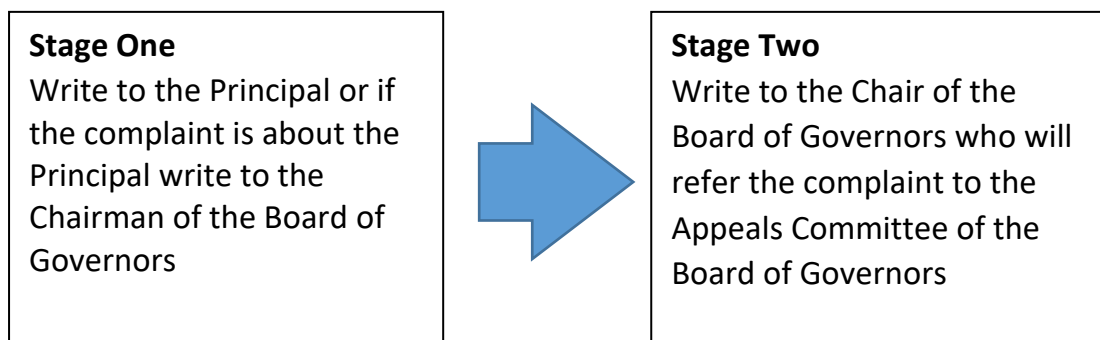
2. AIMS OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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 the 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 from the school on request

3. 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 the original incident taking place or issue arising.

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 school Principal, write to the Chairman of the Board of Governors.*

Your complaint must be made in writing which can take the form of letter, fax or email.

Where this presents any difficulty please contact the school and reasonable arrangements will be made to support you in this process.

Your complaint should be addressed to:

The Principal, Miss E Armstrong or Mr P Little, Chairman of the Board of Governors

Enniskillen Royal Grammar School

1 Lough Shore Road
Portora
Enniskillen
Co Fermanagh
BT74 5HD
Telephone: 028 66 322658 / 028 66322165
Fax: 028 66 328668/ 028 66340905
Email info@enniskillenroyalgs.com

Please provide as much information as possible including:

- 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 to resolve the complaint

All complaints will normally be dealt be acknowledged within 5 school days and a response normally made within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint. If however the school needs to seek clarification on any of the points raised in order for them to be fully considered, you will be contacted in relation to this. If for example the issues raised are of a complex nature they may need clarification and in such instances the Principal will write to you at the earliest opportunity with a revised time scale.

The response when issued in writing by the Principal will indicate, with reasons, whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

The definition of a school day in this procedure will be any day on which there is a timetabled session and pupils are in attendance. This excludes school holidays and ‘Inset’ or training days when pupils are not present.

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 One, write to the Chairman of the Board of Governors (*care of the school and marked Private & Confidential*). Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process. The Chairman 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 5 school days and a final response made within 20 school days from the date of receipt of the complaint. The response will be issued in writing by the Chairperson of the committee.

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.

Contact details for NIPSO are:

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

Progressive House

33 Wellington House

Belfast

BT1 6HN

Freepost: FREEPOST NIPSO

Telephone: 028 90 2233821

Freephone: 0800 34 34 24

Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk

Web: www.nipso.org.uk

4. SCOPE OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- 4.1** 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

4.2 Complaints with separate established procedures

Some examples of statutory procedures and appeal mechanisms are listed below. The list is not exhaustive. The Principal/ Chair of Governors 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"> • Admissions/ Expulsions/ Exclusion of children from school 	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Operations and Estates: Sara Long
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN) 	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Children and Young People's services: Dr Clare Mangan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Development Proposals 	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Education: Mr John Collings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection/ Safeguarding 	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Children and Young People's services: Dr Clare Mangan

- 4.3** The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints, unless deemed by the Chairman of the Board of Governors 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.

5. WHAT TO EXPECT UNDER THIS PROCEDURE

5.1 Your rights as a person making this 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

5.2 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 the appropriate levels

5.3 Rights of parties involved in the investigation

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

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

5.4 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.

Stage 1 – Normally acknowledge within 5 school days, response normally within 20 school days.

Stage 2- Normally acknowledge within 5 school days, response normally within 20 school 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.

6. MAKING A COMPLAINT

6.1 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 process.

6.2 Unreasonable Complaints

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality of service to those who complain.

However, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the complaint 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 the Board of Governors will inform them that the procedure has been completed and the matter is now closed. If the complainant repeatedly continues to contact the school with the same issue it may choose not to respond.