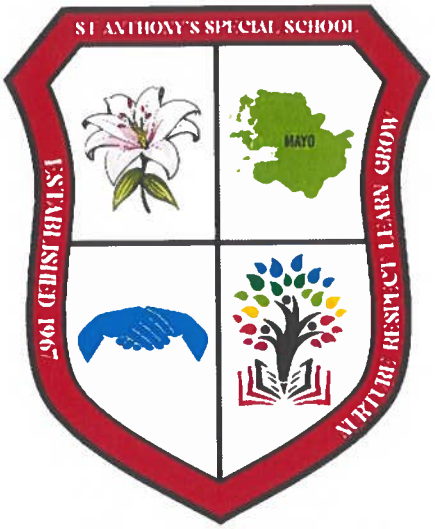


St.Anthony's Special School

Humbert Way

Castlebar

Co.Mayo

Parental Complaints Policy

Version History

Version	Revision Date	Reason	Approved by	Approved on
1	For 2026/27	New Policy	BOM	10th Nov '26

Parental Complaints Policy

Introduction:

In St.Anthony's Special School, Castlebar we value and encourage the important role played by Parents and Guardians in their child's education. From time to time, a Parent/Guardian may have a concern relating to their child at school.

Rationale:

This policy has been formulated to meet its obligations under the Education Act, 1998 to provide procedures to address concerns that may be raised by Parents/Guardians.

The purpose of this Parental Complaints Procedure is to facilitate the resolution of concerns where they may arise in an agreed and fair manner.

Relationship to School Ethos:

In St.Anthony's Special School, we aim to treat each child fairly and with respect. We realise the importance of each of our pupils feeling valued and respected and having access to an evidence-based education. We also strive to promote positive home-school relationships and aim to enhance the self-esteem of everyone within our school community.

Aims

- To promote positive and trusting relationships between Parents/Guardians and St.Anthony's Special School.
- To facilitate Parents/Guardians to express concerns they may have.
- To assist the early resolution of Parent/Guardian concerns that may arise.
- To minimise opportunities for conflict.

Summary of Complaints Procedure

We request Parents/Guardians to adhere to the following procedure should they have a concern:

1. A Parent/Guardian who has a concern about their child should contact the class teacher to arrange a meeting to discuss the issue. Your child's Class Teacher is best placed to solve the problem for your child.

2. If the Parent/Guardian is not able to resolve the concern with the Class Teacher, s/he should contact the Principal to discuss the matter further.

3. Where the concern is still unresolved the Parent/Guardian may contact the Chairperson of the Board of Management to try and resolve the matter.

4. If the concern is still unresolved at this point, the Parent/Guardian may lodge the concern in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management. The Chairperson follows a set out procedure, which is detailed below, to investigate the concern and following this will inform the decision of the Board of Management in writing to the Parent/Guardian and to the Teacher.

INTO Parental Complaints Procedure

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) reached agreement on the following procedure for dealing with complaints by Parents/Guardians. The agreement lays out in five stages the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed at each stage. Please note this is a non-statutory procedure.

Only those complaints about staff which is written and signed by Parents/Guardians of pupils can be investigated formally by the Board of Management, except where those complaints are deemed by the Board to be:

- On matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education and Skills.

- Frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a Teacher/SNA in a school.

- Complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.

- If a parent has a concern they are asked to arrange a meeting with the class teacher during school hours.
- Unwritten complaints, not in the above categories, may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

Stage 1

1. A Parent/Guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, arrange a meeting with the Class Teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. This is irrespective of whether the complaint is about a Teacher or SNA

2. Where the Parent/Guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the Class Teacher s/he should approach the Principal with a view to resolving it.

Stage 2

1. If the complaint is still unresolved and the Parent/Guardian wishes to pursue the matter further s/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

2. The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the Teacher/SNA and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

1. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board and except in those cases where the Chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board to be required:

a) Supply the Teacher/SNA with a copy of the written complaint.

b) Arrange a meeting with the Teacher/SNA and, where applicable, the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 4

1. If the complaint is still not resolved the Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3(b).

2. If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the Teacher/SNA and the complainant should be so informed within 3 days of the Board meeting.

3. If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:

a) The Teacher/SNA should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage.

b) The Teacher/SNA should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint.

c) The Teacher/SNA should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint.

d) The Teacher/SNA should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board. The Teacher/SNA would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a work colleague at any such meeting.

e) The Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant if it considers such to be required. The complainant would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting.

f) The meeting of the Board of Management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3(b).

Stage 5

1. When the board has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the Teacher and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board.

2. The decision of the Board shall be final.

In this agreement 'days' mean school days.

Appealing to the Ombudsman for Children

The Office of the Ombudsman or Children may independently investigate complaints about schools recognised by the Department of Education & Skills provided the Parent/Guardian has firstly and fully followed the school's Parental Complaints Procedure/Policy. The key criterion for any intervention by the Ombudsman for Children is that a child has or may have been negatively affected by the action of a school.

This policy was considered and ratified by the Board of Management.

Teresa Ward 10/11/2026

Chairperson of Board of Management ..... Date

..... 10/11/2026

Principal ..... Date