

Home School Communication Policy

Introductory statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and home/school communication in Enable Ireland Sandymount School.

The family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the child and the nurturing of good and essential values. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other so that the child's education can be effective. All stakeholders aim to work for the benefit of the child and his/her learning.

It should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Code of Behaviour; Anti- Bullying; Child Protection; Intimate Care; Confidentiality; Internet Acceptable Use; Healthy Eating and the Safety Statement.

Rationale

Positive and open communication is essential to the running of an effective school. The Department of Education further describes effective schools as places where teachers are empowered to make informed and reflective professional decisions about teaching and learning, in response to the abilities and needs of all children in a variety of contexts.

This Policy has been formulated to enable all stakeholders to understand how positive and effective communication can enhance their role in the education of our pupils, while respecting the roles of the other stakeholders involved.

The family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the child and the nurturing of good, moral values. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other so that the child's education can be effective. All the stakeholders aim to work for the benefit of the child and their learning.

The home school communication policy recognises and endeavours to adopt the values that are set out in the ethos of the school for those at work in the school. It attempts to support and sustain a harmonious environment in which the potential of all staff is nurtured through the cooperation between staff, pupils, parents, board members and all other relevant parties.

Aims

Enable Ireland Sandymount School works to promote and support good communication structures in the following areas:

- Staff communications
- Communications with parents/guardians
- Within the wider school community (such as Therapists from Enable Ireland ,Board of Management & Parents Association) and staff/ parents/guardians
- Facilitate good communication between staff within the school, and between staff and parents
- Outline procedures for communicating with parents



- Have regard for the integrity of pupils' welfare regarding confidentiality
- Offer protection for those volunteers who give their time to the school
- Provide assurance and confidence to parents in general that those who volunteer are unambiguously bound by strict guidelines and have due respect for your child's privacy.

All members of the school community are expected to familiarise themselves with this policy.

It is considered that everyone has a responsibility to make themselves aware of where and how to see information and updates as the need arises and should seek to keep themselves informed.

Behaviour of all Stakeholders in the School

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. Communication between adult stakeholders should reflect the professional nature of the school as a workplace.

This not only extends to the pupils but to all of the stakeholders e.g. the staff, family members, therapists, nursing staff and the wider community. Anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so. While the behaviour of pupils in our school is of vital importance, adults in the school community also have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of pupils.

All stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviours in the school. Examples include:

- All stakeholders are expected to speak to each other with respect. Speaking or writing with a calm and clear voice, even in situations which may be stressful or emotive. Shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If a stakeholder displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building. In certain cases, the Gardaí may be called.
- All stakeholders will treat the pupils with the utmost respect while on the premises
- The staff of the school will respect your child's right to privacy so it is asked that parents respect other children's rights to privacy
- When stakeholders meet, it is important to respect that the time of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected
- Staff are generally available issue in the morning and after school. However, should a parent need to have a discussion or meeting, an appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties. This ensures that issues can be resolved. Classes begin at 8.55am and finish at 2.35pm and this time should not be interrupted.
- Respecting the experience, skills and abilities of others when differing opinions arise.
- Having reasonable expectations of others; no one should be subject to unfair criticism or vexatious complaints.
- Respecting others' right to maintain their reputation; defamatory comments about school staff, children or other parents on communication apps and social media sites are not acceptable.
- Respecting others' privacy, staff will not discuss another pupil, that pupil's family circumstances, another member of staff or that staff member's family circumstances.
- Respecting others' time; attendees to meetings should be punctual and if cancellation is necessary, adequate notice should be given.



Where the behaviour of parents or visitors to the school falls below the expected standard, school leadership or the Board of Management reserve the right to take appropriate action. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Restricting or removing a parent's ability to contact a staff member by email.
- Implementing a "two members of staff present" system at meetings.
- Issuing a formal verbal or written warning from the Board of Management.
- Refusing access to the school premises.
- Calling the Gardaí if instructions to leave the school premises are not followed.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with the school
- Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children
- Share the responsibility of seeing that the school remains true to its ethos, values and distinctive character
- Become actively involved in the school/parents association
- Participate in meetings, respecting the professional role of the staff
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

Structures in place to facilitate open communication and consultation

- IEP and IFSP meetings take place during Term 1. Attendance/non attendance is recorded in pupils' files.
- Parents receive a comprehensive report on their child's progress at the end of the school year.
- Ongoing consultation throughout the year with teachers and support staff.
- Review meetings if necessary are held with the multi-disciplinary team
- Written communication between home and school through pupil communication books/by email/through the Seesaw app which are used to relay information on the child's daily activities.
- Text messages, e-mails, letters and monthly newsletters from the principal to provide information on school activities.
- Parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of all school policies through their nominees on the Board of Management. Copies of all policies are available on request; some are published on the school website.
- The news page on the school website keeps parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school activities.
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. sports day, school celebrations, and school concerts.

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the class teacher directly to arrange a suitable time.

Things the school need to know

It is important that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to your child and therefore may adversely affect his/her education. Your first point of contact should be your child's teacher. In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians supplied on enrolment will be consulted by staff.

If your child is not travelling home on school transport, the school should know who is collecting your child. Should this change the onus is on you to inform the school of the change.



Under no circumstances will a pupil be released to anyone unauthorised/unknown to the school.

Separation in the home

The staff of Enable Ireland Sandymount School encourage parents who are experiencing separation to come and speak confidentially to the class teacher and/or Principal. It is our aim to handle such matters with sensitivity and compassion, and ultimately, our primary concern is for the well-being and overall development of the child.

Parents' Contact Details

Parents' contact details, including emergency contact details, must be provided to the school. These contact details are used only for the purpose of communicating with parents on issues relating to their child (ren).

It is vital that the school is aware of any changes to methods of communication with families. The responsibility for informing the school of a change of address, phone numbers or email rests principally with parents/guardians.

Parent/Teacher meetings

Formal IEP/IFSP meetings are held once a year for all classes (Circular 14/04). The details regarding date and times is worked out by the school in months in advance.

In the case of separated parents, requests can be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually. The school will attempt to co-ordinate times where siblings are concerned. Meetings take place remotely or in person on a day when the school is closed early for pupils.

The teachers use prepared guidelines for the meetings and collaborate in advance. The pupil's Individual Education Plan (IEP) is presented at this meeting. In advance of the meeting parents are invited to give their input to the plan by completing an information gathering IEP questionnaire. This is further discussed at the meeting and the content of IEP is agreed.

The purpose of the Parent/Teacher meeting is:

- To establish and maintain good communication between home and school.
- To learn more about the pupil from the parent's perspective.
- To let parents know how their child is progressing in school.
- To help pupils realise that home and school are working together.
- To meet demands for accountability.
- To share with the parent the challenges the pupil may be experiencing in school.
- To learn more about parental opinions on school programmes.
- To identify ways in which parents can help their child.
- To negotiate decisions jointly about the child's education
- To complete the pupil's IEP.

Informal Meetings

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the class teacher to arrange a suitable time.



If parents wish to drop items for their child this can be done through the secretary's office as it is important to keep class interruptions to a minimum. Occasions occur where a parent needs to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings may need to take place without prior notice. The principal will aim to facilitate such meetings making every effort to ensure that the children in the class do not lose out on any of the teaching/learning time.

Meetings at the classroom door are discouraged on a number of grounds:

- A teacher cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent
- It is difficult to be discreet when other pupils are close by
- It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to staff at a classroom door.

Communication with the nursing department

Good communication by parents/carers, teachers, medical personnel, respite services with the nurse department is an essential part of health promotion in Enable Ireland Sandymount School.

Developing open and trusting relationships is essential. Communicating concerns in relation to general health and well-being as well as details of medical conditions, medical appointments, and prescribed medications including any changes to medications or any side-effects from medication is vital in order to support the pupils' needs. Co-operation in these issues enables early and effective interventions when required and also ensures that any directions from medical personnel can be adhered to appropriately and without delay.

The following methods of communication are used:

- Verbal communication- face to face or via phone.
- Letters and emails.
- Completion of documents ie: medication information forms, vaccination permission forms, dental and health screening permission forms.

It is essential that parents/carers cooperate with the school nurse department by:

- Notifying them of any medication or changes of medication that have been prescribed for their child.
- Providing them with copies of prescriptions, and relevant guidelines for medications on a six monthly basis as well as care plans where appropriate for all prescribed medications that need to be administered at school as directed by the relevant doctor.

Clinical staff in Enable Ireland

There is regular contact, both formal and informal, between the school and the clinical staff in Enable Ireland. The school/ clinic relationship, fully recognizing the involvement of clinical staff in the child's education and development. The therapy team for each class meet with the class team once a term to review progress of goals set at the IEP meeting. See 'Term of reference for School Clinic meetings' - Appendix 5.

Circular 56/2011 Initial Steps in the Implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy has been adopted by the Board of Management. References to parent/school communication are:



Reporting to parents

Parents have the primary responsibility for their children's learning and development. Schools can strengthen the capacity of parents to support their children in this way by sharing meaningful information with parents about the progress that children are achieving in the education system. This information needs to draw on the different sources of evidence that staff use, such as conversations with the learner, data-collection and documented progress on objectives and milestones reached in their short and long-term planning, examination of pupils' own self-assessment data, documented observations of the learner's engagement with tasks, outcomes of other assessment tasks and tests, and examples of pupils' work. In turn, parents will often be able to enrich staffs knowledge of their child's progress through providing further information about the pupil's learning at home.

End of year reports

Teachers use the agreed school report templates which are completed at the end of the year and sent to parents. This is a comprehensive report covering all aspects of the pupils' life in school. Copies are kept on file.

Communication during school closures:

Emergency closures etc. will be communicated to staff and parents by web text and email by the principal. If there is a red weather warning staff will be informed the night before by web text with a confirmation the following morning to let them know when the school will reopen. Parents will be informed the night before if there is a red weather warning in place as school buses will not run. A confirmation web text and email will follow to inform families whether the school is to open or not.

The principal is responsible for communicating notice of bereavements etc. of members of families of either staff or students to other staff members during school closures. Person of concern will be informed before the staff representative communicates the information to others.

Communication with the Board of Management

- The Board of Management hold regular meetings. The agenda is set and notice of the meeting sent to each board member. Minutes are recorded. Communication to the Board is kept by the secretary and dealt with at every meeting.
- Parents' Representatives on the Board of Management give representation to matters concerning the parent body.
- Teacher Rep gives representation from the Staff
- Treasurer discusses Finances and gives a Financial Report
- Should a parent(s) have a concern regarding their child, they should, in the first instance, speak with their child's teacher and/or Principal.
- Occasionally, parents may wish to have a matter discussed at Board of Management level. For this to happen, the matter should be forwarded, in writing, to the Chairperson of the board at least 10 days before the next planned Board of Management meeting. Parents will be informed of upcoming Board Meetings.
- The Board members also receive updates from the Principal via the Principal's Report to give them an insight into daily school life.
- Board members are expected to speak to each other in a respectful manner and maintain confidentiality.



Parent Association [PA]

Enable Ireland Sandymount School is fortunate to have a wonderful PA. The PA has an influence on school life in Enable Ireland Sandymount School and makes an exceptional contribution. There is regular contact, both formal and informal, between the school/Board of Management and the PA. The Parent/Principal/Teacher relationship, fully recognizing the intense involvement of parents in their child's education.

The PA frequently send updates via email and in the Bulletin to parents, keeping them fully informed of the events being organised by the PA.

- The chairperson of the PA contacts or meets the Principal before their meetings to give an opportunity to for all relevant information to be communicated to the PA committee.
- The parent nominees on the Board of Management attend a number of PA meetings during the school year. Their role is to represent information and decisions of the BOM to the PA. Parent nominees should attend a minimum of two PTA meetings during each school term.
- The Principal will receive feedback from the meetings of the PA about issues of relevance. This feedback takes the form of the chairperson of the PA discussing with the Principal in the days after a PA meeting. This also provides an opportunity for the Principal to convey BOM decisions to the parent body.

School Communication Methods

Joining the school community

Parents of pupils who are new to the school receive a parent and guardian handbook.

School calendar

The calendar outlines the date of the school terms and holidays. It is issued to all parents/guardians in June prior to the next academic year and is available on the school website.

General communication

News updates with information on events and school activities are circulated electronically regularly via monthly newsletters and emails.

Online and Social media

Sandymount School has a dedicated official school website. Information and updates about variety of topics is available on the school website, <http://sandymountschool.ie/>

This is maintained by a designated member of staff, who holds a post of responsibility in relation to this. Information on the website includes:

- School Calendar
- News from classroom activities and school trips
- School Policies
- PA pages



The school also has an official Instagram account and an official Twitter page.

Instagram: sandymountschool

Twitter: @SandymountS4

Absences

We ask parents to please inform us of the reason your child may be absent from school through Aladdin or emailing your class teacher.

In-School

The following tools of communication are in place in Sandymount School:

- Oral communication between staff
- Staff meetings
- Staff emails
- Collaborative use of Microsoft teams and Zoom
- Oral notices to staff by the principal
- Announcements/discussions in the staff room at break times
- Staff room notice board
- School-related events
- Assembly
- Classroom visits by the principal
- Regular Board of Management meetings and shared report

The following measures endeavour to ensure cooperation between school and home

- Consultation throughout the year
- IEP meetings usually held in September
- Written communication
- Aladdin App and Seesaw App for home school communication
- Notices to parents on specific issues
- Regular Board meetings with shared report published on the school website
- School reports in mid June with time for questions/feedback
- Meeting parents/guardians face to face (by appointment)
- Phone calls to the school on 01-2615907
- Emails- the school endeavours to be as environmentally friendly as possible, as such, we are attempting to use electronic communication instead of paper. The school may email parents about special events throughout the year.
- School surveys
- School events
- School website
- School Instagram page
- School Twitter Page

Communication with Department of Education

Generally speaking, communication to the school is addressed to the Chairperson of the Board or the Principal or both. The school deals with a wide range of departments within



the Department of Education, from those dealing with employment matters to those concerned with funding to those dealing with curriculum.

Communication with the Inspectorate

The Principal or Chairperson communicates with the Inspectorate by phone call or in writing.

Communication with Enable Ireland

The school maintains close contact with its patron body, Enable Ireland. This can be done through the Principal, the Chairperson or the patron's nominee on the Board of Management.

Communication with Other Agencies

There is regular two-way communication with a wide range of other organisations/ agencies such as the HSE, Psychological Services, Social Services, Gardai, National Council for Special Education, National Education and Welfare Board and Dublin City County Council.

Parental Complaints about Teachers Procedure

Please note that Parental Complaints about teachers procedure is detailed on the document named "Parental Complaints about Teachers Procedure.docx".

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act became operative on 1 November 1989. It is an important piece of legislation for Board of Managements and for those who work in schools, as schools and colleges were brought under the scope of safety legislation for the first time.

It is recognised that school staff may be at risk from violence in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation. This behaviour may come from pupils, parents, guardians, other staff members or intruders.

In this respect, all staff should be aware of **DES Circular 40/97** which deals with the procedures to follow if they feel they have been subjected to any of the above behaviours.

Review and Ratification

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

Signed:



Sé Goulding
Chairperson of Board of Management



Jennifer Doyle
Principal

Date: 16 October 2024



APPENDIX 1: Communication by email

Communication by Email

- Emails will be used to communicate a large percentage of school, organisational issues and events. This reflects our green school ethos of cutting down on the unnecessary use of paper.
- The school promotes sustainable working and the “right to disconnect”. Therefore, emails between staff will be sent Monday to Friday during office hours (8am to 4pm) except in the most urgent of circumstances. The school kindly requests parents to follow these guidelines where possible. Parents must expect a reasonable period for response, as normal working hours are to be respected.
- Teachers have a considerable amount of pre and post school administrative duties and parents are respectfully asked to consider the impact of responding to emails has on time intended for planning, teaching and learning.
- Email should be written in the tone of respect that we expect of all communication within Enable Ireland Sandymount school community and follow the expected conduct outlined in this policy.
- Emails are best used for brief exchanges of important information, they should not be used to discuss concerns about children. If a parent or teacher has a concern about a child, this requires a two-way conversation by phone or in person.
- Emails may be used by teachers to communicate with individual parents or class groups of parents if they so choose.
- Emails are used to communicate between the principal and staff and between staff members.
- Emails will be used to communicate a large percentage of school/PA organisational issues and events. This reflects our green school ethos of cutting down on the unnecessary use of paper.
- Emails may be used to communicate between parents/guardians and teachers if the teacher has decided that it is appropriate. These emails may not specifically mention any one child, or any individual parent/teacher issue. They should be used for general classroom management and organisational issues.
- No student shall have access to this teacher/parent/guardian forum.
- Class/group emails set up by the PA may not be used for advertising, complaints or for school matters concerning any child, parent or staff member. They shall only be used for general organisational and social purposes.



APPENDIX 2: Communication with separated parents

In cases where a child's parents are going through or have been through separation, Enable Ireland Sandymount School strives to deal with all parties in a sensitive and compassionate manner, with the primary focus being the welfare and development of the child concerned. The school asks parents experiencing separation to speak confidentially with the Principal and/or teacher. The school will follow the procedures below, with the aim of supporting children whose parents are going through separation. These require active co-operation between the parents affected and the school:

- The Board and staff of Enable Ireland Sandymount School will endeavour at all times to deal sensitively and caringly with children experiencing parental separation and with both parents.
- Parents of a pupil are asked to inform the school if they are separated. The school needs to know what the child's living arrangements are – i.e. with which parent they normally reside, or what shared arrangements are in place.
- Contact details (including emergency contact details) should be provided by both parents. The school must be kept informed of collection arrangements, and changes to these must be communicated in writing.
- Parents should inform the school of any difficulties their child may be experiencing as a consequence of separation (e.g. emotional upset).
- In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the assumption will be that both parents continue to be involved in and committed to their child's education, and so are equally entitled to be made aware of all important details and events relating to this.
- The school cannot be asked to withhold a child from either parent in the absence of a custody arrangement to that effect. The same applies to significant information relating to the child.
- If a separation /custody order is in place which limits contact by either parent with the school, the school should be informed in writing to this effect. This can be done by providing the school principal with a copy of the relevant part of the order. The school commits to ensuring that such information will be held in the strictest confidence and will be used on a "need to know" basis only.
- The school will assume, unless otherwise instructed, that consent for school trips, routine medical examinations or vaccinations can be given by the parent with whom the child principally resides.
- It is school policy to offer separate parent/teacher meetings to both parents, if so desired.
- Standard school communications which are normally transmitted via school bags will be expected to be communicated by the parent with whom the child principally resides to the other parent.
- Communication in regard to academic reports, significant disciplinary issues and health and safety issues will be communicated by the school to both parents separately, unless there is a compelling reason not to do so. Such reasons must be given in writing to the school.



APPENDIX 3: Parental Complaints

Code of Practice for dealing with Complaints made by Parent/s, Guardian/s of a School Student or by a Student (who has reached the age of 18) currently enrolled in Enable Ireland Sandymount School,

or

by a staff member from the patron body or other visitor to the school against a Staff Member employed by the Board of Management of Enable Ireland Sandymount School

This Code of Practice for dealing with Complaints made by Parent/s, Guardian/s of a Student or by a Student (who has reached the age of 18) currently enrolled in Enable Ireland Sandymount School, or by a staff member from the patron body or other visitor to the school against a Staff Member employed by the Board of Management of Enable Ireland Sandymount School was developed following discussions at between Enable Ireland, the Board of Management (BOM) of Enable Ireland Sandymount School (the school) the Parent's Association of the school and trade unions representing teaching and SNA staff, to foster an environment where communication between parents, staff of the school and clinical services staff is open and positive.

Please note that Parental Complaints about teachers procedure is detailed on the document named "Parental Complaints about Teachers Procedure.docx".

Procedures are necessary to ensure fair treatment for all. It is necessary that procedures be agreed, known and observed in the interest of good relations in the school and workplace environment.

It is the policy of Enable Ireland Sandymount School to provide a fair, consistent and equitable mechanism for processing complaints by parents/guardians or students (who have reached the age of 18 years), clinical services staff or other visitors against a school staff member and to do so in a manner that affords all concerned full rights in accordance with natural justice. This procedure outlines the procedures which should be followed by all – school and clinic staff, parents/guardians and/or students over 18 years of age and/or their representatives, in the event of complaints being made against staff.

Investigations of complaints will be handled with sensitivity and due respect to the rights of both the complainant and the staff member concerned. Throughout this procedure, all communication between the staff member, parent/guardian and or student (who has reached the age of 18 years) must take place in an atmosphere that is calm, dignified and in a climate that respects the viewpoint of either party to the Complaints Procedure. This procedure is intended to resolve complaints outside of recourse to legal process.

It is understood that all complaints will be investigated with minimum delay and in accordance with principles of natural justice. Every effort will be made to adhere to the time limits prescribed in the procedure. The time limits laid down under the Formal Procedure may be extended by mutual agreement of the parties concerned, or by the person(s) appointed to manage/investigate the complaint, provided the grounds for extending the time limits are reasonable.



Exclusions

- a) Complaints considered by the Principal/Chairperson of the BOM/ EI National Director or appropriate line manager to be frivolous or vexatious
- b) Anonymous complaints
- c) Complaints which are appropriate to another Code of Practice/procedure.
- d) Complaints which do not relate to the work of a staff member in Enable Ireland Sandymount School.
- e) Complaints in respect of child abuse which are dealt with under separate guidelines and procedures issued by the Department of Education and Skills.
- f) Complaints which are the subject of legal proceedings.
- g) Complaints in relation to teacher/principal professional competence which should be processed under the Department of Education and Skills circular letter 59/2009.

Good practice

Where a complaint arises, the parties concerned (complainant, staff member/s and management representative/s) are encouraged to strive to understand the other party's position and should seek, as far as possible, a mutually acceptable solution through informal means.

Without prejudice to his/her right to invoke immediately the Formal Procedure, a parent/guardian /student (aged eighteen years or over) who believes s/he has been treated unjustly or unfairly is encouraged to raise his/her complaint, as a matter of first instance, through an informal approach with the staff member.

Mediation

Mediation, if appropriate, and subject to the agreement of all the parties to the grievance, is not excluded by way of a mechanism to resolving complaints at informal or formal stages.

Any information disclosed in the course of mediation must remain within the mediation process. It must not be disclosed and cannot be used in furthering a complaint through this procedure or any other process and must remain confidential to the mediation process. In the event that mediation is unsuccessful, the Complaints Procedure can be re-invoked at the same stage and without prejudice to the parties having engaged in a mediated process.

The Procedure

Complaints, whether verbal or in writing, should be processed informally through stages 1 and 2 of the procedure and a copy of any written complaint be given to the staff member concerned.

The complainant will be informed if the complaint is amenable to processing within the terms of this procedure and if not, the reasons for this decision.

A complaint(s) may be withdrawn at any stage of the procedure. All complaints received will be entered in the complainant's file. Where the complaint is withdrawn, a note to this effect will be entered in the file.

Parties to a complaint do not require legal representation. A staff member may be accompanied by a trade union representative or friend at any meeting convened under this procedure. A



parent/guardian/adult student may be accompanied by a friend or someone unconnected to the complaint.

Informal Stage

Stage 1 – Speaking with the staff member concerned with a view to resolving the complaint

- 1.1 A parent/guardian/student (aged eighteen years or over) who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there is good and sufficient reason in the first instance, make an appointment to discuss the matter with the staff member concerned with a view to resolving the complaint. The staff member has the right to refer the complaint to the Principal and in this context, to respond to the Principal on the complaint. In such circumstances the complaint moves directly to stage 2.1. In an administration office context, if the matter cannot be resolved, the parent/guardian/adult student should seek an appointment with the School Principal or Chairperson of the Board of Management. A copy of the Procedure should be made available to the parent/guardian/adult student.
- 1.3 If at this point the matter cannot be resolved, the matter should proceed to stage 2 ideally within a maximum of ten working¹ days.

Stage 2 – Contact the Principal if your complaint is against a member of staff other than the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint

- 2.1 A parent/guardian/student (aged eighteen years or over) who is unable to resolve the complaint at stage 1 may seek an appointment to report and discuss the matter with the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. The Principal will arrange such a meeting. In some instances and where deemed appropriate by the Principal, it may be necessary for the parties concerned (subject to mutual agreement of both parties to the complaint) to meet with the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. The Deputy may be nominated by the Principal to facilitate this stage of the process.

In either circumstance, such a meeting will take place within a maximum of a further ten working days.¹

Any documentation relating to the complaint should be provided to the parties no later than three days prior to the meeting/s with the Principal.

The purpose of such meeting/s is to seek a resolution of the complaint to the satisfaction of the parties concerned.

- 2.2 Following the facilitation process, the Principal will communicate the outcome verbally to both parties. In the event of the matter being resolved, the parties will be requested to sign a statement to the effect that the matter is concluded to the agreement of the parties concerned.

¹ “Working days” are understood in a school context to be counted as days on which the school is open for student instruction



- 2.3 If after stages 2.1 and 2.2 the complaint is still unresolved, the parent/guardian/adult student should be advised that they may raise the matter formally (in writing) with the Board of Management (under Stage 3).
- 2.4 In the case of a complaint against a Principal, the parent/guardian/adult student should discuss his/her complaint with the Principal. Meeting/s in relation to complaints against a Principal may be facilitated by the Deputy Principal. If the parent/guardian/adult student is unable to resolve the complaint with the Principal, the complaint may be processed under Stages 3 and 4 of this procedure.

It is envisaged that the overwhelming majority of complaints will be resolved to the satisfaction of the parties to the complaint without recourse to progressive stages in the Procedure.

Formal Stage

Stage 3 – Writing to the Principal if your complaint is against a member of staff other than the Principal

- 3.1 If the complaint is not resolved at stages 1 or 2, then the parent/guardian/adult student should lodge the complaint in writing, with the Board of Management within ten working days of the date of issue of the findings from stage 2.
- 3.2 The Board of Management should formally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 working days. This will confirm that your letter has been received, and either:
 - Provide a response to the issue(s) you raised; or
 - State that your complaint is being investigated and indicate when you can expect a response to be issued (normally a maximum of 20 working days from the date on which your letter was received). The investigation may require you to meet the principal and due notification will be given of such meetings. The principal may also talk to the parties relevant to the complaint.

Stage 4 – Writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management

If you believe that your complaint has not been dealt with in a satisfactory manner following the completion of stages 1-3, or if your complaint concerns the Principal, you should write to the Chairperson of the Board of Management, including, if applicable, copies of the original correspondence relating to Stage 3. The Chairperson will be responsible for referring your complaint to a Complaints Sub-committee of the Board of Management, which will investigate and respond to your complaint. The Complaints Sub-committee will have a minimum of 3 voting members.

- 4.1 Your written complaint should be as concise as possible and address specifically the issue or issues that are of concern to you. You will receive a written acknowledge of your letter within 10 working days. This will confirm that your letter has been received and:
 - Provide a response to the issue(s) you raised; or
 - State that your complaint is being investigated and indicate when you can expect a response to be issued (normally a maximum of 25 working days from the date on which your letter was received).



The investigation may require you to meet the Complaints Sub-committee of the Board of Management and due notification will be given of such meetings. The Complaints Sub-committee of the Board of Management may also talk to the parties relevant to the complaint.

The investigation team shall:

- a) Supply the staff member with a copy of the written complaint and a copy of all other evidence submitted by the parent/guardian/adult student including any relevant material concerned to the facilitation process undertaken by the Principal.
- b) Supply the parent/guardian/adult student with copy of all written documentation concerning the complaint supplied by the staff member and any relevant material concerned to the facilitation process undertaken by the Principal.
- c) Supply both parties with a copy of the terms of reference under which the investigation will be conducted including a reasonable “no later than” timeframe within which the parties to the complaint will be furnished with the official investigation report.
- d) Be responsible for keeping all parties apprised of developments appropriate to the ongoing investigation.
- e) Conduct the investigation in accordance with the specified terms of reference.

4.2 Following the conclusion of the investigation process, the investigation team will provide a written report for the Chairperson of the Board of Management. The investigation report shall advise under each element of the complaint as to whether the complaint is upheld or not upheld.

Stage 5 – Appeal Process- Appeals Sub-Committee of the Board of Management

- 5.1 If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the Board of Management Sub-committee you may write to the Chairperson of the Board of Management with 10 working days of receiving written feedback from the Complaints Sub-committee of the Board of Management, appealing their decision. Your written request should be as concise as possible and set out specifically the ground of appeal.
- 5.2 The Chairperson will be responsible for establishing an Appeals Sub-committee comprising of at least three members of the Board of Management who were not involved in the original investigation. You will be invited to a meeting of the Appeals Sub-committee where your appeal will be heard.
- 5.3 You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within ten working days. This will confirm that your letter has been received and provide you with the date and time of the meeting with the Appeals Sub-Committee at which you will have an opportunity to explain the ground for your appeal. This meeting will normally take place within 30 working days of your appeal request having been received.
- 5.4 Within 10 working days of this meeting, you should expect a final written response. This will indicate the Management findings, their recommendation and the reasons supporting their decisions.



The decision of the Appeals Sub-Committee is final. At the end of the process the Chairperson will inform you, in writing, that the Complaints Procedure has been exhausted and that the matter

Record Keeping

The Principal and Chairperson of the Board shall maintain a record of all correspondence, conversations and meetings concerning your complaint. These records shall be held confidentially in the school and shall be held confidentially in the school and shall be kept apart from pupil records. All such records will be destroyed three years after the date of the last correspondence on the issue.

Malicious or vexatious complaints

Where a Board of Management consider the actions of a parent/group of parents to constitute frivolous or vexatious behaviour, they will seek advice from the relevant Employing Authority in order to protect staff from further such actions.



Appendix 4: Pupil Complaints about staff

Complaints



Easy read document for Pupils at Enable Ireland Sandymount School



Complaints Book



Enable Ireland Sandymount School want you to tell us when you have a problem.

Complain



This book tells you how to make complaints.
Complaints are telling when you have a problem.

Rights



This book tells you about rights.
Rights are knowing what you should have.

Safe



This book tells you about personal safety.
Personal safety is knowing how to get help when you are afraid.

1. Complaints are telling when you have a problem



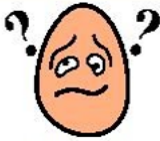
1.1 Complaints

Complain



A complaint is when you give out about something.

Problem



A complaint is when you have a problem.

Sad



Your problem might make you feel sad.

Worried



Your problem might make you feel worried.

2.1 Complaints

Angry



Your problem might make you feel angry.

Afraid



Your problem might make you feel afraid.

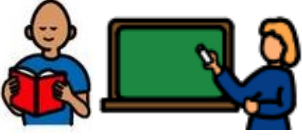
Bored



Your problem might make you feel bored.


3.1 Complaints

Staff




You can complain to any staff who work for Enable Ireland when you have a problem.

Listen




The staff will listen to your complaint.

Person in Charge



The staff will tell the principal about your complaint.

Meet



The principal will make a plan with you.
This plan will make things better.

4.1 Complaints

Time



Some problems take a long time to fix.

Some problems need lots of people to help.

People



The principal will talk to you about other people who need to know what is happening.

Complaints Officer



Jennifer is the complaints officer.

Listen



The Complaints Officer's job is to make sure staff and managers are listening to you.

3. Rights are knowing what you should have



2.1 Rights



It is Sandymount School's job to support you.

Home



It is Sandymount School's job to support you with where you live.

School



It is Sandymount School's job to support you at school.

Friends




It is Sandymount School's job to support you with friends.

3.1 Rights


Problem

You can complain when you have a problem.




Stop

You can complain about something you want to stop.




Wait

You can complain about something that didn't happen.



Choose

You can complain if you want something better to happen.



4.1 Rights

Bus



Some people have complained about transport.

Clothes



Some people have complained about clothes or school uniform.

Staff



Some people have complained about staff.

Privacy



Some people have complained about wanting privacy.

5.1 Rights

Outside



Some people have complained about not being able to go out when they want to.

Food



Some people have complained about food including your school lunch

Listen



Some people have complained about people not listening to them.

Choose



Some people have complained about not being able to choose.

Homework



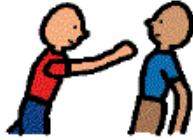
Some people have complained about their school homework.

5. Personal safety is knowing how to get help when you are afraid



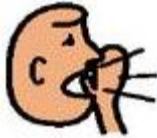
3.1 Personal Safety

Mean



You can complain when someone is mean to you.

Yell



You can complain when someone shouts at you.

I need help



You can complain when someone doesn't care for you.

Touch



Sometimes people touch you.

You can complain if you don't like it.

4.1 Personal Safety

Person



The person who is mean to you might be another pupil.

Staff



The person who is mean to you might be staff.

Family



The person who is mean to you might be family.

Friends



The person who is mean to you might be a friend.

5.1 Personal Safety

Neighbour



The person who is mean to you might be a neighbour.


Stranger



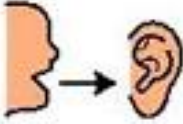
The person who is mean to you might be someone you don't know.

6.1 Personal Safety


Staff You can tell staff.

An illustration showing a male teacher on the left holding a red book, and a female student on the right pointing at a green chalkboard.

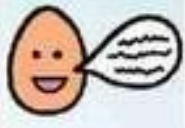
Respect You can tell someone you trust.

An illustration of a human head in profile with an arrow pointing from the mouth area towards an ear.

Listen Staff will listen.

An illustration of a human head in profile with a hand cupping the ear.

Tell It helps to tell everything that happened.

An illustration of a smiling face with a speech bubble coming out of its mouth.

7.1 Personal Safety

Write



The complaint is written down.

The complaint is sent to a group of people.

Meet



The boss or manager will make a plan with you.

This plan will keep you safe.

People



Other people will need to know what is happening.

Safe



The plan will make sure you are safe.

If you have a complaint

Principal



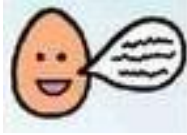
Jennifer will tell you who to contact if you're still not happy.

Contact



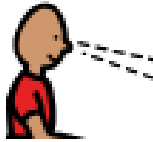
You can contact the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Tell




Jennifer will give them everything she knows about your complaint.


Look





They will look at your complaint again.

7. Conclusion – The End

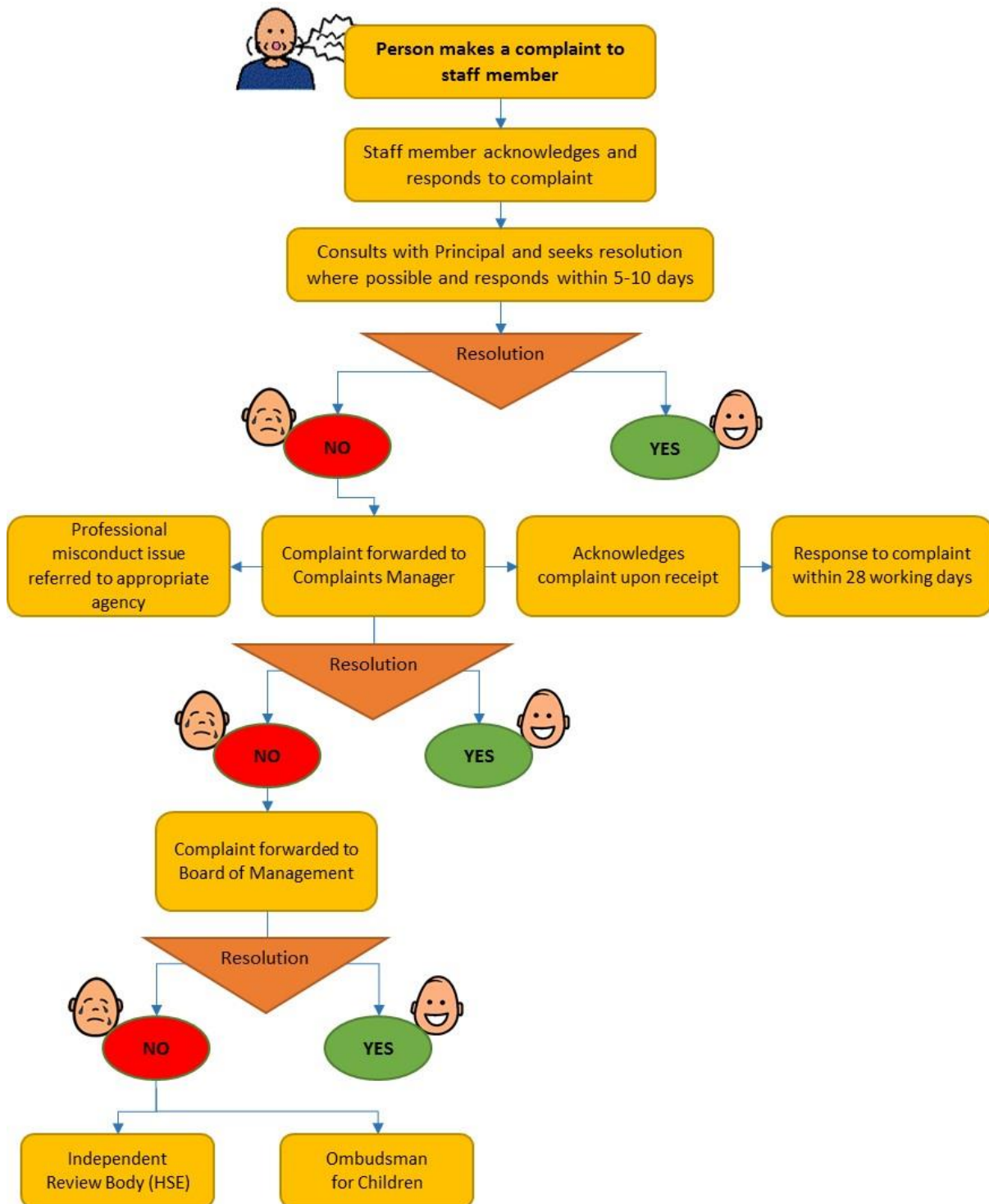
<p>Wrong</p> 	<p>Complaints tell Sandymount School when they get things wrong.</p>
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<p>Right</p> 	<p>Complaints tell Sandymount School how to make things right.</p>
--	--

	<p>Your complaints are important to Sandymount School.</p>
--	--

<p>Better</p> 	<p>Your complaints help to make things better for everyone.</p>
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Complaints Flowchart



APPENDIX 5: Term of reference for School Clinic meetings

Sandymount School and CDNT1 school team meetings

Purpose: to facilitate effective, clear communication and collaboration between staff in Sandymount School and clinical staff on CDNT1 school team.

Frequency: One meeting of 1 hour at the beginning of each term (3 per school year). Additional meetings can be arranged if requested either school staff or the school team

Quorum: For the meeting to go ahead, there must be a minimum of two people available to attend – one person from the CDNT school team, and one from the class.

Terms of reference:

1. To ensure a consistent approach to supporting IEP and IFSP goals for children in the class
2. Plan classroom based and universal supports for the coming term.
3. To build and maintain a positive working relationship between staff in the school and the school team. All staff will communicate professionally and positively throughout these meetings.
4. To give staff in the school an opportunity to feedback on processes and procedures in place by the CDNT school team.
5. A clinician from the school team has been identified as a key link for each class. They will schedule meetings, and bring feedback to the meeting from the other school team members and vice versa.

Attendance, Participation and Scheduling:

- At least two people from the CDNT school team – the key link for that class and one other person from the team.
- Meetings will be scheduled prior to 8am and from 2.40pm onwards during term time.
- Class teacher and all SNAs (if possible)
- One person from the nursing team
- Sandymount School principal

Review: These terms of reference will be reviewed at the beginning of each school year

