



Communication Policy

Introduction

Good communication is essential to the smooth running of an efficient school. In recognition of this fact, Trim Educate Together National School has in place a policy on school communication between the various individuals, groups and organisations connected with the school to provide information and guidelines on communication including formal and informal meetings.

Rationale

Trim Educate Together NS staff and Board of Management believe that

- > *Good communication between home and school is important because with positive and active partnership the child gets the best that primary education can offer.*
- > *Teachers can do a better job where they are supported by and working closely with Parent(s)/Guardian(s). We know from research that children do better, behave better and are happier at school where Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and teachers work closely together and when Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are able to give their children support at home.*

National Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Council document Working Effectively as a Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Association

Trim ETNS staff and Board of Management are committed to

- Developing close effective links with Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- Participating in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the central and fundamental role of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) as Primary Educators of their children
- Maintaining the ethos, values and distinctive character of Trim Educate Together National School
- Supporting and facilitating the Parent Teacher Association.
- Encouraging and facilitating the participation of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) in school policy and decision making.

In Trim ETNS, Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/guardians 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 and Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.
- In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be consulted by staff. It is essential that all Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are named on the enrolment form.

Positive Respectful Behaviour

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all of the stakeholders e.g. the staff, Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and the wider community: anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so. Adults in the school community have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children. We expect communication at all times between all stakeholders to be respectful and in line with our Ethos.

Keeping Children safe and healthy

- It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that may cause anxiety to your child and could affect his/her education. Your first point of contact should always be your child's class teacher.



- The school should at all times know who is collecting your child. The school secretary should have a list of people and their contact information, those whom have been authorised to collect your child. Should this change the onus is on you to inform the school secretary of the change. You can provide this information by email or by dropping in to the school office. Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone unauthorized/unknown to the school. If, at any time, Parent(s)/Guardian(s) alter the pickup arrangements for their child, the school should be given written authorization by the parent(s)/guardian(s) immediately. In an emergency situation, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must leave a message on the answering service or speak with the principal/teacher.

Facilitating open communication and consultation with Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Consultation throughout the year including:

- Open day for Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of new Junior Infants (in mid June each year)
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one annually
- Meetings with Parent(s)/Guardian(s) whose children have special needs

Written communication including

- Homework diary (1 st – 6 th class), to inform Parent(s)/Guardian(s) about assigned homework, to confirm that homework has been completed and to relay messages between Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and teachers
- Aladdin Connect
- Regular newsletters keep Parent(s)/Guardian(s) up-to-date with school events, holidays, decisions taken to change current policies and procedures, or to introduce new ones and other school concerns
- School report for each pupil at the end of each school year
- Text messages/emails for general reminders (e.g school closures, school events)
- Home/School Communication Journal/Diary for SEN children.

All communication sent from the school will be sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) email address/child's home address as given on the enrolment form, unless otherwise requested by Parent(s)/Guardian(s).

Other structures and processes including

- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of some school policies. The PA receive such policies in draft form and provide feedback to the Board of Management. The document once ratified by the Board is made available to all Parent(s)/Guardian(s) via the school website or in hard copy if requested. Any feedback arising is brought to the attention of the Board.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Sports Day and school concerts
- Involvement of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) in curricular areas when appropriate including Learn Together, Maths/Science Week, STEM etc.

Procedures for Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to initiate communication with the school

Communication relating to a child's learning, behaviour or classroom based queries should, in the first instance be directed towards the class teacher. If a parent(s)/guardian(s) wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the class teacher or school secretary to arrange a suitable time. If the issue remains unresolved after this initial communication, the Principal may become involved if necessary. In the unlikely event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has a complaint, Appendix 1 outlines the procedures to be followed.

Classes begin at 8:30am and finish at 1:10pm (Infants) and 2.10pm (1st -6th) and this time should not be interrupted. Meetings with the staff at drop off or collection times to discuss a child's concern/progress are discouraged on a number of grounds:

- Staff cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent.



- It is difficult to be discreet when so many children are standing close by .
- It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to staff.

On some rare occasions a parent may need to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. A member of staff 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. These exceptions should only include instances where there are concerns regarding a child's health, safety or welfare or when there is a family emergency. If Parent(s)/Guardian(s) wish to drop in lunch boxes etc during class time etc. this can be done through the secretary's office so that learning is not disrupted.

Online and Social Media Communication

Trim Educate Together National School has a website www.trimetns.ie and Facebook page. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are requested to visit these sites regularly to keep up to date on school matters. The school name or anything that identifies the school should not be used on online or on social media by members of the public including Parent(s)/Guardian(s) without express written permission from the Principal or Board of Management. Trim Educate Together National School will request removal of any online or social media sites that are not approved by the school.

Use of emails in TETNS

- Aladdin Noticeboard messages will be used by parents to communicate with teachers.
- Emails may be used by teachers to communicate with individual parent(s)/guardian(s) or class groups of parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 when general classroom management and organisational issues are to be decided.
- No complaint shall be received by email.
- No parent may 'cc' any other person other than the principal, when communicating with a teacher. The communication should remain strictly one-to-one.
- Class-group emails may not be used for personal communications.
- No child shall have access to this teacher/parent/guardian forum.
- Aladdin Noticeboard messages/Emails should be written in a respectful tone, that we expect of all communication within the Trim ETNS community.
- Class/group emails set up by the PA may not be used for advertising, complaints or for school matters concerning any child, parent/guardian or staff member. They shall only be used for general organisational and social purposes.
- No co-ordinated campaign is acceptable.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must expect a reasonable period for response, as normal working hours are to be respected.

Communication between Children

Children communicate with each other formally and informally throughout the school day. It is expected that communication between children is respectful and positive at all times and in line with our school Ethos and Golden Rules.



Communication with other Outside Agencies

There is regular two-way communication with other agencies such as the Health Board, Psychological Services, Social Services, Gardai, Community Employment Scheme and the County Council. Communication of this nature is usually by phone call and/or email.

Communication

This policy may be viewed on the school website.

A copy of the policy is communicated to all new parents.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 10/6/25.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Signed: David Earley
(Principal)

Date: 10/6/25

Review date: May 2027



Appendix 1

Complaints Procedure

Complaints are infrequent but the school would wish that these would be dealt with effectively and fairly. The following is the agreed complaints procedure to be followed in primary schools.

Revised Parental Complaints Procedure



Note:

- A copy of this procedure will be available for parents/legal guardians on the school website and/or on request from the school.
- This procedure comes into effect on the 1st of January 2024.
- Under the Education Act 1998, legally, all schools are managed by the school's Board of Management, on behalf of the school patron.

Purpose/Objective

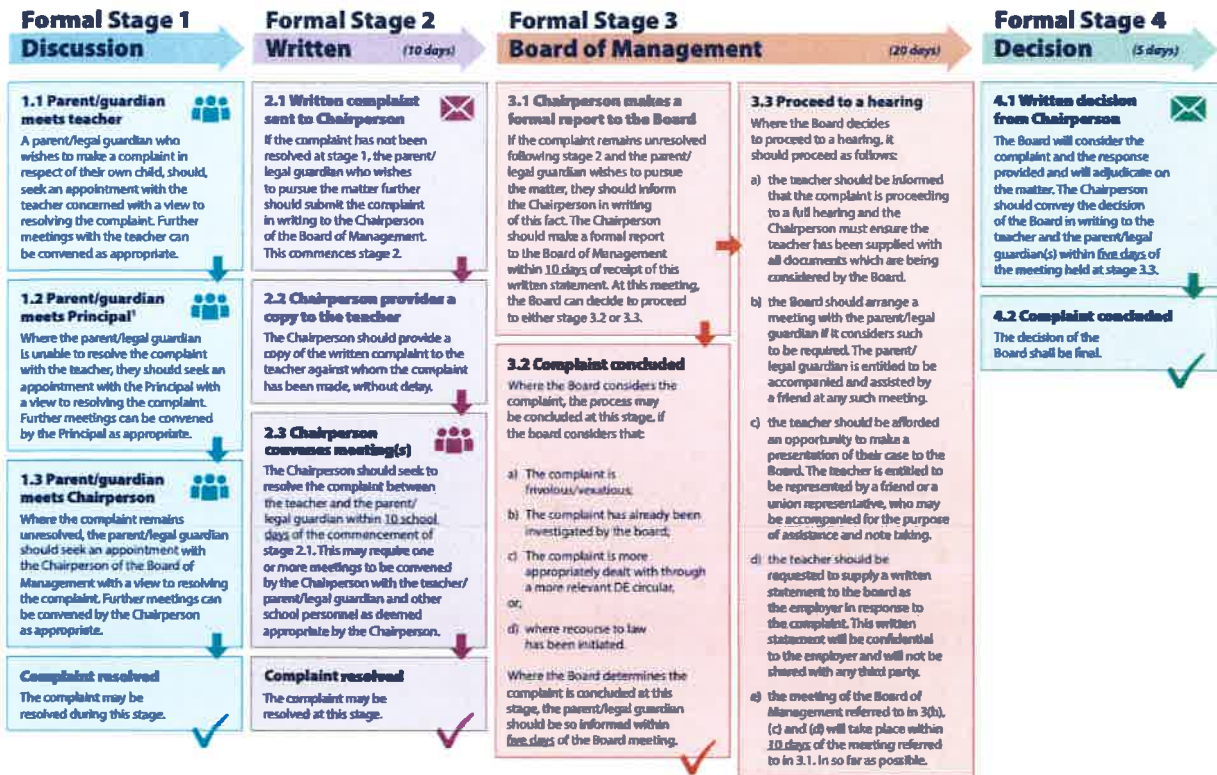
The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the management bodies of primary schools, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland, An Foras Pátrúnachta, the Muslim Primary Education Board, Educate Together and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education in 2023. It is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner.

It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time-to-time concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school. It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship between the parent and school can be preserved and respected. It is expected that all parties concerned will engage proactively.

Procedural Points

The procedure is a staged procedure where every effort is made to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage. In most cases, concerns will be dealt with either informally or formally at the earlier stages of the procedure. Where it has not been possible to agree a resolution at the earlier stages, the procedure does allow for the escalation of the matter to the Board of Management. This procedure sets out, in four stages, the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed. It is expected the parties will follow each stage in sequence.

- Where the term written correspondence is used, this refers specifically to a letter or email correspondence from a parent/legal guardian(s).
- Only complaints about a teacher which are written and signed by a parent/legal guardian, and which relate to their own child, will be investigated.
- Where a complaint raised by a parent/legal guardian is deemed by the employer/board of management to relate to the following, this procedure will not apply;
 - matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
 - frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
 - complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.
- In all circumstances, any form of written correspondence for the attention of the Board of Management must be supplied to the Chairperson of the board of management **only**. Any deviation from this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of this agreement.
- **Days in this procedure refer specifically to school days.** A school day is a day on which the school is in operation. Holiday periods, school closures and leaves of absences are not counted as school days for the purpose of this procedure.
- Group/collective complaints are not provided for and each parent/legal guardian raising a concern will be dealt with separately through this process.
- The procedure is a domestic forum and accordingly, neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any stage.
- Issues should be raised in a timely manner. It is in the best interests of the child that issues are raised to achieve early resolution at the earliest possible stage with the teacher, ideally while the pupil is in that teacher's class.



¹Where a complaint is received about a principal the above process commences at Stage 1.2.