

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Parents' views and experiences regarding the complaint procedure in primary, post primary and special schools



NPC

SUPPORTING PARENTS
SUPPORTING CHILDREN



+353 1 887 4034



info@npc.ie



www.npc.ie



13 Marlborough Court
Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 XP94

1

NPC Vision

The National Parents Council want to see an Ireland where every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential

NPC Mission

The National Parents Council exists to ensure that all parents are supported and empowered to become effective partners in their children's education. NPC will work to increase the capacity and capability of the education sector, to achieve true partnership and deliver better outcomes for all children and young people.

Values

NPC knows that when parents and schools work together, children do better. Therefore, NPC believes that in order to achieve this parents must feel:

Engaged: Parents must be actively engaged in the education of their children.

Supported: Parents' involvement in children's education must be supported by the attitudes, beliefs and practices of all members of the school and broader education community.

Partners: Parents must be viewed as partners in facilitating children's learning and be supported in this role by the school and broader education community.

Valued: Parents should be viewed as full partners in the decisions that affect their children and their family.

Welcomed: Parents should be welcome in the school, and their support and assistance sought as a valuable resource to support children's education in the school.

Connected: All communication and dialogue with parents must be regular, open, two-way and meaningful.

National Parents Council

Key Activities

SERVICE DELIVERY

NPC's services are developed to empower parents so that they can support their children in all aspects of education.

HELPLINE

The NPC helpline is a national confidential service for parents. The helpline staff listen and give information and support to parents to help them make the best possible decisions for and with their children.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The NPC Training and Development programme is a national programme of training, development and support for parents. The purpose is to empower parents to play an active part in their child's education at every level.

WEBSITE

The NPC's website www.npc.ie aims to provide parents with information regarding education at early years, primary and post primary levels.

ADVOCACY

NPC engages in awareness-raising activities and campaigning and lobbying at a national level on the objectives of its Strategic Plan.

REPRESENTING PARENTS

NPC represents the voice of parents through representation on external bodies and other mediums. NPC consults with parents and brings parents' views to bear on education policy.

BUILDING PARTICIPATION

NPC builds participation strategies and activities to ensure parents and children are an integral part of the work of NPC.

Introduction

This report by the National Parents Council (NPC) seeks to provide an in-depth analysis of the views and experiences of parents regarding the complaints procedures in primary and post primary schools. As an essential part of the education system, effective communication between parents and schools is crucial in fostering a positive learning environment for students. However, when concerns or issues arise, the way these complaints are addressed can significantly impact outcomes for the children involved, parental engagement and trust in the school community.

Through this report, the NPC aims to capture a broad spectrum of parental perspectives on the clarity, accessibility, and effectiveness of school complaints procedures. It will explore key themes such as the ease with which parents navigate the process, the responsiveness of schools to complaints, and the satisfaction levels of parents with the resolutions provided. By highlighting areas of strength and identifying opportunities for improvement, this report seeks to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on how to enhance the partnership between schools and parents, ensuring that the concerns of children and families are handled fairly, transparently, and with respect.

The findings presented here are based on the results of a survey, an online focus group and an in-person focus group event conducted by the National Parents Council in September, October and November 2024. The survey and invitation to both online and in-person focus groups were sent to all primary and post primary parents on the NPC mailing list who had consented to receive same. The survey was initially open for a short period of time from October 18th to October 20th and was open to parents again from October 29th to November 12th. During this time, a total of 1253 people completed the survey. The in-person focus group event took place on September 21st, with 17 attendees, and the online focus group took place on October 24th, with 42 participants. The views of the 1312 parents who took part in these focus groups and the survey will be outlined in this report.

Survey

The survey included questions where parents were invited to give their answers in free-text boxes. A summary of these answers will be presented in this report; however, a full transcript of all answers is available as follows:

Appendix A: If your experience was satisfactory, please tell us how the process went for you.

Appendix B: If your experience wasn't satisfactory, please tell us why.

Appendix C: To whom /where do you think parents or students should be able to appeal?

Focus Groups

To inform the focus group events, the National Parents Council and the Ombudsman for Children, Dr. Niall Muldoon gave presentations to parents. Dr Muldoon presented on child centred complaints handling. He took parents through the Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO) document on complaints handling, highlighting the reasons the ombudsman believes we should have a child centred approach and then went through the principles of best practice in this area. The NPC outlined the complaints procedure in schools, shared the results of the initial snap survey (open from 18th-20th October), provided an overview of child-friendly complaints procedures from two UK schools, as well as examples of other areas of practice from various jurisdictions for consideration. Below is a summary of each presentation.

1. Complaints Procedure Overview

The current complaints procedures for primary and post primary schools were presented to parents.

2. Survey on Complaints Procedure

Findings from the initial survey (October 18th – 20th) were presented to parents.

3. Dr. Niall Muldoon, Ombudsman for Children

- Overview of the role of the Ombudsman for Children.
- Challenges of the current complaints procedures in Ireland.
- Importance of a child centred approach to complaint handling.
- Principles of best practice for a child centred approach.

4. Child-Friendly Complaints Policy

UK Examples:

- Policies outline how a child as well as a parent is encouraged and supported to make a complaint.

Key Features:

- A child (with the support of their parent where needed) can make their own complaint.
- Clear stages (teacher, headteacher, governing board).
- Transparency, transcripts of interviews and focus on safety.

5. Independent Oversight in International Systems

Countries Examined: Canada, Finland, Sweden, Netherlands.

Examples of Independent Bodies:

- Canada: National Student Ombudsman to protect rights and investigate complaints.
- Sweden: Schools Inspectorate monitors systemic issues and investigates bullying.
- Netherlands: Independent committees resolve disputes across various categories.
- Finland: Regional State Administrative Agencies ensure legal compliance and mediation.

6. Core Principles for Independent Complaints Bodies

Features:

- Independence and impartiality.
- Confidentiality and protection from reprisal.
- Preventative, child-centred approaches.
- Collaboration with educational bodies and timelines for handling complaints.

Throughout this presentation, parents who participated in both the online and in-person focus groups were asked a series of questions, so that the National Parents Council could better understand their views on, and experiences of, the complaints procedure in schools. The questions can be grouped into the following themes:

- Positive Experiences with the Complaints Procedure
- Challenges with the Complaints Procedure
- A Child-Centred Approach to the Complaints Procedure

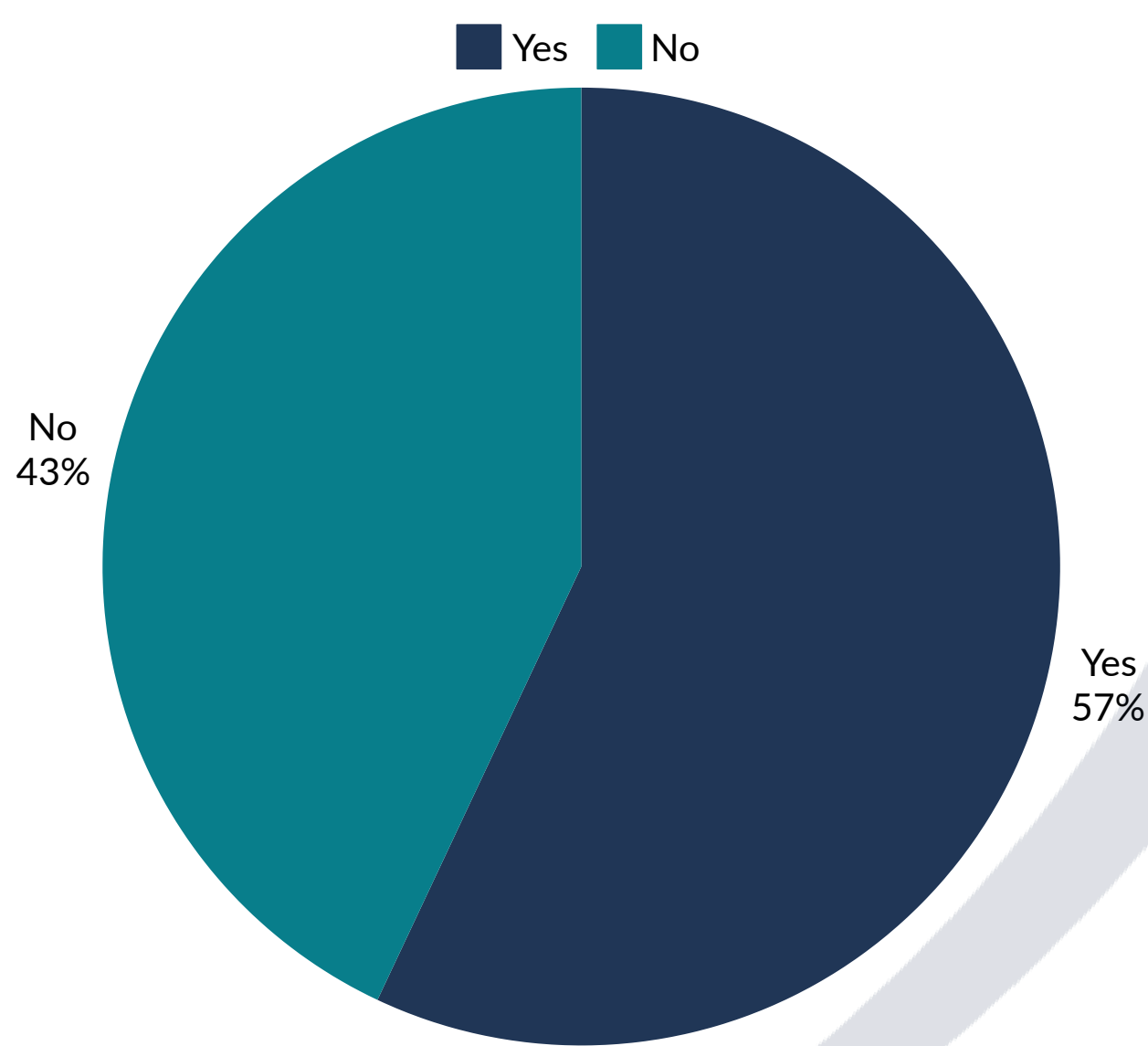
1. Do you think a child-centred approach to complaints should be used in schools in Ireland? If yes, why?
2. What did you think of the UK examples? Do you think an approach like this could work in schools in Ireland?
3. What do you think would be the challenges in implementing an approach that is child-centred and child friendly?

- Independent Oversight

1. What struck you about the inclusion of an independent body in the other countries we discussed?
2. Can you put the principles in order of importance? Which ones would you leave out?
3. What challenges would you see in including these principles in an independent agency that would be responsible for dealing with complaints?

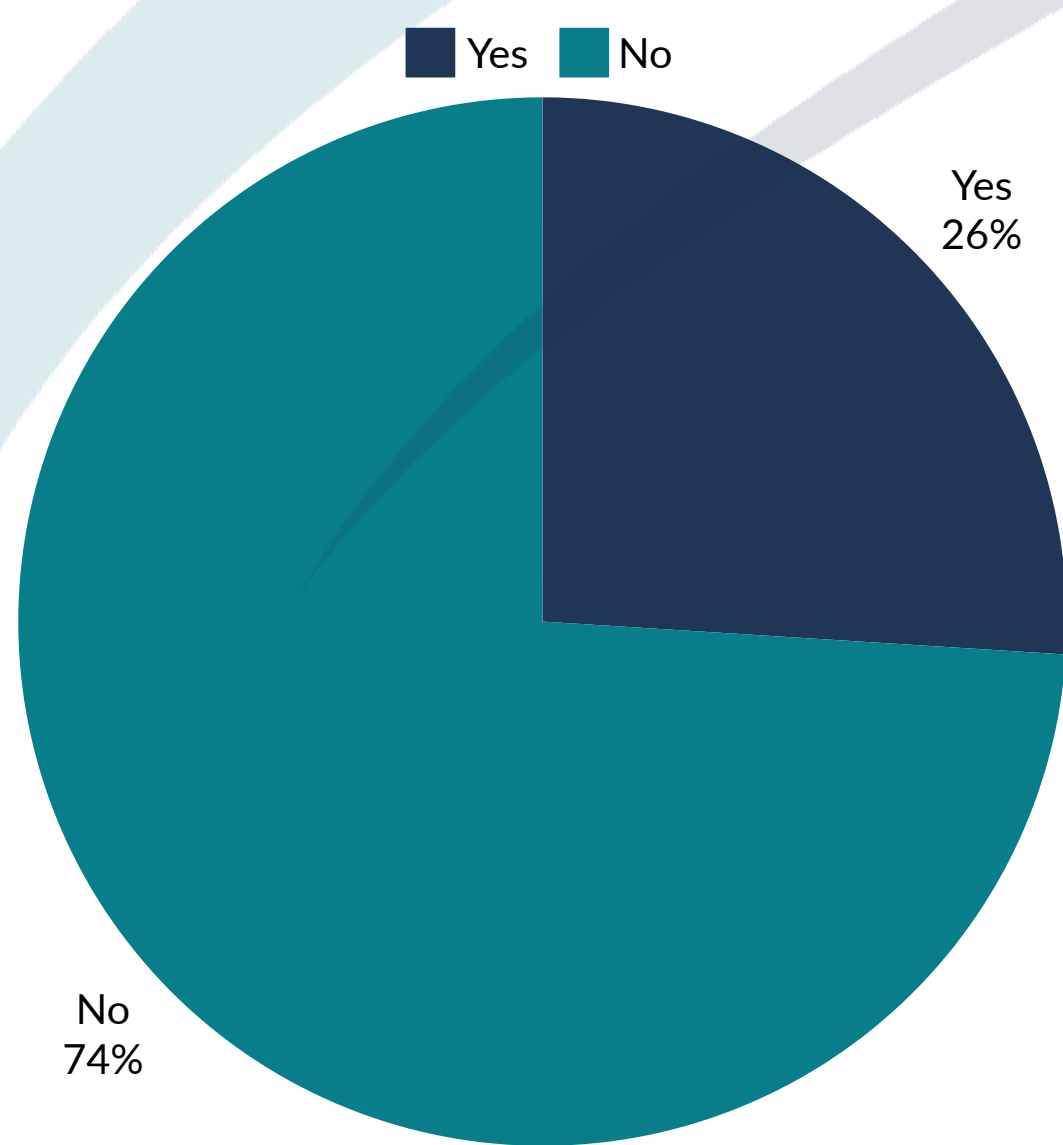
Findings

Parents who completed the survey were first asked if they are aware that there is a complaints procedure in their child’s school. 57% of parents were aware of a complaints procedure in their school, with the remaining 43% answering “no” (see figure1).



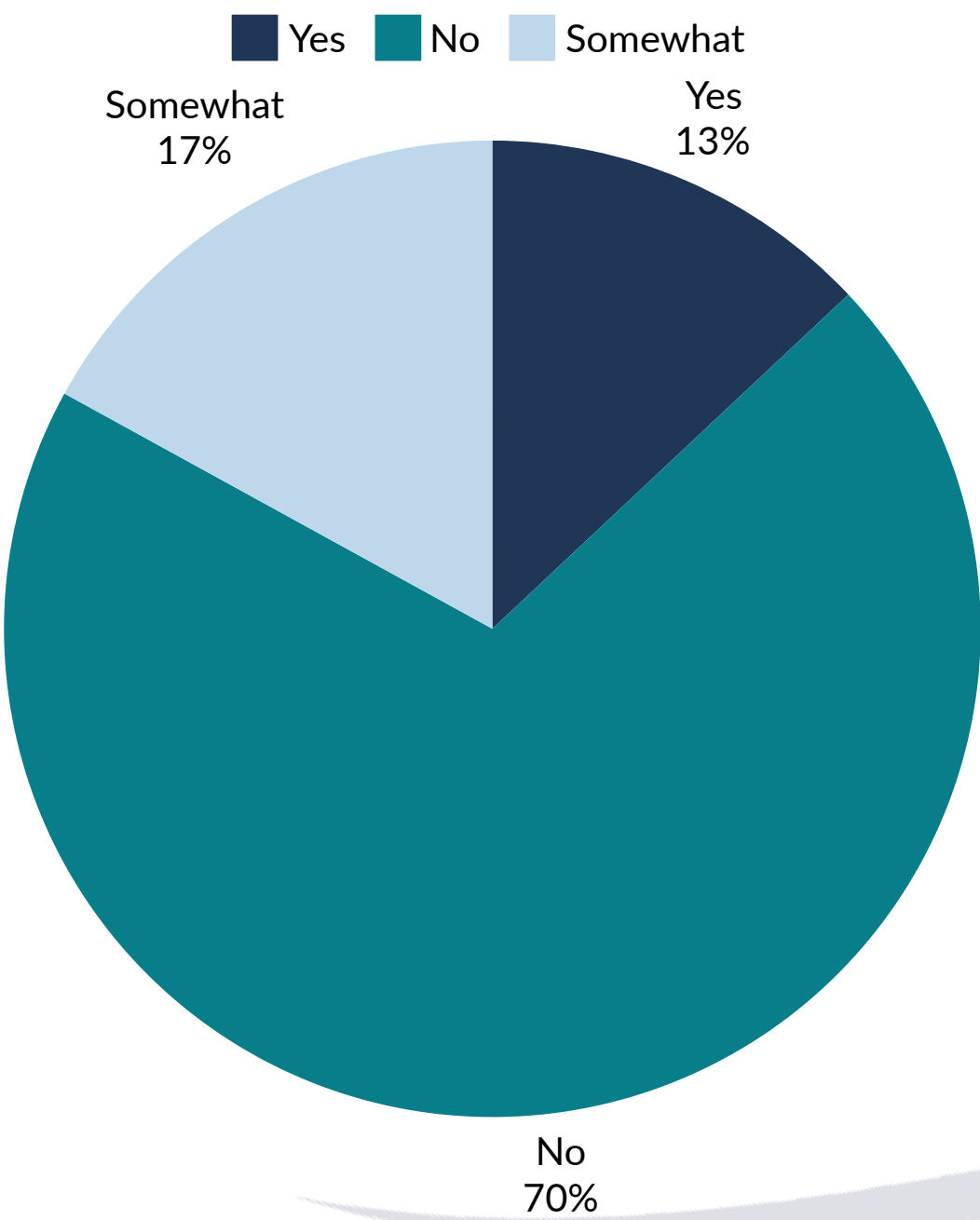
(Figure 1)
Are you aware that there is a complaints procedure in your child's school?

When asked if they had used the complaints procedure, 1-in-4 parents who participated in this survey (26%) had used the complaints procedure in their child’s school, while 74% had not (see figure 2).



(Figure 2)
Have you used the complaints procedure?

All parents who stated that they had used the complaints procedure (183) were then asked if their experience was satisfactory. Of these 183 parents, 70% reported that their experience was not satisfactory. 17% of parents said their experience was “somewhat” satisfactory, while only 13% reported being satisfied with their experience (see figure 3).



(Figure 3)
Was your experience satisfactory?

Positive Experiences with the Complaints Procedure

In both the survey and the focus groups, parents were invited to share positive experiences with the complaints procedure. Across both forms of focus group, the responses from parents about their positive experiences with the complaints procedure reveal a range of outcomes. Although there are instances of success and satisfaction, these positive experiences are often tied to informal mechanisms, the competence of individual staff members, or the parents' knowledge of the system. The general perception seems mixed, with the formal procedure itself being less frequently seen as inherently effective. A full transcript of all comments can be found in appendix A but some common themes across their experiences were:

Success in Informal Resolutions

- Parents often experienced positive outcomes when complaints were handled informally.
- Parents consistently reported that initiating informal contact with class teachers or school officials was often straightforward. Direct communication, like phone calls or emails, with teachers or Principals which led to responsive action, solutions and swift resolutions was praised.

Responsive Action

- In positive accounts, parents reported that school staff, including teachers, year heads, and Principals, responded quickly and took the issues seriously. This responsiveness is a crucial point in the parents' satisfaction.
- Many responses indicated that school staff followed up with both the parents and the affected children to ensure that the situation was monitored and further concerns addressed.
- Some parents noted that they did not have to wait long for responses or meetings, and cases were dealt with promptly when raised.

Collaborative Problem-Solving

- Positive feedback was shared regarding teachers who were empathetic, offered advice, actively worked toward a solution, followed up, and worked collaboratively with parents to find solutions and to support children both in and outside the school environment.

Clear Guidelines and Process

- The structured format of the complaints procedure and defined steps was acknowledged as a helpful aspect by some parents.
- The staged nature of the process allowed parents to escalate complaints if needed, including moving to external bodies like the Teaching Council. For some parents, however, this was also highlighted as a negative, as they reported feeling stuck by not being able to escalate a complaint until it had cleared all the set levels first.
- A small number of parents highlighted the helpfulness of set timeframes for response etc. within certain types of schools (e.g., ETB schools).

Empowerment for Knowledgeable Parents

- Parents who were familiar with the complaints procedure and escalation process felt empowered to navigate it successfully, though they acknowledged it required effort.
- While noted as part of positive experiences, this experience also highlights an unacceptable inequity in the process - parents who are aware of the process and have the capacity to follow it through might have satisfactory outcomes, while parents who are not familiar with the process, or do not have the capacity to engage fully with it, may not.

Challenges with the Complaints Procedure

Parents were also invited to share any challenges they had experienced with the complaints procedure, 70% of parents who indicated they had utilised the complaints procedure reported having a negative experience with it. While parents who participated in the focus group events did highlight positive experiences with aspects of the complaints procedure, the majority also described challenging experiences with the complaints procedure. These experiences highlighted systemic issues, power imbalances, and a lack of support, as well as a pervasive sentiment of frustration and dissatisfaction among parents concerning schools' handling of complaints. (A full transcript of all comments can be found in appendix B).

Power Dynamics and Lack of Impartiality

- The process was criticised for not being independent of the school, with complaints often addressed by the Principal, even when the Principal was the subject of the complaint.
- Parents raised concerns that the Board of Management (BOM) favoured the Principal (especially as the Principal sits on the BOM), which they felt hindered an impartial review of complaints.
- The issue of complaining about the Principal to the Principal was highlighted by several parents. They felt that it would be very difficult for a principal to remain impartial when they were the subject of the complaint.
- Parents felt they had to navigate an uneven playing field, with schools having access to extensive support (e.g. colleagues, unions, legal resources) while parents reported feeling isolated and unsupported.

Cultural and Systemic Issues

- Governance concerns were raised, including conflicts of interest within BOMs.
- Some parents reported that the BOM in their child's school dismissed, downplayed, failed to acknowledge or act on some complaints, creating a sense of futility.

Reprisal

- Some parents reported being treated as "the problem" rather than partners in resolving issues after they raised a complaint. It is noteworthy that this is in direct opposition to the "collaborative problem solving" that was highlighted by parents who had a positive experience with the complaints process.
- Some parents also reported feeling bullied, demeaned, or ostracised after raising complaints. Some were even removed from parent associations or faced retaliatory actions.

- One parent mentioned her job being threatened after voicing concerns, and another described being suspended from school communication after filing a complaint.

Structural and Procedural Barriers

- Some parents noted that complaints often stagnated at the Principal level, with limited escalation options, or that the procedure started and ended with the same individuals.
- A small number of parents also highlighted their frustration at only receiving an oral response, when they must put their complaint in writing, leading to a perceived lack of fairness, accountability and transparency.
- Schools were criticised for not keeping full records of complaints, giving the process a “tick-box” feel, rather than fostering genuine resolution.

Ineffective, Prolonged and Stressful Experiences

- Parents noted that the procedure for filing complaints is overly bureaucratic, with some suggesting that the complexity discourages parents from pursuing their complaints fully, or delays resolutions. Of particular note was that all complaints have to begin with the class teacher, even if it is not relevant to them, and that parents can be told they have to “go back to the start” of the process if it is deemed they have not followed the necessary steps.
- Many parents found the process overwhelming and drawn out, with significant emotional and mental strain.
- Parents reported that complaints were left unresolved for extended periods, causing frustration and further damage to the relationship between parents and schools. In at least 18 instances parents reported moving their child(ren) to different schools due to the stress and negative treatment they experienced after making complaints, or the complaint not being adequately dealt with.
- At least two parents described instances where the “Principal agreed not to let the teacher teach our children again if we withdrew the complaint”.

Impact on Children

- A large number of parents reported that the handling of complaints often negatively affected their children, both directly (e.g., unresolved bullying) and indirectly (e.g., strained relationships between parents and schools).
- Parents of children with special needs felt that complaints involving their children revealed instances of neglect or insufficient support, which intensified the difficulties these children and families experienced.

Burden of Proof

- Some parents stated they felt compelled to gather substantial evidence to support their complaints. This requirement, coupled with the absence of independent oversight, left parents feeling as though they were in a “battle” with their child’s school while also feeling disempowered and unheard.

Lack of Follow-Up

- Many parents reported feeling left in the dark about the progress of their complaints or the steps being taken to address issues, such as not being informed about Board of Management (BOM) meetings, or decisions.

Inadequate Knowledge/Training

- Issues relating to a lack of understanding of special education needs, particularly regarding Autism and intellectual disabilities, were raised by some parents. Parents felt that teachers' lack of knowledge impacts the effectiveness of handling complaints related to these students.
- Some parents noted that Principals’ areas of expertise are in teaching and learning and they may not have received training in people management or conflict resolution, highlighting a need for training in non-teaching competencies.

Presentation from the Ombudsman for Children (Summary)

- Parents at both focus group events heard a presentation from Dr. Niall Muldoon on child-centred complaints handling. He took parents through the Ombudsman for Children’s Office (OCO) document on complaints handling, highlighting the reasons the ombudsman believes we should have a child-centred approach and then went through the principles of best practice in this area.
- The Ombudsman pointed to a lack of oversight of individual schools when it comes to complaint handling. He pointed out that all 4,000 schools in our system have autonomy and this makes it very difficult to ensure there is a consistent approach.
- The ombudsman emphasised the importance of a child-centred approach to complaint handling and linked this to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which Ireland ratified in 1992. He pointed out that this requires the establishment of independent, accessible, safe, and effective child-centred complaints’ mechanisms for children and their representatives.

A Child-Centred Approach to the Complaints Procedure

NPC presented a model of a child-centred complaints procedure which is being followed in two UK schools. The key features of this model are that they use child-friendly language and processes and the child as well as their parents can make a complaint. The parents can be a support to the child if needed. The focus is on the child feeling happy and safe in school and the schools welcome feedback from children to improve the experiences of all.

Parents at both focus group events were given the opportunity to explore what a child-centred complaints procedure might be like in Irish schools. While the principle of a child-centred approach was supported, parents felt that implementing a child-centred complaints process in Irish schools would present numerous challenges, given the structural, cultural, and systemic issues identified by parents and stakeholders. The key positives identified were that the voice of the child was of paramount importance and parents felt the examples of the processes described in the UK would result in better outcomes for children.

Key challenges parents identified with adopting a child-centred complaints' process (as in the UK examples) in schools in Ireland were grounded in the parents' own experience of using the complaints procedures in Ireland and feelings of protectiveness towards their children.

The main points expressed can be grouped under these headings:

Practical Feasibility

- Many parents expressed scepticism about how such a system could be implemented effectively within the current framework. They doubted whether the existing systems and lack of resources in schools could realistically support a child-centred process where children were the ones making the complaint.

Risk of Re-traumatisation

- Engaging children directly in complaints processes raised the concern of many parents about re-traumatisation, particularly for vulnerable children, including those with special needs or non-verbal abilities.
- Parents also expressed the view that while children should be central to the process, they should not bear the responsibility of navigating it.

Challenges in Governance and Implementation

- Irish schools operate under a patronage system with each school having significant autonomy to implement processes and procedures as they see fit. This limits accountability and creates obstacles to the adoption of unified, consistent or transparent procedures.
- A major difference noted by parents was that UK schools have clearer accountability structures, whereas in Ireland, Principals and teachers involved in complaints can often remain influential in their resolution. Parents questioned the objectivity of the process in such a system.
- Some parents questioned the expertise, impartiality and accountability of BOMs in handling complaints involving children.
- Some parents reported frustration that the Ombudsman for Children only has powers to investigate the procedure followed when dealing with a complaint, not the fairness of the outcome of the complaint.

Lack of Inclusivity

- Non-verbal children, children with disabilities, or those fearful of authority figures might find it challenging to participate meaningfully.

Power Imbalance

- A keen sense of imbalance between the voices of children and the authority of educators was highlighted.
- A small number of parents also noted that teachers and SNAs may hesitate to support a child's complaint due to fear of reprisal or professional consequences.

Resistance to Change and Structural Barriers

- Most parents noted that trust in the system would be essential to implementing a child-centred complaints procedure. They noted that trust takes time to build and is particularly challenging in a school system where governance is often insular and hierarchical.
- Many parents believed that BOMs, teacher unions and school patrons may resist such changes.
- In small communities, parents highlighted concerns about visibility and potential backlash making it hard for them to lodge complaints. This is particularly difficult for parents when members of the BOM live in their community.
- Some parents felt that being seen as a good school without problems, was seen as important to the BOM and therefore this may negatively impact their effectiveness when dealing with complaints.

Parents' suggestions for more child-centred complaints procedures

Parents brought forward many suggestions for how a more child-centred process could be implemented in Ireland. Their suggestions included:

Early Intervention and Prevention

- Focus on communication and early resolution mechanisms to address minor issues before they escalate.
- Encourage schools to adopt a whole-school child-centred approach, emphasising care, empathy, and a supportive environment.

Establish Independent Oversight

- Establish an independent complaints body with enforcement powers to oversee and manage all grievances beyond a certain threshold.
- Require BOMs to include external members who are not connected to the school or community to ensure impartiality.
- Implement policies requiring the recusal of individuals directly involved in complaints.

Transparency, Monitoring and Accountability

- Record all complaints systematically.
- Implement mandatory recording and reporting of all complaints to a central body.
- Publish annual reviews of complaints and resolutions to monitor trends and ensure accountability.

Parental Engagement and Parental Advocacy Support

- Educate communities about the importance of a child-centred approach to reduce stigma around complaints.
- Actively involve parents in designing and monitoring the complaints process.
- Create a parent support unit with the authority to provide guidance to families, and to be able to intervene and influence change in response to complaints.

Training and Professional Development

- Provide specialised training for teachers and Principals in managing complaints, conflict resolution, and fostering a child-centred culture.

Cultural Change

- Promote a culture where complaints are viewed as opportunities for growth and improvement rather than threats.
- Use positive language to encourage participation and reduce defensiveness from teachers and schools.

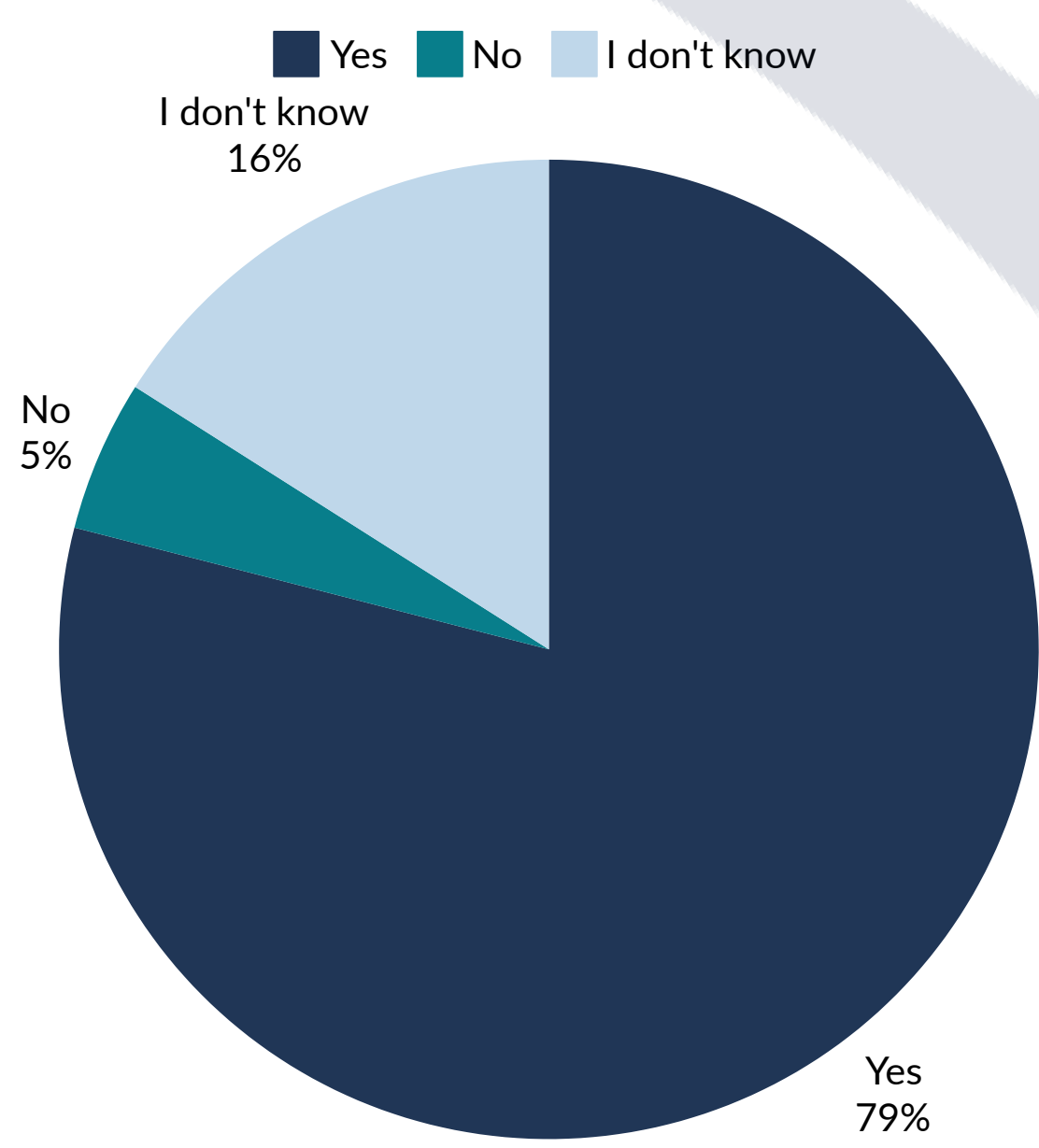
Children making complaints

- Notwithstanding the current situation where there are concerns about the system's readiness for a child centred complaints procedure, this was seen by parents as a very positive idea which in the right circumstances would result in favourable outcomes for all.

Appeals and Independent Oversight

Parents’ opinions on an independent complaints’ body were also assessed through the survey and focus group events. Parents who participated in the survey were asked “If a parent or student is not happy with the outcome of a complaint, do you believe that they should be able to appeal the decision externally?”

The majority of parents (79%) who answered this question believed that parents or students should be able to appeal the decision of a complaint externally, if they are unhappy with the outcome. 16% of parents were unsure, while only 5% said “no” (see figure 4).



(Figure 4)

If a parent or student is not happy with the outcome of a complaint, do you believe that they should be able to appeal the decision externally?

Parents were also given the opportunity to share to whom/where they thought parents or students should be able to appeal the outcome of a complaint. Overall, parents advocated for a clear and accessible process that includes multiple points of appeal to ensure fair treatment for both students and their families. A full transcript of responses can be found at appendix C but common responses included:

Department of Education

- The most common response was that parents or students should be able to appeal unsatisfactory handling of complaints or unresolved issues to the Department of Education.

Independent Body

- A significant number of parents advocated for a neutral, independent body unconnected to the school or the Department of Education. Suggestions include entities like an Ombudsman or a new impartial regulatory board, or Tusla.

Board of Management (BOM)

- Many parents cited the school's BOM as the first or second step in the process, though there was scepticism about its impartiality due to connections with the school staff, including the Principal.

Escalated Appeal Process

- Multiple suggestions outline a tiered approach: starting with the teacher, moving to the Principal, then the BOM, and finally escalating to higher authorities like the Department of Education or an independent national body.

Learnings from other jurisdictions

Parents who participated in the focus group events were presented with examples of independent bodies in other countries' complaints procedures; key positives that parents highlighted were:

Genuine Independence and Neutrality

In countries like Canada, Sweden and the Netherlands, independent bodies operate entirely separately from schools, boards, or local authorities, ensuring a fair and unbiased process.

- This level of independence builds trust and credibility among all stakeholders - students, parents, teachers, and staff.
- The existence of a national complaints body, covering all schools, avoids fragmentation and ensures consistency.
- Independent governance, where individuals directly involved in the complaint must recuse themselves.

Transparency and Accountability

Features like complaints tracking systems, public reporting, and data collection promote transparency and allow patterns of behaviour or systemic issues to be identified and addressed. Such systems ensure that the process is not simply a tick-box exercise, but meaningful and future-focused.

Protection for All Parties

- The independent body provides protections for children, ensuring their complaints are heard without fear of reprisal.
- Teachers and school staff are also safeguarded from nuisance complaints or unfair targeting, reinforcing a fair workplace environment.
- Restorative practices ensure a focus on conflict resolution and de-escalation, rather than on punitive measures.

Prevention and Resolution-Oriented Approaches

- Independent bodies often emphasise early intervention and mediation, catching issues before they escalate.
- Their role is often framed as preventative, helping to avoid the need for litigation or highly contentious conflicts.

Clarity and Accessibility

- Clear guidelines, structured timelines, and standardised procedures ensure that everyone knows their rights and the steps involved in the complaints process.
- In the Netherlands, multiple tiers (e.g. mediators and complaints' officers) provide avenues for both minor and serious complaints, ensuring accessibility for all.
- Provisions for guidance and aftercare (e.g. for psychological support) show a holistic commitment to resolving the impact of complaints.

Inclusivity and Data-Informed Policy

- In many countries, independent bodies handle complaints from the entire school community, not just parents, recognising the voices of students, teachers, and other staff.
- Data collected through these systems informs policy decisions, leading to continuous improvement in school governance and culture.

When considering the implementation of an independent complaints body in Ireland, focus group event participants were asked to put a list of principles in order of importance. They were also asked which (if any) they would leave out.

Taking all answers into account, the top 5 principles could be ordered as follows:

1. Independent oversight with authority
2. Protection against reprisal for students, parents and teachers
3. Child-centred and rights-focused approach
4. Prevention rather than reaction
5. Transparency and accountability

The remainder of principles ranked: Confidentiality, Expertise in Dispute Resolution, Detailed Timelines and Guidelines, Independent Mediation (as Early Intervention), Global Reporting and Complaint Tracking, Collaboration with Educational Bodies, and Aftercare for Children

Principles that parents felt could potentially be omitted (or amalgamated with others) were:

1. Exit Interviews
2. Scoring system for complaints
3. Detailed definition of collaboration

When considering including these principles in an independent agency tasked with handling complaints in the Irish education system, parents identified the following key challenges:

Cultural Challenges

- The existing culture in a number of schools has led to an environment where resistance to accountability has become the norm.
- Patron bodies in schools have autonomy over the implementation and outcome of all complaints and this may lead to a conflict of interest.
- A societal tendency to accept issues and avoid confrontation may limit demand for reform.

Institutional Resistance

- Some parents felt that teacher unions and patrons might resist due to concerns about loss of autonomy.
- Some parents also suggested that schools may be wary of external oversight and may feel targeted by an independent agency.

Structural Barriers

- The autonomy of individual schools complicates enforcement and standardisation.
- Legislative change would be essential for the agency's authority.
- Lack of financial support from the government could hinder implementation.

Practical Concerns

- Without sufficient resources, the agency could become overwhelmed.
- Tailored systems are needed for children with additional needs who cannot advocate for themselves.
- Hiring qualified, diverse staff with expertise outside education will be critical.

Implementation and Accountability

- Clear consequences for mismanagement or negligence are required, as in other sectors.
- Systems must safeguard parents and students from reprisal when raising complaints.
- Transparent processes and regular reviews are needed to build trust and ensure effectiveness.

Conclusion

This report highlights the experiences of parents navigating the complaints procedures in Irish schools, presenting a complex picture of some positive practices, pervasive challenges, and opportunities for meaningful reform. The findings emphasise the need for a system that is accessible, transparent, and child-centred, balancing the voices of parents, children, and schools.

By addressing systemic challenges, through fairness, transparency, and collaboration, the Irish education system can empower all stakeholders - parents, children, and schools; build trust, foster inclusivity, and further safeguard the wellbeing of its most important stakeholders: the children

The National Parents Council based on this submission and the lack of progress made on the Parent and Student Charter calls on the Department of Education to begin the implementation of Section 28 of the Education Act 1998, immediately as a matter of priority. NPC has set out in this submission the areas that it believes are central to a new Complaints procedure for all schools. We look forward to engaging with Department officials at your earliest convenience to discuss our request.

Complaints Procedure in Schools

Appendix 1 Open questions

4.If your experience was satisfactory, please tell us how the process went for you

1. I contacted my child's class teacher and outlined the issue. She replied with some background and said she'd look into the matter further. The following day she responded with a suggestion that suited her, me and my child. I was very happy with the entire process.
2. My child was hit in the stomach by another child. So I made an appointment with her class teacher and told him about the accident. He assured me to take the matter further. I know the school had a meeting with the parents of the other child. My child has never complained about the other child again.
3. Issue dealt with in a calm way and resolved to everyone's satisfaction
4. Contacted year head with a concern. Got response from year head and school counselor with suggested solution. They agreed a plan with me and then spoke to my child to explain and make sure they were ok with it.
5. Didn't have to wait long to speak or meet with teacher
6. I contacted school about students bullying other student and it was dealt within few days by the Year Head.
7. Made complaint. Parents met year head and principal. Year head met students. Policy followed. Complaint resolved.
8. I contacted my child's teacher directly and the problem was resolved.
9. It was done by phone call and was sorted fairly quickly.
10. I email to the school office and speak to the Principal, then they followed up my case.
11. I was satisfied with how the complaint was handled. The principal rang me to discuss it and then spoke to the parties concerned.
12. The policy is good as it gives clear guidelines on how to process an issue or complaint.
13. The teacher involved had good advice and followed through.
14. The teacher recognised the issue and took the time to try to alleviate it at school for the benefit of our child. She gave us suggestions how we could also help outside school and followed up highlighting further measures that were being taken at school

5.If your experience wasn't satisfactory, please tell us why.

1. Felt it was brushed off to just be done
2. I have followed the procedure on my side and got as far as having my letter ready for the board. The school aren't following their side correctly however once the Principal knew we were very serious about proceeding ahead with our bullying complaint, she sorted the issue out finally.
3. It was passed to the priest who deemed there was no need to progress. They didn't want it on their records in case of inspection.

4. There is procedure as such and when a complaint was address to BOM a reply came from the parish priest directly - never discussed at BOM level
5. Was not impartial or independent
6. No follow up after meeting
7. They bring you round in circles. The board is in the pocket of the principal. Even taking it to the National board is useless. They deliberately tie you up in bureaucracy. I've heard similar scenarios from multiple parents. Not one I have spoken to has had a positive experience.
8. We got a simple no from the principal and that was jt
9. The matter was not followed up sufficient enough and it is still ongoing
10. Our school was undergoing huge staff and management changes, with nobody able to make the needed changes.
11. One of my children is in special education, there isn't much a complaints procedure can do when the teachers lack knowledge in Autism and intellectual disability
12. The local priest was on the Board of Management and he took sides with the Principal as always was the case in all parents complaints to the school because the complaint was about the Principal
13. My request for a meeting with the BOM was not met. Emails back and forth seemed to be lost in translation
14. Issues not been brought to the board of mgt and therefore principal getting away with her responds
The board of mgt don't have an email address so all complaints must be sent by letter must be send into the school for their attention but she can access the complain before the board is made aware of them and if she feels her respond is correct she does not inform the board of these complaints as she states it been dealt it adequately also she has time to come up with a respond/plan to deal with issue before when ever the next meeting of bom is been held, as parents we are not informed when these meeting are been held monthly / every 2 months ???
15. Would be told on phone one story what was happening in a bullying case and then when it came to parents meeting each other principle would have a different story and when asked to put what all teachers saw in the bullying case and telephone conversations with school in writing they refused.
16. The principal denied there was an issue and didn't recognise that there was an issue at all.
17. It took forever for anything to be done about it and numerous contacts by me to the school. There was no follow up afterwards and nothing was resolved.
18. If there is a complaint about the administration/administrator, that complaint gets sent to those same people/that same person.
19. The school did not provide a specific response. Too much power sits in the management of the school which is religious run, and only a minority of members are parents, and none are chosen by the parent population.
20. I didn't feel there was much follow up with the other parent by the principal. They weren't held accountable enough for their actions. For anyone's sake I felt I was best to just move forward but didn't feel I was taken serious.
21. The principal wouldn't acknowledge there was an issue
22. The school was obstructive and attempted to delay the procedure
23. My complaint wasn't dealt with
24. I felt that there wasn't enough involvement as a parent. Felt kept in the dark about how the complaint was being dealt with and ho conclusions were reached. S

25. Complaint was related to ongoing bullying that our child was being exposed to. Process included 3 in person meetings with principal, who did not deny that child experienced reported bullying but issue is still ongoing without any feedback on steps taken.
26. Teacher had left so couldn't be followed through.
27. The complaint regarding bullying was advised by school as minor as "they're only kids and they're only saying so, not need to worry about"
28. The principal apologized for what happened, tried to conceal what actually happened and then, in writing, refused to do anything else (including putting in measures to prevent it happening again) and told us to go to the board of management.
29. I found that the principal used the policy to her own benefit and avoided tackling the problems
30. Even though I was listened to and was told that things would change they did not. I think it was just a paper filling exercise.
31. Principal and chairman of bom took no notice of the complaint procedure and ignored the complaint and refused to respond.
32. Complaining to the person the complaint is about and who is in charge of your kids school is ridiculous . And it goes no further it's never sent on to the board simple ignored.
33. Our complaint was bounced back to the Principal as it was deemed "day to day" issue and not policy or governance. It was just playing on words to delay things, hoping we would give up
34. School closed ranks, refused to deal with the issue
35. In a large school, if you have an issue with a teacher that you cannot resolve you can go to the principal or to the board.
In a small two teacher school, what about when the teaching principal is the issue. I had an issue with a teaching principal who would not even address a concern unless it was her concern. So anything at all asked by anyone was blanked. She got the principal role very young, never taught anywhere else only this one small school, has absolutely no experience and it's her way or the high way. She has her friends co-opted to the board of mgt also. I was on the board of mgt and was ignored as no one would cross her. How can a teaching principal never ever have taught in a large school, to gain experience of dealing with issues, and learn to negotiate. The system might work for larger schools but certainly not for small schools.
36. Serious issues reported to principal regarding same teacher behaviour by different parents All kept separate and parents with younger siblings promised not to get teacher again if complaints dropped. Discussions with CPSMA and INTO before meeting with parent. No reporting to Tusla. Complaint of physical and emotional abuse split so all facts not given to full board. Disciplinary hearing held with an apology given to teacher for distress caused, parents have still not received the outcome of hearing.
37. Insufficient oversight of the Board of Management. BOM not independent and protect negligent teachers rather than the child. Dept of Ed won't get involved.
38. Was verbally abused by a principal and was advised by the chairperson of the BOM that I had to go back to principal to discuss complaint before I could proceed with complaint to chairperson of BOM. Made absolutely no sense at all to revert to the person who verbally abused me with a complaint to them about their behaviour.
39. Small minded community
40. I did not receive a proper answer in writing only a verbal response. Which I was not satisfied with.
41. Complaint was not investigated fairly by BOM as principle was on the board . Ended up removing the child from the school . Five other students from the same class transferred at the same time . None of our complaint about the class teacher s behavior were listened by the the BOM
42. Principal can do what she wants apparently. Follow procedure when she wants. Pretend to bring things to the Board. Friends are on the board anyways so nothing happens. Complaint

has been about a staff member and principal protected staff instead of child. Have tried ombudsman for children but no help either as they said its to do with the running of the school

- 43. Requested for school to facilitate a meeting with another set of parents due to ongoing bullying situation but this request was ignored by principal of the school
- 44. Complaint was made against principal and vice principal! Vice principal and her husband sit on the BOM got nowhere
- 45. I made two complaints
Bullying still continued
She still did not getting proper learning support

I took my daughter out of the school and into another school as it was not worth the heart ache and the meetings where nothing changed

- 46. We had a serious issue in our school regards afterschool. A decision made unilaterally by the Board of management. We tried to envoke the school procedures and even went to Norma Foley and councillors, ombudsman, early education, ministers , and educate together Ireland. We were informed as it was a BOM decision it was a local decision and no one would get involved. This caused serious concern and left all parents helpless
- 47. Our complaint was about the Board of Management. There was no mechanism at all to make a formal complaint about a decision made by the BoM. Also, the Prinicipal being on the BoM means it's difficult to make a complaint about Prinicipal to the BoM.
- 48. We felt that we werent heard and requested help and understanding and mediation. Nothing coming forward from the principal and board of management
- 49. The challenge was that the Board of Management of the school is accountable only to itself. There was an issue at my children's school from which the actions of the Board negatively affected 70 families and placed employment at risk due to unilateral and abrupt withdrawal of after school facilities. The only recourse was to complain to the Board, from which the experience and outcome was unsatisfactory, poorly communicated and very upsetting for many families. The Patron body was unwilling to investigate or look into the case as they stated that it was a matter for the school's Board. There was no accountability and it is unfair for there to be no oversight to the actions of a Board of Management.
- 50. Complaint was about BoM and was judged by the BoM
- 51. There is no mechanism make a complaint about Board decisions, Board interactions with the wider community or Board transparency. I tried to deal with the Patron body who said it wasn't their job to review board decisions nor are they an "appeals body". As a parent with serious concerns about transparency and decision making at Board level I felt there was nowhere to turn.
- 52. The complaints process is totally inadequate. The BoM is totally unaccountable, the process whereby all complaints have to originate with a class teacher regardless of whether they are relating to that teacher or class. It is incredibly poor that a BoM can ignore parents individually or collectively, and that the complaints mechanism is approved and supported by the patrons and dept of education.
- 53. We had a significant issue whereby the BOM decided to remove all after-school care from the school building, where it had been operating for 5 years - this removed sibling hour care and full-time afterschool care and left over 70 children in need of such care, and facing a pulling apart of the community of children and afterschool teachers they had come to love. Parents were advised that this was a Board decision and communications should be made to the Chairperson of the Board. Parents wrote individually and collectively to the Board, and asked to meet with the Principal and/or the Chair. This request was not facilitated for weeks. A large document was instead produced by the Board which did not address all of the issues raised by the parents. Parents were left with no other option but to protest outside the school. A

meeting with some parent reps was then finally allowed, but it was not satisfactory and parents were left protesting outside the school for 3 weeks.

All of this created huge ill-feeling across the school body. This has not been addressed head-on and remnants of distrust continue to affect the atmosphere amongst parents.

As parents we contacted the Patron Body also, but were mainly told that this was a local issue entirely within the powers of the BOM. So we had nowhere else to go. Parents discussed trying to hold a vote of no confidence in the leadership of the school and the BOM, but it seemed that this would be symbolic only and we were essentially powerless.

54. Complaints process appears to be shaped towards teachers. If the challenge is with the Board Of Management there does not appear to be a clear process
55. We are told to use the complaints procedure for everything even things that are not complaints e.g. last year several parents wished to enquire why school contribution had increased so much and we were directed to the process as opposed to the PA being able to enquire so immediately it is seen as that parent complaining and the repercussions for same
56. Because they stalled the process all the time then my child was moving to secondary school
57. Used it as member of board of management. Could see that the process is not fit for purpose for the parents with the complaints. Need an independent person to investigate- not a chairperson who has a vested interest/working relationship with the principal with whom the complaint was about. Not impartial-all about protecting their reputation and not the truth or failings on the schools part.No onus on the chair to share all the details with the BOM. In the end the parents were so exhausted they just removed the child from the school-that's a very poor outcome for the child. Process needs to have the best interest of the children-the interviews of the kids shouldn't be done by the person being complained about. Too much input from the unions in drawing up the policy in the first place (about protecting the teachers, not the kids)
58. We are currently in the process of a complaint procedure regarding the actions of the board of management of our sons school. The Department of Education have advised us to direct our complaint to the chairperson of the board of management and the school patron . The chairperson is not responding to our requests to speak directly with us and both patrons have refused to offer us a complaints procedure stating that they have no role in investigating a board of management. Current policy needs to change. A board of management is accountable to nobody for their actions. We have no option but to go through the office of the OCO for a complaints procedure. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with your organisation regarding our experience . Thanks , Gráinne Farrell, 086 8486271.
59. No accommodations made. No acknowledgement of our efforts or struggle
60. Nothing changed
61. Mt complaint was totally ignored by the principal. We received no reply
62. I wrote my letter of complaint to the principal of our national school who arranged a 1:1 meeting between me and her to discuss the matter. I willingly attended the meeting but as well as the principal, the chair of the board of management was there too and I was not advised of this in advance. I was so unhappy with the outcome but felt I couldn't escalate the issue to the chair of the board of management as she was already involved. It was just dreadful, I felt extremely disappointed and frustrated with the school for how they did not follow the complaint procedure. I had no where else to turn. I have lost complete faith in the school management due to this.
63. My husband and I made an appointment with the principal of the school to discuss a bullying problem with one of our children. We assumed that by taking what we felt was this very formal step that we had activated the school's policy. However as a board of management member I was shocked at the next board meeting when it was reported that there were no incidents recorded despite our meeting with the principal. I reviewed the policy and found that there was no clear process as to what were the steps involved if a report is made what a

parent can expect and what happens if the parent is unsatisfied by the outcome. We were left in limbo. I found that while the policy is lengthy it speaks of values and hopes and what the school aims for with no clear route as to how that is to be achieved or what tools are available to parents who encounter difficulties and wish to challenge decisions. There was no effective policy in place, no clear procedure it was a mere box ticking exercise.

64. When dealing with the teachers/staff they don't seem bothered, they are supposed to be neutral but tend to side with others.
65. I was told my complaint will be submitted to a committee at a later date.
66. We had a major issue was the principal and the complaints process there meant that we had to raise the issue with the principal. This went against what we read on the Department's complaints process.
67. Because in a two teacher school where you have a teaching principal, this complaints procedure doesn't work if your issue is with the teaching principal. They have immense power even on the board of management, they won't even bring your issue to the board if it doesn't suit them. This is why so many parents I know, including myself, just move our children or put up with rubbish.
68. The complaints procedure is designed to be about an individual teacher. If your complaint is about a general/urgent issue for the School it doesn't work. It is too slow and cumbersome. There should be a transparent process where a large issue affecting many families can be dealt with efficiently. In our school feels like it is used to stymie communication not promote it.
69. I have made contact with the school and my phone calls were ignored; my child was being badly bullied and it took a long time to get a meeting with the principal- he used "medical issues" as an excuse- if he's not able to do the job the vice principal should make the calls back- it was handled very poorly after I spoke to the principal- he was unhelpful- I sent a complaint to the board of management and I don't believe they got it as the principal is part of the board of management so gets the complaints and does not let the board see how badly things are being run and does not address complaints- I believe he blocks the complaints from the board as I am one of several parents who sent them in and got no response- I have also reported him to Tusla- as I got no reply from him or the board on another complaint- he left a classroom of 3rd and 4th class children alone in a room all day 1 day last year, when their teacher was out- he has 3 resource teachers and he is a non teaching principal so there is no excuse for this- it's a dereliction of his duty of care. You should not have to complain about the person to the person- the whole complaints procedure needs to be set up so you can report it to the department directly for investigation
70. They didn't follow their procedure at all
71. The board didn't listen to the parents and sided with the principle and my son was expelled
72. Teacher was principal best friend was chairman she quoted the complaints system but didn't follow it herself, no support for parents outside of this I tried welfare officer sept of education health & safety officer to no avail
73. Extremely negative, Teachers complaining about things that should be dealt with in class, not online where there is no interaction possible with parents. A lot of these complaints should be dealt with in school, like years ago and move on with the class. Extremely negative for kids coming home from school, the whole procedure is negative as Teachers quite happy to put the negative and don't seem to have the time to put up the positive.
It has made my child's life at the school an unhappy one and has turned him negative towards his school.
It doesn't take much to encourage kids positively and ask them how to help them out when struggling.
74. A complaint about the Principal, which can only be directed to the Principal. A very very poor Chairperson of the Board.

I have a current complaint with the Data Protection Commissioner as both the Principal and Chairperson have not complied.

75. It was not followed through to a satisfactory end it began well then stopped
76. Teacher although blatantly bullying was protected by principal
77. Kept been quoted the procedures but principal did complete opposite herself & could because she's principal
78. I disagreed with a principals opinion in a meeting she then went to make my child's school day v upsetting and accused me of bad mouthing (also terrible English used like this word on emails) refused to say what was said by whom & where despite numerous request (lots of emails to prove this happened) she continued to ignore this which was a false allegations but as a parent I had no support or any one to support me as she was the teacher & principal & her buddy was chairperson & welfare office didn't want to help either as needed to go thro all school's communication channels , meanwhile my 7 year old was bullied by this teacher // principal & the vice principal not allowed her involved as doesn't speak to the principal this is one v messed up system it is absolutely shameful
79. Our complaint forced the school to actually formulate a formal complaints procedure, they tried to push us back to step one even after meeting the chairperson. I also think it's derogatory for a chairperson who is a nun to tell us to pray for a resolution when we are in the process. I could continue here my list is very long.... Schools have the upper hand you can go nowhere else after BOM resulting in sloppy and unprofessional policies and procedures. There should in particular be inspections of special needs schools by the department, our most vulnerable kids are sitting ducks for lack of clear policies and procedures and lack of consultation with parents resulting in clear infringements of their statutory rights
80. Principal agreed not to let the teacher teach our children again if we withdrew the complaint. But things got worse with the next teacher. We were vilified by the school and eventually left
81. There was no justice or transparency
82. The comments and concerns are going to deaf ears
83. Procedure was just a matter of form from school respect, total power is left with school principal regardless if chairman of Board of Mgt is in agreement with the parents. Our process fell completely on it's face resulting in having to change schools for both our son who was the victim of ongoing bullying and his younger sibling.
84. Teachers bullying behaviour wasn't adequately dealt with and we didn't feel comfortable having to approach this teacher first
85. Principal refused to acknowledge and act on the complaint. Priest, chairperson likewise. They didn't want my complaint on record.
86. The steps of the schools' complaint procedure mean that 1 you have to deal with the teacher/principal you're complaining about in a meeting with them which is often defensive and moderated by a (biased) school colleague; only other option then are BOM which have the school principal and 2 school teachers thus weighing in bias against the complainant. There is no appeal after BOM. No Ombudsman Office to deal with issues at all
87. No follow up action taken by Principal despite being told they would do so
88. They didn't take any action or give me any feedback of how the complaint was managed until I followed up for the third time
89. The principal was also the teacher (my girl got out of the school on a main road (I received no apology as the teacher & because I refused to go to next step board of management (chairperson parent best friend with principal)) this was far too serious to have another parent involved especially when connected to the principal & trains school kids regularly weekly in the school ?? I rang the sept of education who wanted to know nothing at all because I didn't contact board mngt & I also contacted welfare officer as v serious & also couldnt help because I did not contact board

There seems to be no consequences for principals (I also have a paper trial from principal but then refused to continue by email) as I had all in writing

We have left this school & never looked back

90. We had already complained to the principal who was the same person dealing with the complaint and the same person that controlled the board of management. Therefore we were never going to get an outcome we were satisfied with if the person who's decision we weren't satisfied with is involved in the process all the way to the end.
91. Complaint procedure not followed and it's a small rural area. Board talks openly outside of the meetings so confidentiality is not there.
Items closed out and not properly logged.
92. Primary school complains procedure a disaster and staff started bullying my child and family - class system and inequality. Secondary school more open and good communication between staff and parents - caring.
93. Principle didn't listen to parents issues
94. Arduous process, we didn't complete it fully as there was no point, nothing changes in the school. The principal is the main issue and she makes it impossible to voice any concerns
95. The school did not outline properly the process once we made the complaint. We did not feel that the school did enough to resolve the complaint.
96. Not happy with outcome felt like I was gaslighted by them and made out I was the problem
97. Complained to old principal about teacher and she just shrugged and said she had nothing to do with that class herself
98. Principal said to me, "I am on the board. I've already discussed this issue. The outcome won't change."

The outcome absolutely did change but the process and length was absolutely gruelling. We ended up using a solicitor to help advocate. My visually impaired child has a 2 out of 5 in JI/SI PE because she needs to work on hand eye co-ordination. This is a child with a white cane. This also came AFTER using the complaints procedure. So while some issues like learning support were resolved, the teaching principal still did not fully cooperate and understand.

In the end result was satisfactory. School and parent relationship has taken a huge hit. There needs to be a better way.

99. The people you are complaining about should not get to decide the outcome
100. Have not replied in writing to my letter of complaint to the board of management in four months.
101. Bom always backs their principal
102. I was sad to have to go down that route but it actually forced the principal to stand up and sort out some of the bullying in the class that had been going on years.
103. Ineffective.....meaningless
104. The Board of Management did not address the complaint and actively protected the teacher from serious allegations of misconduct and negligence. They deliberately delayed proceedings for months on end and failed to properly investigate. Because the BOM procedure hadn't been exhausted (stalled) the Dept of Education wouldn't get involved and the Children's Ombudsman "don't get involved in school matters".
105. Left at stage 2 for 14mths. School failed student did not follow correct procedures. Breach of a number of policies. School not willing to investigate or do anything.. Chairperson acknowledged he hadn't been made aware of all reported incidents that we had been told they had. School did not report absences of over 50 days in school yr. School did not carry out 20 ant day bullying policy cut it short. Took 3mths for school 2 report to tula very sensitive information regarding child which we as parents had reported to school on two different

dates. Child on more than one occasion said they didn't feel safe and even put it in writing that school and board saw.

106. Basically principal lied to Chairperson about what had really happened/had been said. Chairperson basically backed up principal based on her version of events. And then that's it no where else to complain
107. School lied about adhering to their own code of behaviour. Nothing was done to safeguard my child. We changed schools.
108. The steps involved are too numerous, time consuming just dealing with the teacher before even going higher up to the principal. It favours the school to a large degree. They do something to just tick a box, irregardless of it actually helping a student. You cannot skip a step, even when child safety is of great concern. It's a set up for failure, unless you have video evidence, which is not looked favourable on in a school setting.
109. The school principal believes that his school does not have any bullying or ever had bullying at his school
110. The chairperson refused to response in a professional manner. My complaint was ignored at every step of the way
111. The issue was not solved by the teacher or principal and there was no way to contact the BOM except put a letter in a box on the principal's office . Why do school BOM'S not have an email in this day and age to send a written complaint to. It took three weeks to find out how to complain to the BOM. It was like a state secret.
112. How can it be satisfactory when the BOM will never go against the principal???
113. My daughter was assaulted by a staff member. The school investigated themselves and closed the investigation within 4 hours of opening it.
114. School did not operate procedure properly, delayed proper responses and denied wrongdoing until we were essentially on the steps of the court when they admitted everything. And by that point it was too late for our daughter to benefit. I have no confidence the school will make the required changes to prevent the same thing happening in future. Also, teachers and principals seem to feel they should not be accountable to anyone. And the inspectorate, the NCSE and NCCA were not much use.
115. Expulsion.
116. No change , very poor staff quality, not a clue of ASD child , big let down , emotionally damaging
117. The only response was an email with the words "your complaint has been noted." Nothing was done to rectify or resolve the issue.
118. Principal tried to prevent us from going to the BOM. The BOM supported the Principal even though there was overwhelming evidence to support our complaint.
119. School is powerless to deal with bullying if other parents don't accept that there is an issue and don't get involved
120. We had an experience last year. The result of the experience is that my child learned that he should lie in future and not tell the truth. To me this is not a win. He did his detention but when the other pupil lied it was accepted. While I understand there are two sides to a story and he may have been in the wrong. This not the result that I would have liked him to gain from this experience. Ethical behaviour should be support in some way in the future.
121. School principal does not follow their own behaviour procedures and is not leading the school. The pupils have no respect as there has been no discipline or sufficient punishments given to act as a deterrent. There has been assaults and serial assaults with little consequence. They are not acting in loco parentis and have enrolled my child in martial arts class to help them regain confidence and feel safe. They are all in each other pockets. It's disgusting.
122. They didn't want the hassle of dealing with bullying in the school
123. Blocked by board of Management and principal

124. On every occasion where I need to report an issue with bullying I have to start with teacher then principal may or may not intervene ... it always results in a verdict of bullying or not and then there are zero ramifications to the bully
125. No transparency, biased result, ineffective communication, limited accountability.
Fear of reprisal
126. The school did not follow their own complaints procedure
127. Not transparent ... parents painted as being trouble maker and life made miserable
128. No follow up
129. Never responded to the complaint
130. We were allowed to go through the process and then when we wanted to escalate further we were told we had to go back to the start because we hadn't followed the process correctly. Instead of the process helping us it was used to frustrate us and get us to drop our complaint or have to start the process again - which had taken months
131. We complained about the failure of the school to meet our child's needs. The principal and vice principal were board members. It seems weird to complain about the administration to themselves but because there were two parent board members, we thought it might be worth it to prevent the same scenario from happening to more kids. We were met about our complaint and essentially blown off. "Things are changing all the time at the department". Turns out one parent board member was completing her teaching credential and training with the school to be employed there once she finished. The whole thing was a joke. Nothing changed, other children have suffered since for same reason, there was no justice or acknowledgement of the suffering my child experienced on their care. Why have a complaints procedure if your y planning to learn anything from the people flagging the problems.
132. We followed the complaints procedure however when we received no reply from the BOM and we chased it, we were instructed to return to 1.1 of the complaints procedure. The BOM chose to ignore our complaint. We went to the Ombudsman for children who could deal with how the school failed to follow correct procedure but this took 12 months and the Ombudsman couldnt deal with the actual complaint itself. We were worn down, our complaint was serious and valid so a solicitor was our only option. Years later our complaint hasnt been dealt with fully.
133. I'm waiting since June for my complaint to be infront of the Board
134. Outcome didn't reflect the seriousness of the situation
135. Nothing changed nothing done no apology
136. I'm starting to feel as though my complaints are not being taken seriously and that the principal/ school are not addressing the issue in a more serious manner.
137. Teachers lied no transparency. Self governance doesn't work protect the teacher at all costs
138. Principal asked us to withdraw the complaint on the condition the teacher didn't teach our children again.
I heard after that the teacher had a long history of the same behaviour.. all being covered up
139. The principal sides with teacher and you just labelled a complainer
140. Complaint investigated by the patron,same body that employed the two employees i complained about. Wasn't taken seriously until i appealed the adjudication. So,flawed as not impartial.
141. I felt it was handled and managed to prevent bigger issues and keep it quiet from the rest of the class/school community. Often a case of thanks we're aware of the situation and leave it with us instead of a transparent action plan with open feedback/updates. It wouldn't encourage me to advise my child to speak up in future.

142. Our experience came to a dead end, after involving the board of management, the school failed to act upon the chairpersons recommendation. I then reported another incident of bullying and asked for a meeting but this request was ignored by the principal.
143. Ni reply received from the school. My email was totally ignored
144. The chair of governors was not aware of the correct procedure and had no interest in the process or my child. The head teacher and senco totally covered up the seriousness (safeguarding related to send) and totally censored and whitewashed what they told the governors - what they wanted them to know.
None of them cared that my child was suffering due to their incompetence (he is now unable to attend school due to trauma caused by them and I can't work so that I can care for him).
None of them told the truth. None of them were properly trained.
None of them should have been in such responsible positions.
They have basically ruined our lives but especially my son's mental health and wellbeing.
145. In my case the principal lied didn't respond in writing didn't follow the procedures either,
146. The school did not engage openly and did not appear to have any interest in investigating or acknowledging the issues at hand. Instead they were rude, obstructive and in the end brushed serious issues under the carpet. No one holds them to account as the Boards of Management are appear to be ill-informed and adverse to rocking the boat. In all it creates an unsafe environment for our children.
147. Did not address problem
148. School policies on snas were not publicly available to parents/guardians. I was asked to a meeting with the school principal to discuss my complaint only to discover the board of management chairperson was also present. I was not given a chance to bring a person to support me in this meeting such as my child's key worker in the school age team in my disability services provider in the community
149. Because the only thing is to keep a nice image of the school, no matter if a child and their family find themselves in a difficult situation. They have not any chance other than change school.
150. Despite my child being bullied on a number of occasions and despite us not only highlighting the issue and warning that the issue was not resolved and would only escalate. Mr. Ennis would still victim blame. As parents we often felt our child was to blame despite her/him being the one bullied. Mr. Ennis was very defensive and unreasonable in his approach. We came away feeling like he was protecting his name/school/teachers more so than protecting his students. My child can't wait to leave the school and from speaking to other parents neither can theirs too. He does not take bullying seriously, his methods are archaic. Interrogating the class, calling them out, interviewing them one by one, it does nothing but put the spotlight on the victim. All he needs to do is listen to the victim, reassure him that the matter would be looked into then watch what happens with a close eye. Observe the playground, see what unfolds and make sure the teachers are aware in the yard. A little bit of patience instead of prison office techniques would go a long way.
151. Felt adversarial- school tried to include non-impartial Governor in panel hearing from same MAT rather than independent one, tried to delay panel hearing due to attempt to bring in expert, tried to force me to exclude evidence, didn't feel the governors had knowledge/expertise of all the issues to be informed, school could have dealt with issues sooner as a lot of my complaints were eventually upheld, school wished to have 8:2 ratio of Academy to parents in panel hearing. We fought to make the panel hearing fair but this was exhausting to have to keep arguing with them in the lead up to it. The length of time for all stages led to delays in child's SEN needs being met. Also, evidence provided by school was inaccurate/misleading in many places. I was concerned the panel weren't given all evidence pre-hearing.

7.To whom/where do you think parents or students should be able to appeal?

1. asdfasdf
2. I am not sure
3. Department of Education
4. Outside body
5. External body/ombudsman/government department
6. A body outside of the school. We had an issue with the school principal and the person to speak to is the school principal before the board of management. There should be special procedures to follow if the issue is with a school principal.
7. A specialist unit in department of education
8. Board of management initially then a specifically appointed representative body for parents.
9. A separate parents support group, for example.
10. A education school regulator
11. School body
12. Board of management without principal permission.
Department of education.
13. Dept of education
14. Oaths Commissioner
15. The department of education
16. Ombudsman
17. Whoever is higher than the board - would it be the SENO, I don't know but definitely a higher body is needed.
18. Department of Education
19. an independent person
20. Department of Education
21. The appeal should be heard by a independent group of ppl
22. Board of mgt
23. Department of Education
24. Independent board
25. Department of education.
26. Dept of Education
27. Board of management
28. I'm not sure?
29. In our case the Board of Management are the issue as they do not reply to complaints.
Therefore would it have to be to the Bishop? As they have such a strong role in the Board? Or is it to the Depart of Education?
30. DES
31. Department of education or the education minister.
32. Department of Education or ombudsman
33. Board of education if BOM is not impartial

34. Independent body. Not the department of education. Composed of representatives from teachers, parents, independents. I have raised issues with schools before but am never made aware of formal procedures and results are usually unsatisfactory.
35. education board
36. The board of management
37. An independent body of parents
38. Governmental institution
39. Department of Education
40. An ombudsman for children
41. Department of Education
42. A body independent to the school
43. Not sure depends on nature of complaint
44. Dept of education
45. An independent, regulated government body with expertise to adjudicate on genuine complaints
46. Bom
47. Independent person. Board of management is made up of principal and parent reps as well as other external people. Issues have occurred in our school with a parent rep and principal and there's no where to go
48. Specialised area in dept of ed.
49. I am not sure but somebody neutral with no vested interest, may be like the right commissioner
50. Dept of education; courts
51. The current complaints procedures can be manipulated by senior staff and the Board of Management. I am aware of complaints that have not been addressed, acknowledged or responded to, and the term 'vexatious complaint' is open to interpretation and abuse. There is no transparency or accountability. Making complaints about senior staff, particularly the Principal, is a major problem, as they are an integral part of the complaints process and it is intimidating and offputting for parents or staff to be able to make such complaints. This is a huge issue. There should be an independent complaints system, particularly if a complaint is being made about senior staff or the Board of Management.
52. The Board of Management
53. To a neutral third party.
54. I would imagine that if the matter was serious, it would go before an arbitrator or suitable body for purpose.
55. Not sure, maybe dept of education or similar.
56. Department of education
57. A government body responsible for implementing change
58. Department of Education
59. First Principal, then BOM then patron of the school. This should be enough in terms of fairness and appealing.
60. School inspector
61. An external body like WRC
62. DED or Ombudsman
63. Board of Management
64. Department of education complaints department
65. The Ombudsman for children is the only current avenue. This is laborious and often beyond the reach of most stressed parents. Also this doesn't give tangible results. Maybe an independent national independent education board (not an ngo) should be created

66. Governing body - external to Chair of BOM
67. ETB
68. Must be external with sufficient distance to remove conflict of interest and linked to dept of education and the inspection process. From experience, the board of management can be biased, dysfunctional and lacks the appreciation for governance, respect for all members of the board, parent reps in particular and total absence of ethics to properly investigate incidents. We chose to move our children from the school despite multiple attempts to engage and work through issues.
69. Department of Education and or Dept of social protection
70. Local education officer.
71. Department of Education (appointed Complaints Officer.
72. To either Department of Education and/or to the Patronage
73. Board of Management
74. the Schools Board of Management
75. To the principal/teacher.
76. Independent review board
77. Board of Management
Department of Education
78. Department of Education
79. Maybe an ombudsman
80. The Board of management in school
81. BOM
82. Depends who/what complaint is, and who has reviewed or dealt with complaint.
Teacher/Principal/Board of Management/ Dept Education.
I think if there was a regionalised/national complaint board where parents/teachers/schools could use for support, would be helpful and also may be less biased. Would also highlight recurring complaints of issues that may need to be addressed at another level. I would think majority of complaints are similar in each school and this may help getting solutions in place so that alot of issues do not reach complaint stage.
83. Independent office
84. Someone / organisation outside of the school and the school management committee to raise concerns further for an unbiased investigation and outcome
85. department of education
86. This depends on the complaint.
For example, if the complaint is because school policy was not adhered to and the school refuses to change their mind, then yes. On the other hand if your daughter is not selected for the star role in the school play, then this should not go outside of the school for appeal.
87. School BOM or then the Cigar/School Inspector
88. School council
89. Board of management
90. Dept of Education
91. There should be a board / panel that parents can forward their concerns and get the issue dealt with accordingly
92. Dept of Ed
93. An independent to the school person or body.
94. Department of education or to a school representative non bias.
95. Dept of Education
96. Honestly not sure

97. Board of directors,Tulsa and the Gaurds
98. I think an appropriate panel, eg. principals, vice principals, should be available every quarter, to hear appeals where necessary.
99. To a designated responsible board in the Department, similar to Social Welfare appeals board.
100. a third party external to school
101. Dept of education
102. There should be an independent board for investigation of SEN complaints, due to lack of spaces children are trapped and SENOs unwilling to intervene
103. The Department of Education
104. Department of Education
105. Statutory body with compelling powers
106. Department of education
107. Dept education?
108. Department of education
109. Someone within department of education
110. The department
111. An external oversight body, but I don't know if one exists already
112. Board of governors or separate governing body.
113. Independent body similar to ombusman
114. Department of Education
115. An independent body governing school so that all complaints are dealt with in the same manner and procedure
116. Board of Management / Governing body / Dept of Education
117. The Board of Management
118. Department of Education
119. Board of management
120. Somewhere other than the Principal and Board, many if not all that ypu would know in a small school..
121. the school's governing body
122. I think it depends on the issue. I think of it is something the parent feels the school can not deal with fairly or without bias there should be someone foe that parent to contact.
123. It depends on the insident. If it is assault or abuse, I would say the Garda or Department of education. Not sure.
124. To the patron of the school, in our case Educate Together.
125. Another board of management from a different school look at it and see what they think
126. Department of Education
127. Dept if Ed
128. Should be an independent board that principals of schools don't have any influence on, and it is fair and clear as what the correct action procedures were followed and the outcome was based on the true findings not just by the school investigation but if required an independent investigation then it will be carried out to ensure all complaints are handed correctly .

Also I think if the parents/students are not happy with the result that if requested want to they should be allowed attend a meeting to state their case in front of the BOM and ensure all the correct information is provided and that they can answer and provide additional information to the BOM if needed, to ensure all the facts and information is true and fair practice is followed by all.

It would give parents peace of mind that their issues are been delayed with fairly .

129. Department of education
130. Am external body with no connection to school or parish.
131. School Board, perhaps if talking to the principal and teacher doesn't work.
132. No idea
133. some one that has no connections with the school e.g. Board of Management
Principle and teachers and other staff. A CERTAIN PERSON OR GROUP OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL.
134. Dept of Education
135. A representative within the Dept of Education
136. Board of Management
137. I think that complaints should follow the following procedure:
Teacher, Principal, Board of Management, Regional School Inspector, Head of Inspectorate
and onto Secretary Generals or Minister then if needs be.
138. Department of Education and Skills
139. No idea
140. Board of Management
141. The board, the patron, the DOE
142. Department of Education
143. Department of education
144. Patron Body
145. Principal of school
146. Dept of Education mediation body
147. Pschool complaints committee
148. Dept
149. School board
150. The government pays the teachers. They should operate the schools including the
complaint process.
151. External agency such as NPC, who should have power to investigate or question BoM
as a source of support to parents and parent association. BoM in our school chose to ignore
parent complaints at the behest of principal. Dept chose to ignore also. Very difficult for
parents who have been treated unfairly and issues disregarded by principal who
condescendingly dismisses parent's concern as irrelevant or stupid.
152. Board of management, parents council, department of ed
153. to the CDETB
154. Not sure who
155. Dept education
156. Board of management or NPC
157. Board of management
158. Not sure; department of education
159. NEPS and Dept of Education
160. school board and Department of education if necessary
161. school board and Department of education if necessary
162. BoM or NPC if its serious
163. Patron
164. Department of education or here should be an independent body as at present its
ridiculous that the school investigates itself

165. The board of management or an external assessor- especially if the complaint is about the principal
166. Educational board
167. Maybe skme sort of committee should be set up externally.
168. There could be an independent body for appeals
169. Principal, teacher
170. Education department
171. Some non affiliated body so they're impartial.
172. Ombudsman for Children
173. Board of management
174. Dept Education
175. Dept of Education
176. Board of Management or Dept of Education
177. Someone in Dept of Education
178. Independent body - Not the Dept of Ed, Not the NPC, Not the patron body, Not the teaching counsel. A new independent body made up qualified professionals eg social worker, legal professional, cousellor, child welfare officer, psychologist (not teachers or principals)
179. With the board of management
180. Board of Management
181. To and above the level of Board of Management
182. Dept of education
183. Chairperson
184. To the board of management or Department of Education, depending on the situation
185. Special external body would be needed. Probably government-run or sanctioned
186. For example Tusla
187. A new completely independent body. Possibly with judicial links.
188. Department of Education representative
189. The Department of Education
190. Board of management
191. I'm not sure
192. Department of education or board of management
193. Parent council, principal
194. The Department if Education
195. Management Board
196. An independent body
197. Not the board of management who is in the case of our school hand picked by school management. A third party who is accountable.
198. Don't know
199. Board of management and then department of education
200. Dept of Ed. Should have a specialised section for this sort of thing.
Schools are cliquey. Having a procedure that first goes to the principal, and then if a parent isn't happy escalates it to the BOM, where said principal sits is ridiculous.
201. Not the board of management. There should be an external body where parents and students can appeal.
Schools hide behind many governing bodies to deflect problems away when they done want to deal with things or choose to unfairly rule on something without further discussion.
There is a lot of favouring going on and depending on who you are that depicts how a complaint is dealt with.

Often it goes no further than the board of management, because the board is mostly school staff and they rule with the school.

- 202. The minster of education
- 203. Department of Education
- 204. Principal
- 205. BOM
- 206. I'm not sure of the detail of procedure but if not first involved board of management and then dept of education
- 207. Inspectors or
Regional department of education reps
- 208. There should be an independent body that can monitor complaints against schools and has the power to resolve issues brought to their attention like illegal suspensions or discrimination.
- 209. Board of management
- 210. Parents/student union
- 211. The board of education or further than a principle .
- 212. School procedures
Teachers
Situations involving other students
- 213. Board of management or there should be an appeals council set to look at issues
- 214. Principal or class teacher
- 215. Dept of education
- 216. Teaching Council of Ireland .
Parents association .and the board of education because the board of management has the principal on the board so if it's an issues with them it can't be resolved
- 217. OCO needs more power. Seno and Inspectorate should have the power to 1. Make the school accountable for the resources they are given and 2. Following best practice
- 218. Department of education
- 219. Principal and board of management
- 220. Someone/somewhere above the board
- 221. Board of management or Department of Education
- 222. Dept of Education or school governance authority
- 223. Independent body I.e. ombudsman
- 224. Department of Education
- 225. Department inspector
- 226. external body not affiliated with school or dept and have the necessary qualifications and understanding to deal with it. Advocacy group
- 227. Department of Education
- 228. To the board of education
- 229. I don't know who they should be able to appeal to as I had an issue with how my childs school didn't deal with her being bullied. They told me she wasn't being bullied because they saw her being nice to her bully. I wrote to the board of management but never heard back from them so I don't know who else I could have contacted.
- 230. Board of education
- 231. Department of Education
- 232. there should be an external board that looks at issues brought to them to give an outside opinion on to ensure that there is fairness. Too often we see children being moved from schools to others for these reasons.

233. Schools should not be able to investigate themselves. The teaching council is a disgraceful set up, with parents not afforded the right to appeal if their complaint is not investigated. My experience is the teacher lied and was believed over the child. The ombudsman for children appears to do nothing also, leaving parents with no where to go and children let down
234. An independent body would be a good idea.
235. There should be some governing body other than lay people on board of management
236. To the ministry of education
237. Firstly to the School board of management
Secondly to a panel within the Dept of Education that deals with complaints
238. Independent nominated body
239. An independent arbitrator
240. To individuals that have no association to the school in any way. Board of Management is always carefully curated by the principal. Also I am considering submitting a complaint but it would appear I can only do that about a teacher. There should be a way to make a complaint about a system or process or lack thereof...rather than it being about a teacher only.
241. Dept of Education and / or Children's Ombudsman. "It's a matter for the Board of Management" is not an acceptable response when the internal complaints procedure has failed.
242. Board of management, then independent board (by area)
243. The Department of Education
244. Board of education
245. An independent body
246. Board of Management, Dept of Education, Teaching Council
247. Unsure, somebody independent.
248. Independent body that's not the BOM or patron.
249. Ombudsman
250. Minister of education
251. Department of education
252. An impartial agency, with no connection to the school staff members, board of management etc.
253. Board of Management, under our school current policy.
It would be useful to encourage good practices to a further appeal to a national body with expertise like the inspectorate.
For many parents and children, getting quick decisions in the appeals process is equally important, and maybe the appeal to the board of Management is an unnecessary step in the process if there are strict timelines on an external review/appeal.
254. Teacher
Principal
255. Department of education or an ombudsman
256. An impartial party with an educational background, appointed specifically for this role.
257. To an independent body who is specialised in autism and neurodiversity. Many teachers do not even realise their actions are harmful and they are doing their best with the knowledge they have. Schools need appropriate guidance and support so that students are safe. Felt safety. Connection over outdated compliance that is harmful. Wellbeing. Minding our children.
258. Patron, National Parents Council, Minister of Education, Tulsa

259. Dept of Education, however this would need to be done for significant issues
260. Dept Education
261. Tulsa
Dept education, dept health, minister for education, disability
262. School first, then Department of Education
263. I would say "The Dept of Education " but they do not appear to have any actual enforcement powers over individual schools.
264. National body
265. Board of education
266. An independent board or panel
267. An external body that has power to impose change.
268. Board of management. Teaching council
269. DoE
270. Children s ombudsman office should investigate, Tulsa should also play a role
271. Independent complaint appeal process
272. Dept of education
273. No idea
274. School Principal
275. A separate authority body that can do an investigation internally.
276. Yes but to an independent authority. Unfortunately we had to move both our sons from the school as we didn't have any confidence that the bullying situation would improve even though the board of management was involved. From a child welfare point of view we had no choice but to move. I strongly feel every parent of a child who moves schools regardless of the reason should have to complete a compulsory feedback sheet outlining the reasons behind the move. Regardless of what policies are introduced in schools the principal still has full power to act in whatever way they please regardless of child welfare.
277. Board of management then the department
278. i have no idea
279. The board of management
280. Department of education or children's ombudsman
281. Department of Education
282. Department of education
283. To a independent ombudsman
284. Department of Education
285. An independent body
286. Bom
Department
287. Department of education
288. An independent body
289. Principal
290. Parents Council
291. I think as parents if the complaint is about the Principal, the next level is School Board whom the Principal is a member of, which is wrong. The Department of Education do not get involved in complaints, a parent can only go to Ombudsman. There is no mediation, there should be an external level between parents and Ombudsman
292. Teaching Council or equivalent body
293. External source as school can have a biased attitude or will just say oh no it's fine all is sorted when it truly is not! As as

294. Board of management
295. Dept of Education or Child Ombudsman
296. An independent body or a team within the Department of Education
297. Department education or SENO
298. Do not know
299. Board of education
300. Principal
301. Dept of education
302. An independent body who have no connections with the school.
303. I don't know...
304. It depends on the situation. Most situations should be able to be solved within the school.
305. An independent body not affiliated with the school
306. Dept of Education
307. The school or the BOM
308. School inspector
309. Department of education as the BOM is untouchable if your complaint is against the BOM
310. Patron Body and Dept of Education
311. Dept of education
312. They should be a nominated third party foe either school or parties involved
313. Not dept of education but separate body Tulsa maybe
314. Private independent body something like the ombudsman
315. Dept of education
316. I'm not sure - somewhere independent and sensible and practical
317. Children's Ombudsman and the Patron body of the school.
318. To an outside source, who is not affiliated with the school, the principal of the school should not be the first step in the complaint procedure, and should not be on the BOM
319. Ombudsman for children
320. Patron Body or Department of Education
321. Patron, and Dept of Education.
322. Depends on the complaint and it's complexity.
323. School Board?
324. Dept of Education, Ministers
325. A school fairness/ethics panel
326. Board of Management, Education Department, or any other institution that can intervene in such situations.
327. Dept of education
328. To a outside body, no connection with the schools
329. Educational board.
330. A governing body
331. Someone who can make the right decision without being influenced
332. Council, solicitor,
333. Department of Education or equivalent oversight.
334. An outside organisation
335. Independent body

336. Board of management
337. Ombudsman
338. Designated group but not the board of management as too closely linked in with school
339. Not sure. National Parents Council. Not sure who has the authority to deal with appeals in this manner.
340. Initially to the Patron Body - but they should have powers to intervene, not simply push it back to the BOM. Perhaps to the Dept of Education. Maybe to the Circuit Court in specific circumstances - e.g. where a BOM is claimed to have made an unreasonable decision.
341. BOM/ mediator
342. Board of Management
343. Department of Education
344. The board or management or an independent adjudicator from dept
345. It depends on the decision. Maybe the Dept of Ed or perhaps another forum
346. Department of Education and/or board of management
347. Principal
348. Unsure as board of management will always support staff.
Possibly an external complaints board?
349. Board of Education
350. WHO, Methal and Tusla
351. Depth of education ? Unsure
352. Educational Training Board or Dept of Education
353. Dept of education
354. Ombudsman or similar
355. Department of Education
356. Dept of Education
357. Board of Management
358. I'm not sure but not the board of management
359. Department of Education
360. Education welfare officer
361. Board of Management and/or Dept. of Education
362. The school board and principal. If not happy there then I would suggest appeal to the department of education.
363. Ideally an impartial person should lead to avoid bias, cover ups. Someone who understands education and running of a school- perhaps a special office within the children's ombudsman.
364. Dept of Education
365. Dept education
366. Department of education
367. School patron
368. Teaching council
369. They should be able to choose from a list of professional independent mediators and/or grievance investigators who are recognised by the government and paid by them. To ensure someone qualified, experienced and independent is overseeing the process. Also to ensure the complainant and other party have a choice of professional and agree selection. As would happen with any other complaints to public bodies.
370. Tusla maybe
371. I don't know.

372. A dedicated department within the department of education much like the section 29 appeals department. We have experienced dealing with the section 29 department and it was a very positive experience . All personnel were child focused and clearly understood the educational interests of children. More responsibility should be placed on the department of education to intervene in school matters when the child's well-being has/ is being compromised by school management .
373. ???
374. I have no ideas
375. There needs to be a quick appeal system with current system there is little to no point especially if complaint is against a school principal
376. The board of management
377. Board of education
378. Board of Education
379. External party.
380. Ombudsman or education board
381. Section 29 dept of Education
382. a specific board for school complaints
383. Dept Education
384. Yes
385. Department of Education
386. A review board for the department. Regional and national.
387. Independent advisory council
388. Department of Education
389. External person, maybe hse
390. The school the teacher
391. Department of Education
392. Board of management
393. Patron body
394. To whoever will listen and act on a timely basis. From experience of difficulties with the health system for example, your service your say etc is a nominal paperwork exercise where nothing is done. I would like to see a dedicated body with the power to address issues and that there is actual recourse for grievances. This does not exist I'm our experience to date.
395. I have never used the procedure myself, but I have a client I work with who has, and the procedure was lengthy and geared towards protecting the teacher's rather than the children. The principal used the procedure as a way of avoiding taking responsibility for something that happened within the school. And while the parent tried their best to follow the complaints procedure to the letter, by the time the complaint got to the teaching council, they dismissed the complaint because she hadn't followed the procedure... When she was doing her best to do so.
396. The Department of Education
397. Board of management or board of education
398. The principal then BOM, then ETB or relevant governing body then Dept of Education
399. Department of education
400. An independent 3rd party.
401. The Department of Education.
402. Independent body
403. Independent board appointed by Dept of Education.

- 404. Dept of Education
- 405. Dept of education
- 406. Board of management
- 407. Dept of education
- 408. I don't know - Tusla
- 409. Dept of education.
- 410. An impartial complaints body. I just mentioned I was thinking of putting in a complaint against my ASD son's school, the next day they rang social workers and said I was hitting him. Case closed in 3 days.
So they can complain but we can't say anything or they our children's words against us FACT
- 411. A local independent group
- 412. To a neutral individual who has no relationship to the school.
- 413. Department of education
- 414. The board of management
- 415. Initially appeal internal to school and afterwards perhaps afterwards. However there needs to be ground rules around procedure to protect children, teachers and parents.
- 416. Principal
- 417. A panel of 6. Parents(3) and(3) teachers/principal. To look at what has happened to give a final decision. That can't be appeal
- 418. Dept of Ed
- 419. Board of management
- 420. Independent personal
- 421. External body help line maybe
- 422. Don't know
- 423. External body
- 424. Parents council
- 425. Board of management
- 426. Board of education.
- 427. Dept of education
- 428. Board of education
- 429. Board of education
- 430. Board of management or local school governing body
- 431. Board of education perhaps or a separate body that works with students wellbeing
- 432. Dept of education
- 433. Board of management however I don't believe principals should be on boards so maybe external office
- 434. Board of Management or the Parents Association
- 435. 1. to the parent rep on the board of management in another school for example who could look at the case and have experience.
2. to the chair of the parents association of another school?
- 436. A higher authority, somebody who is neutral, has no relationships to the parents or the staff or the children themselves.
- 437. Any government agency set up for that purpose. Or the parents council for analysis purposes and any further action.
- 438. Dept of Education
- 439. Another principal or teachers association
- 440. Depends on the complaint. Maybe the teachers union
- 441. board of education

442. Neps, NCSE, HSE
443. Board of management
444. Teaching council and more independent body. Definition of 'serious complaint' must be reviewed. Teaching council do not take day to day complaint far enough and process is to delayed.
445. Dept. Of Education
446. Dept of education
447. I think somewhere outside the board of management, as sometimes it feels like you won't be taken seriously by them.
448. Independent review not sure by whom
449. Dept of education
450. Depends on complaint
451. Internally to the principal, the board and then the patron. Externally, there should be several avenues, including local education authorities, Dept of Education and, ideally, an independent ombudsman.
452. Board of Management or some type of external Educational Board
453. Department of Education
454. Bord of management or Board of Education
455. There should be a board who looks at issues that you bring them, if they do not wish to bring them through the complaints procedure as there may be extremely valid reasons why they dont wish to go through the normal channels. An external board could look at things from an outsiders point of view and see each side of the issue without the twist being put on things by the principal/board and see if it warrants further investigation.
456. School Inspector/Department of Education
457. Department of Education
458. I believe it should be dealt with in house. Then perhaps the. To the next level.
459. Minister for education
460. I think there should be someone parents/students can appeal complaints to. Something like an overseer/ ombudsman.
461. Inspector of the school or an independent board.
462. External body protecting children's rights specifically. Teachers have unions, parents and children have no one.... tl
463. An Independent body
464. Higher than the board of management, including the priest. but I don't know what that is.
465. The DOE. I believe there should be a complaints portal set up on their website- as in our case the principal could not block/hide them then..
466. To the principal if there is any?!
467. Board of mgmt . Dept of education
468. Tusla / Tess, Ombudsman, Norman Foley, Education Minister, Dept of Education, Garda Siochana
469. I think the first conversation/communication should always be with the School Principal.
If the outomce from a complaint is not the expected, the parents should try to talk it with other parents to see what's the common feeling and then talk again with the Principal or ask how to appeal externally.
470. Department of Education
471. An education board, complaints review mechanism such as an appeal board/committee/

- 472. Board of management
- 473. To an ombudsman
- 474. School board of directors
- 475. External independent body no one from the area
- 476. The Department of Education
- 477. Court
- 478. Depth of education/ombudsman for education. Not the BOM as they will not go against the school/principal
- 479. Department of education, or an independent committee not board of management
- 480. I appealed to the department of education but lost
My appeal - but again I think it's cause the chairperson of hearing knew the chairperson of the school and it's all about who you know not what's happened
- 481. BORd of Management and higher
- 482. NPC
- 483. External body. With no connection to the school.
- 484. Board of Mgt?
- 485. Either the superintendent or the board of education.
- 486. Department of Education or a regional education board
- 487. Principil
- 488. Board of management's principles teachers ??
- 489. Don't know
- 490. Department of education (should take responsibility for hiring these people
- 491. Appointed complaints officer maybe someone part of the parents committee.
- 492. Board of management , followed by the department of education.
- 493. Ombudsman
- 494. BOM
- 495. The Board of Management
- 496. Dept of Education.

Current Chairperson of Harold is not fit for purpose.

- 497. Board of management directly not through Principal
- 498. Independent board of management at other schools, teachers unions.
- 499. Board of management or school Council maybe
- 500. After board of management the Government education dept.
- 501. Schools Board of Management & Dept of Education
- 502. Possibly the board of management but preferably with no direct association to the school
- 503. Not associated with that school
- 504. INTO/Department of Education/CETB
- 505. Not sure
- 506. To an external body. The board of management is very old school set up with principal and teacher usually on the board
- 507. Educational Board
- 508. Not sure, but should be the higher up who governs the education sector.
- 509. An independent body
- 510. NOC, Dept Education
- 511. School/board/council

512. Board of management or a central governing body specifically for primary schools.
513. A specific complaints officer in dept of education
514. Dept of education , board of management are security ppl for principal and no support to parents, my child could have been killed on a main road when she left the school unnoticed & the welfare officer Would not get involved until I went to the board of mngt and reported it (this is a parent) I think he should not have a decision on the seriousness of the event ! I also rang the dept of education who wanted to know nothing about it ! The end outcome I move my girls from this school due to lack of care safety & support !
515. An independent board of management
516. Dept of education they are hiring three young inexperienced teachers & placing them in principal roles
517. There should be an external body. Even in the circumstances of a complaint that may not be suitable to go through the usual channels.
518. Dept of education
519. If its with the teacher, then the DP or Principal. If its with with Principal, then the BoM
520. Independent body/ person
521. Department of education or an ombudsman particularly when a school breaks equal status act and GDPR legislation
522. The board of management
523. Inspectorate
524. Principal
525. An adjudicator unknown to school or the parents
526. Children's Ombudsman
527. Principal of school and the board of management
528. Board of Management
529. Ombudsman for children
530. An independent body and not the board of management or any other group affiliated to the school
531. Totally independent of school.
532. NCSE
533. Department of Education
534. BOM
535. Ombudsman
536. DOE
537. The the Education Minister and Curriculums
538. Dept of education
539. Intervention after nothing is being done is too late as we had to leave the school. For us we spend a full year meeting with the school and BOM, gathering solid evidence of the bullying along with input from other peers parents confirming our son was being bullied within school time but yet the school did nothing despite the BOM directing action should be taken. I feel there should be some form of external intervention during the early stages of the process within the school, this is the only way change will happen and bullying will be addressed within a school run by management of this mindset.
540. Independent body
541. Board of management, dept education, tusla
542. The board of education or higher of needs be
543. Department of education

544. Ombudsman for children ??
545. Dept of Education
546. It should be an independent reviewer with an expertise in the area
547. The board of the school and the some connection to the minister of education
548. Education minister
549. I'm not sure
550. An independent expert body
551. Dept of Education
552. A representative from the dept of education and/or education trust and/or an independent person
553. Dept of education. And this is why we need divestment. No more religious interference in schools and an overhaul of the board of management structure. No more voluntary running of our schools.
554. Ministry of Education
555. Create an Ombudsman's Office for Schools
556. An independent body
557. Department of Education
558. Dept of education
559. Notbsure
560. Dept of education
561. A governing body outside the school.
Dept of education.
562. Parents /students should be told not asked to whom/where, That information should be known to parents
563. There should be an ombudsman for education
564. DES
565. School Patron, National Parent Council
566. Department of education, in my experience the board are not always impartial
567. First Teacher, if Teacher is not listening, I will report to the principal.
568. Department of Education
569. Definately not the board of mng as they are on the schools side from the start it's not based on correct procedure
570. Botd of Management
School Patron if warranted
571. An independent body.
572. An independent body, not connected to school
573. Principal, board of education, then dept of education
574. Board of education
575. An independent body in the county / or the department of Education
576. Body made up of ex parents/ex pupils for full objectivity
577. After the BOM the patron. Then after the patron, the Department of Education. A specific section should be set up.
578. No one takes responsibility so who can you go to? You cannot enforce breaches of recommendations either. Which should be requirement
579. Dept of education
580. Higher than board of management i.e bishop
581. Principle and Board of education

582. Schools council.

I also thinks all complaints should be logged with a separate register outside of the school by the complainant.

583. Department of Education

584. ETB DIVISION

585. An independent authority outside of the school staff

586. Board of Management

587. Ombudsman, Department of Education, Edu Minister Norma Foley, Children's Minister, TESS, Tusla, HSE

588. Board of Management of the school

589. External organisation

590. I'm not sure. Education department of government?

591. Not sure but it should be independent

592. Department of Education

BoM all local people neighbours priest etc. in community so difficult to highlight issues.

593. Higher level personel

594. On first to their child's teacher and after to school office.

595. Board of School or someone outside of school who has decision making power.

596. Board of education or local council

597. Department of education

598. An authorised body other than the Board of Management as they're hands can be tied by the principal.

599. Ombudsman for children ? Someone o dependent

600. Ombudsman for children

601. Principal

602. Governing body

603. Independent body

604. Arbitration service

605. A regional division within the department - perhaps under the inspectors?

606. A simpler process less daunting process when the teacher is not suitable. Sometimes the principles hands are tied.

607. Board of directors then education board

608. An independent body

609. An independent body

610. I think there needs to be an independent body or department of education needs to look at it

611. Department of Education. There should be someone over principals, superintendent like in USA. Principal should not be on BOM.

612. Tusla or department of education

613. The department of education should have a section to deal with this

614. An out side body. On the outcome of the complaint, not just on whether the school followed procedure

615. Firstly should be able to sort out locally in the school prior to escalation then to BOM and if not happy then externally. Needs to be an independent external body and also an advocate present with parents/guardians students when they have a complaint and wish to appeal.

616. The board of management

- 617. Board of education
- 618. Department of Education
- 619. Department of Education
- 620. Educational ombudsmen
- 621. We brought our complaint to the Ombudsman for Children and even his hands were tied dealing with the Education System. Maybe the minister for Education needs to know what's happening and she needs to be held accountable for not ensuring that schools aren't following guidelines and circulars etc.
- 622. Third party who is not involved
- 623. Board of management
- 624. Dept of Education
- 625. Board of management, then trustees, then Dept of education if necessary
- 626. Somewhere much higher than the principal.
- 627. Independent body (independent of school, management of school and Dept of Education)
- 628. The Children's Ombudsman
- 629. Principal
- 630. Should be able to go to a party or agency which is not connected to school system. You go to school. Teacher. Principal board and they stick together so an outside party needs to be mediator between school reps and parents. Schools need to be made accountable and know or feel they are being watched because at the moment they can do what they want and it's wrong and dangerous to the innocent victim which is the child. If you were to think about it if two adults had an issue it's dealt with though when it comes to adults in school and a child it's brushed under the carpet in my cases in our own experiences it was brushed under the carpet and made out that wouldn't happen here even though teacher admitted it was going on in our situation and one of the two children admitted their involvement but people above class teacher told her what to say because I as parent was told teacher had been told to say the opposite
- 631. Board of education
- 632. An outside body not affiliated to the department of Education
- 633. Principals have a monopoly generally the Chairperson is someone the principal has been involved with electing onto board therefore principal has a very large influence esp if complaint involves them. I'm not sure who/where an appeal should be dealt with but my opinion is that there should definitely without a doubt be something other than internal & at board level.
- 634. An independent body
- 635. Board of Management
- 636. Dept of education
- 637. An appeal should go to an independent/external body not linked to school should investigate complaints.

I hope it's ok to explain what isn't working in schools at present: At present if someone is unhappy with principal decision re a complaint the person then raises it with the board of management. The principal is part of the Board of Management, the bom will very rarely go against/override a principal's decision that has already been made. I wouldn't bring a complaint to the bom as 1. Decision made at principal level wouldn't change 2. As a mum to a special needs child it's too stressful to bring a complaint to bom, overall it doesn't change anything. 3. Relationship between parent and principal/school is damaged once a complaint/appeal is made. I'd be afraid things would be made worse for child at school.

- 638. Department of education
- 639. An Ombudsman or other national appeals mechanism
- 640. TDs, garda and the board of education.
- 641. To the DOE
- 642. A mediator maybe
- 643. School board, ombudsman
- 644. Education Board or a smaller body which is created by parents/teachers from other schools a good distance away from the school in questions.
- 645. Department of education
- 646. Someone able to help with the problem they are facing
- 647. External parent support unit maybe in department
- 648. An outside organisation, not board of management as principal/teachers usually on it
- 649. Department of education and ncse
- 650. An independent group that does not include any teachers from current school
- 651. Department of education
- 652. I do not know but I know that contacting Board of Management would make no difference. It would be important to know.
- 653. Department of Education.... The Ombudsman cannot respond efficiently enough.
- 654. There should be an independent outside appeals board for parents to appeal to
- 655. School board member
- 656. A specific area of the Dept of Education
- 657. Regulatory body
- 658. Department of Education
- 659. Dept of Ed
- 660. Independent complaint committee
- 661. Department of Education
- 662. Independent body or agency or dept education. Not BOM. Not independent, under control of principal
- 663. Department of Education
- 664. Dept of ed
- 665. An outside body - like an Ombusman
- 666. Separate team. There is no trust when staff inspect themselves
- 667. The Department of Education or Teaching Council.
- 668. There should be a section on the Dept of Education or the NCSE
- 669. To an independent and impartial body
- 670. Someone not related to dept of ed
- 671. An external complaints and inspection body equivalent to Hiqua in HSE or a completely separate department with no alliance with the school management.
- 672. An unbiased body, seperate and not staffed by people currently working in that type of job or anyone connected to education.
- 673. Department of education,,seno or a solicitors
- 674. Board of management then department of education
- 675. The dept of Education
- 676. An independent body that is not connected to the school in any way.
- 677. An independent body

678. Ombudsman for Children. Or WRC. And the High Court. That is already possible if equality legislation has been broken, which it was in our case. And anyway parents and children always have the right to appeal actions of public bodies under administrative law.
679. Independent agency
680. Dept of education
681. Board of Management and NPC or some independent body.
682. Independent person not connected to board of management
683. Department of Education. The BOM will always side with the principal in our school. I would like to make a complaint against her, but I have also sat on the BOM so know that it would not be handled correctly.
684. Independent body with powers to overrule
685. Someone higher , who is not the principal or staff
686. Board of management
687. Department of Education
688. Department of education
689. Department of Education. Our taxes fund the schools and it is unacceptable that the management of them is farmed out to autonomous boards of management that have no accountability.
690. Not sure
691. Department of Education
692. There should be a section within the Board of Education to help with these situations.
693. An appeals board
694. Department of education
Education welfare officer if its impacting the child attending school and their right to a education
695. Department of education
696. Independent advocacy service
697. An independent third party other than the OOC as they lengthy wait times due to their case load
698. Board of management or the board of education
699. I have no idea. It seems to be a closed shop.
700. Independent body
701. Independent abrogation who have some power
702. Department of Education
703. Department of Education
704. Both
705. Board of management, Tusla and NPC
706. I think there is a school ombudsman
707. I'm not sure. If we need - we'll find out.
708. Board of management, if unresolved then Board of education. There should be a body set up to deal with complaints in a timely manner
709. Department of Education/ board of governors
710. Principle
711. Board of Management
712. board of management then dept of education
713. To someone unbiased
714. KWETB
715. Tusla

716. I think they should if decision the wish to appeal is coming from the Board of Management they should be able to appeal to Kildare & Wicklow Education Training Board and to the Department of Education. But I think this should only be in exceptional cases i.e. expulsions not every day decisions like suspensions (unless over 5 days) etc
717. Education dept
718. I don't know
719. Principal
720. Department of Education.
721. We should be able to appeal to a third party
722. Board of Management
Director of Schools (ETB)
Dept of Education
723. External appeals committee.
724. Further up the education chain
725. A group that has no connection to the school to review the appeal.
726. Not sure
727. To a committee that is not made up of principals from the same town or made up of friends and cronies of the principals.
728. Don't know.
729. An external body, perhaps the Dept of Education
730. Dept of education
731. Don't know
732. KWETB
733. Board of management depending on complaint
734. To the principle
735. To their head teacher
736. Department of education or Ombudsman
737. Board of management are useless so department of education should be responsible
738. Schools governing body. ie: ETB etc
739. Separate unit for parents and kids
740. Board of management or department of education.
741. First to the BOM, as they behind all decisions within the school.
Second-directly to NCSE, Tulsa Education welfare officer, and directly to Dept of Education
742. not sure, because all institutions were, and still are disappointing my child and me.
743. I don't know
744. Board of Management
745. Board of education
746. Seno
747. Ombudsman for children.
748. A separate panel where complainants are only identified as A B or C etc
749. An independent group/body . Not the BOM
750. Board of education
751. Anywhere!
752. Inspectors
753. A higher rank outside of school
754. Board of education
755. Depending on the complaint. Teaching Council if not resolved at school level

- 756. School principal
- 757. Education system
- 758. Not the school
- 759. DOE
- 760. Department of education
- 761. Somebody not connected to the school
- 762. A board that doesn't have staff on it
- 763. Maybe the ETB or department of education
- 764. Ombudsman for children

Honestly don't feel safe to use complaints procedure as don't trust would not have implications for the pupil or her sibling that will follow. Very sad to say this is the case

- 765. Higher then board of education anyways because they arnt no help either they back their schools so someone independent nobody would know that's maybe is trained
- 766. Impartial adjudicating body
- 767. Section 29
- 768. Department of Education or a body under them
- 769. Department of education
- 770. Department of education
- 771. Dept of Education
- 772. Dept of Education
- 773. I don't know. But I think internal systems and groups can be very biased. I would find out what other institutions do in other countries and model it on the most successful one.
- 774. Somewhere which is not the board of management - as in our experience this is controlled by the principal and the chair (who turned out to be a long time friend and mentor of the principal). Not independent at all.
- 775. Board of management
- 776. Somewhere without that school's staff
- 777. Courts
- 778. Department of education
- 779. Board of Management. Department of Education, Office of the Ombudsman
- 780. We need an Ombudsman for Education. I have raised this with Minister Naughton and others in the Dept of Education. Schools and their Principals should not have the autonomy they currently enjoy.
- 781. DES
- 782. I don't know
- 783. Department of Education
- 784. Don't actually know
- 785. BOM
Department of education
- 786. I'm not sure
- 787. Not sure but not to school
- 788. Ministry of Education
- 789. Have no idea
- 790. Ministry of Education
- 791. Board of management
- 792. Department of education
- 793. Local Authority, DfE, an independent ombudsman as a final arbiter

794. The issue right now is the governors can stop the complaints so will never get further. Local authorities will not work either, an independent auditory entity is the answer. Schools and LA are far too removed from some homes/children issues.
795. Someone not involved with the school not the governor
796. Especially if they are not in the wrong
797. A special department who is versed in such. Problems occur often with principals I have found and there is little recourse that can be safely taken with the school or the board of management and it would be helpful to have an external body who can either adjudicate, actually as mediator or provide other support and assistance with school complaints. Like the WRC but for schools.
798. An outside body or board. We had an issue last year and went as far as meeting the Principal but we couldn't go to the next step of meeting the head of the BOM as we felt they wouldn't go against the Principal. So we weren't listened to and the issue wasn't addressed.
799. Department of Education
800. Dept of Education
801. I'm unsure at the moment, this is something I am looking into at the moment.
802. Not the school
803. Department of Education
804. Designated teacher
805. dept. of education
806. External body to teachers/schools
807. Dept of education / liaison officer
808. An independent body which is not the board of management of the school
809. I don't know.
810. Not sure
811. It depends on the type of complaint, Board of Management, Dept of Education, Garda
812. Minister for Education
813. Board of Education
814. Dept of education as if a school and parent are failing to resolve the issue and communicate correctly. A proper mediator should be able to step in and not be immediately be on the side of the school. They should assess that the school is adhering and that the parents dissatisfaction is of legitimate concern without prejudice that would be looked at by board of management
815. Department of Education
816. Ombudsman for children?
817. Department of Education
818. The school
819. Someone or department that's unbiased
820. DES
821. Department of Education- I know they are very busy but the class teacher/principal/board of management are very closely tied. when I had an issue which was quite substantial, there was nowhere to turn for help - the principal is on the board of management and it was hard to be heard when the Board of management is slightly corrupt/not to be trusted 😞
822. Department of education
823. dept of education
824. School board
825. There should be an independent ombudsman or council

826. Minister of Education
827. Board of Education
828. To an autonomous body that does not have a high proportion of teacher/union representation
829. Someone outside the school entity (as in, also outside the schools Board of Management)
830. Dept Ed
831. A neutral body with no attachment to the school
832. Ombudsman for Children
833. Don't know
834. An independent body not the diocese appointed should be a lawyer a principal outside the area and a chair of parent council outside the area
835. Nationalist board of education
836. The NPC or Department of Education
837. Department of Education
838. An independent body from the department of education that isn't related or any way connected to the school personnel or board of management
839. An independent body, like the wrb, but done privately, not in public, to protect all parties.
840. Department of education
841. The board
842. An independent group
843. Dept of education
844. Education board
845. To the principal and teacher I charge of the child's education
846. Department of Education
847. Dept of education
848. Principal or board of management
849. to a body above the school or some institution independent to child's school
850. Board of education
851. Not sure what options there are.
852. Someone independent. Outside of school, BOM etc
853. The government
854. Principle
855. Board of management initially
856. Higher authorities if a serious complaint and not been dealt with.
857. An independent organization who could mediate
858. Department of Education
859. The Department of Education
860. BOM or Dept of Ed or even Gardai if safety issue
861. Department of Education
862. BOM and Dept Education Gardai
863. This would have to be an external source and totally independent of school/Dept of Education. In our situation we spend a full year organising meetings and following up with teacher, principal, vice principal and chairperson of Board of Management but to no effect. Myself and my husband felt completely isolated despite accessing any external recourse we could find i.e. Neps, Tusla etc. great as a listening ear but could not get involved directly. Despite several meetings with school management and many suggestions from us to target

the bullying and encourage to implement an action reintegrate and re-build self confidence, in the latter end our emails were ignored. Effectively we were forced out of the school and moved both our sons to a different school at beginning of this school year. I truly feel external intervention should be mandatory after a specific number of meetings with school management/BOM. In our case the ship has sailed, for child welfare reasons we had no choice but to move our son(s). A very difficult decision for any parent to make but our son is a totally different child since the move - moving was the best decision we ever made.

I also think it should be mandatory within all schools where children are being interview regarding a bullying case or likewise where child welfare ins involved that there is more than one staff member present. During our process, the principal failed to give us a fully account of the interviews held with other peers, his report was very dismissive stating he could not read his own writing. This along with several other incidents is not good enough this day in age.

- 864. Impartial and independent 3rd party
- 865. Board of management
- 866. Teacher or principal
- 867. Principal
- 868. Board of management
- 869. The department of Education
- 870. I think you should be able to first give feedback on what u feel is nt working ! I was unhappy with few aspects of my daughters school said 1 thing and teacher got very defensive was something small but would have benefited my daughter a lot I think anonymous feedback would be great maybe to the principal once a year what u felt went well what u think did nt for example survey maybe
- 871. Dept of Education or another named body
- 872. External body, Tusla
- 873. External board
- 874. There should be an external body where complaints are dealt with.
- 875. Bord of Education
- 876. Education Department
- 877. BOM
- 878. LA
- 879. The board of management.
- 880. Department of Education Body
- 881. A governing body that should listen to us
- 882. Directly to the LA, Ofsted, DfE, LGO.

I went to the above except LA/ LGO and no-one took my complaint on. In fact, the senco is still in her job and destroying children's life chances.

This needs to change and be taken far more seriously with legal back up. I quoted the DfE send code of practice, children and families act, education act and equality act and no-one knew how to handle it so it got swept under the carpet. Disgusting.

I am now a training governor for school to ensure this never happens to anyone again.

- 883. Depends on the nature of the complaint.
- 884. Department of Education official
- 885. Ultimately, to the Minister of Education and her Department.
- 886. School Board of Management
- 887. The Board of Governors

888. An independent body who can remain impartial but is also very clued
In with the running of
The school
889. There should be a independent body not the dept of education as i really feel they don't know how to teach special needs kids, severely disabled kids need a different syllabus no sphe and sex education for example as my son does not understand any of it , a waste of time special needs trained teachers only not regular teachers , also more funds a-lot more needed for special needs schools as nothing given for all the extra gloves, buses to swimming or horse riding costs 400 a week making sensory and physical needs not being met
890. Dept of education, courts
891. Dept of Education
892. An independent, educated committee with representatives that are drawn from a variety of professional qualifications, but not including principals, teachers or members of Boards of Management.
893. Someone outside of school .a board .no ties to school
894. There should be an independent panel of a principal from another school and parents and board of management members from other schools. The school details at the centre of the complaint and any identifying details should be removed. This will protect the student concerned and reduce unconscious bias
895. There should be an escalation process, from Principal through to a couple of levels in the Department of Education and potentially a third party if required.
896. In the office for it to be reviewed or head of the principal
897. External body
898. Parents should have the right to have their complaint reviewed if they are not satisfied with the response of the school, in a similar way a consumer can approach FSPO for financial services complaints.

I don't know what agency would be appropriate in terms of school complaints. If the school have provided their final word on a matter and the parent/guardian still isn't satisfied with the response there should be a reasonable process to resolve which is independent of all parties and all parties would accept that process is the final word.

899. Independent body not board of management
900. An independent arbiter assigned by but not answerable to the Department of Education.
901. Depth of education
902. Local Authority
903. Department of education
904. KWETB
905. Guards
906. Board, or sub-committee of board of directors.
907. Department of Education
908. Board of education
909. Who can open this problem deeply and find answer
910. Board of Education and Tusla.
911. A body/ department that sits above schools and have the time and resources to mediate the conflict (complain)that will investigate both parties and come with a mediation plan.
912. Board of management at ETB school, external independent committee at second level or independent board at primary level

- 913. Board of education
- 914. KWETB
- 915. Board of education
- 916. Tulsa. Education Authority Board.
- 917. Not familiarized with the process or the institutions.
- 918. Board of education
- 919. Dept of education
- 920. Board of management.
- 921. PTA or the school board
- 922. Department of Education
- 923. Department of Education
- 924. Bom
- 925. BOM
- 926. Ofsted, DfE currently but doesn't appear to have much power to intervene

I would like there to be greater accountability

- 927. A body of authority over the school
- 928. Maybe a committee formed to deal with
- 929. BOM initially with a further appeal to Department of Education Appointed person or company
- 930. Board of education

Appendix 2 Other answers

6.If a parent or student is not happy with the outcome of a complaint, do you believe that they should be able to appeal the decision externally

- 1. Parents
- 2. Teachers
- 3. The School Principal