



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Customer Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Our Commitment to Quality Customer Service

The Customer Charter and Action Plan sets out the standards of service you can expect from staff of the Department. If you are not satisfied with the quality of the service itself or the manner in which the service was delivered you should make your complaint known to the staff member or manager of the section you have been dealing with to have it resolved in the first instance. If this does not resolve the issue to your satisfaction, you can make a formal complaint to our [Customer Service Section](#). Your complaint will be dealt with promptly, fairly and impartially in accordance with our customer complaints procedure.

We hope that we have been able to resolve your complaint satisfactorily. However, if you remain unhappy with our response then you can refer your complaint to the **Office of the Ombudsman**. The Ombudsman is fair, independent, and free to use.

The Ombudsman will ask you for details of your complaint and a copy of this letter/email (our final response to your complaint). The best way to contact the Ombudsman is by:

- **Clicking on the 'Make A Complaint' link at www.ombudsman.ie**
- Or writing to: Office of the Ombudsman, 6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 W773
- Or calling the Ombudsman on 01 639 5600 if you have any queries or if you need help making your complaint.

The Ombudsman for Children may be contacted at:

Office of the Ombudsman for Children, Millennium House, 52-56 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1
Phone: (01) 865 6800
Free-phone 1800 20 20 40
Email: oco@oco.ie

How to make a Complaint

If you are dissatisfied with the quality of the service itself or the manner in which the service was delivered, please express this to the officer with whom you are dealing who will try to help. If you prefer, please ask to speak to a manager who will also try to help as we aim to resolve all difficulties at local level where possible.

If you remain dissatisfied and wish to make a complaint, you can contact the Customer Service, who will arrange for your complaint to be formally examined by the Head of the relevant Section or an official nominated by the Head of the Section who will respond to you directly. Complaints may be made either orally (a written record will be made) or in writing to:

Write: Customer Services,
Department of Education,
Marlborough Street,
FREEPOST
Dublin 1

Email: Customer_ServiceOffice@education.gov.ie

Phone: (01) 8896690

We understand that on occasions you may feel upset about a particular issue and may wish to express your annoyance and frustration to an official orally or in writing. We will try to assist you in resolving your issue and will be courteous in our dealings with you. We also request that you are courteous in your dealings with us. The Department reserves the right to terminate conversations/ correspondence if it is offensive/abusive. If this occurs, we will explain to you why termination is necessary. Where we have provided a final response to a particular issue of concern to you and have exhausted all mechanisms available to resolve the problem but you remain dissatisfied, it may be necessary for us to inform you that we will be unable to engage in any further correspondence on this particular issue and advise you to contact the Ombudsman or the Ombudsman for Children.

Information you need to provide

By providing the following information, you can help to speed up the investigation of your complaint.

- Your name, address your telephone number;
- The full details of the issue on which your complaint is based;
- The name of the official(s) or sections(s) who dealt with you;
- Details of the measures you have taken to try to resolve the matter at local level;
- If your complaint is complicated, you may find it best to put it in writing so that no important detail is overlooked. Remember to send us copies of all relevant documentation/ correspondence that you may have;
- If you have special needs that may affect your ability to make a complaint, please let us know at the earliest opportunity. We will make every effort to assist you.

Our Standards for Dealing with complaints

- We will treat your complaint fairly and impartially;
- Making a complaint will have no implications for your dealings with the Department;
- The Head of the appropriate Section or an official nominated by the Head of the Section will examine your complaint and respond directly to you.
- We will examine and review your complaint and send a reply to you within 20 working days of the receipt of your complaint. Where it is not possible to meet this target, we will inform you and continue to do so until the matter is resolved;
- We will acknowledge for any mistake, explain what happened and put it right wherever possible;

If you are unhappy about the outcome of the review by the Complaints Officer you can appeal the matter to the Office of the Ombudsman or the Office of Ombudsman for Children.

What is not covered by our Complaints Procedure?

The Complaints Procedure does **not** cover:

- A routine first-time request for a service
- Matters which are the subject of litigation
- Complaints relating to a school/ETB or other education institute or agency (in such instances you should contact the agency concerned directly)
- A request under freedom of information or data protection legislation

- Complaints/Review regarding a decision which fails to be dealt with under an appeals mechanism or, if no appeals mechanism in place, by the Head of the relevant Section or an official nominated by the Head of the Section
- A request for information or an explanation of policy or practice
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered
- Where we have already given our final decision following an investigation. If you are still not satisfied, you can ask the Office of the Ombudsman/Office of the Ombudsman for Children for an independent review of the complaint.

The Role of the Ombudsman

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Appeals

An appeal indicates dissatisfaction with a decision of the Department

- the provision of a service
- your entitlement to a service
- activities, which are subject to regulation by the Department

Where a complaint relates to a service provided by the Department you should make your complaint to the Head of the relevant section. If an appeals process is available [[Appendix A](#)] you should ensure that you utilise this option.

Appendix A

Independent appeals boards

[Appeal against Permanent Exclusion, Suspension or Refusal to Enrol](#)

[School Transport Appeals](#)

[Student Grants Appeals Board](#)

[Staffing Appeals](#)

[Incremental Credit Appeal](#)

[Procedure for Review of Inspection of Schools and Teachers under Section 13\(9\) of the Education Act, 1998 \(This procedure allows schools and individual teachers to seek reviews of inspection reports\)](#)

Department

[Ill Health Retirement Process](#)

Critical Illness Appeal Process

- [Teachers](#)
- [Special Needs Assistants](#)

[Teacher Refund Scheme – Appeals Committee](#)

[Summer Course Programme](#)

