

PUBLIC CONCERNS

Statement of Policy

The Peel District School Board is committed to developing strong relationships with parents, students and the community. Together, we create safe, positive climates for learning and working. Therefore, it is the policy of the Peel District School Board to address public concerns in a fair, respectful and effective manner.

This policy is aligned with and supports the principles and expectations of the Board's Human Rights policy (Policy 51) and the Equity and Inclusive Education policy (Policy 54). At all times, this policy should be interpreted to be consistent with the Board's policies and the *Human Rights Code*.

Guiding Principles

1. The Board is guided by the values and character attributes that form the foundation of positive and productive relationships (caring, cooperation, honesty, inclusiveness, responsibility and respect) while addressing public concerns.
2. The Board believes that the process of addressing public concerns is an opportunity to improve relationships with our parents, students and community.
3. It is the practice of the Board that public concerns and questions should be dealt with at the level closest to the issue.
4. The Board will continue to comply with all relevant legislation as it relates to privacy for all members of the community.

Role of Trustees

Trustees play a very important role in education. As representatives of their communities and advocates for students, parents and community members, the local Trustee can greatly assist to facilitate communication between the parent/guardian and the appropriate staff member at the school or Board level. In the case of community member issues, the Trustee can facilitate communication directly with the Principal. Parents/guardians/community members may contact trustees at any time.

Trustees will direct the parent/guardian/community member to the process which should be followed in resolving any concerns or to the appropriate person or step in the process (dependent on the steps the parents/guardians/community member have already undertaken to resolve the concerns at the time the trustee is contacted) but shall not act as a representative opposing the policy of the Board.

Procedure

If a parent/guardian/community member has a concern about a school matter, they are advised to follow these steps in resolving the issue. At all times, the parent/guardian/community member is encouraged to speak to the local Trustee who can assist in reviewing school matters

and provide explanations of Board policy and procedure. The Trustee can also assist in referring the parent/guardian/community member to appropriate Board personnel for resolution of the matter. In the case of a concern expressed by a community member, contact should be initiated with the Principal of the school rather than classroom teachers.

- **Step 1: Review of the issue with the child's teacher**
The parent/guardian should discuss a concern or issue with the classroom teacher at a mutually convenient time.
- **Step 2: Review of the issue with the school Principal**
If the parent/guardian and the teacher are not able to resolve the issue, it should be discussed with the school principal (or designate). Again, in the case of a concern expressed by a community member, the first point of contact should always be the school principal. The principal (or designate) will gather facts from everyone involved to clarify the problem and work to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. Basic to every investigation is the Board's expectation that employees and students will follow school and Board policies and procedures.
- **Step 3: Review of the issue with the Superintendent of Education**
If the parent/guardian/community member and the school principal are not able to resolve the issue, they may request that the matter be reviewed by the school's Superintendent of Education. The superintendent will review the matter as it relates to established policies and procedures and will respond to the parent/guardian about his/her concern.
- **Step 4: Review of the issue with a member of the Director's Office**
If the parent/guardian/community member and the Superintendent of Education are not able to resolve the issue, they may request that the matter be reviewed by a member of the Director's Office Team who will review the matter and respond to the parent/guardian/community member about the concerns.
- **Step 5: Register as a Delegation and Present to the Board of Trustees**
If the parent/guardian/community member and the Director's Office are not able to resolve the issue, they are encouraged once again to discuss the matter with their local Trustee. In the end, should they wish to discuss the matter in a more public forum, the parent/guardian/community member may register as a delegation and make a presentation to trustees at a meeting by contacting the Executive Assistant to the Director of Education to set up a mutually convenient time. Depending on the nature of the issue to be presented, this delegation will take place at either In-Committee (when personal matters require discussion) or at a public meeting of the Board.

Representative of the Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

The Board understands that the parent/guardian may need support in order to adequately address their child's interests (for example, a translator). This support may be necessary while parents/guardians are attending meetings with the staff employed by the Board.

Parents/guardians have the right to have a representative of their choosing in attendance at meetings with staff, subject to any limitations established in these procedures. Any costs/expenses associated with such a representative are the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

Principals, staff and parents/guardians shall be notified in advance of a meeting as to who is anticipated to be in attendance.

Matters That Should Not Be Discussed By Staff

Although the subject matter of meetings between parents/guardians and staff may be fairly broad, these meetings will generally relate to the education of the parents'/guardians' students(s) at the school in question. However, there are certain matters that staff members are unable to discuss with parents/guardians/community members, including personal details or disciplinary measures concerning other student(s), and matters related to staff performance issues.

In the event that discussion cannot be limited to the subject matter that led to the meeting (generally the education of the child of the parent/guardian at the school in question), staff will bring closure to any meeting that becomes a discussion of personal details concerning other students or matters related to staff performance issues.

Role of School Councils

School Councils are established to advise Principals on matters such as the implementation of school curriculum and code of student behaviour. They are not a forum to discuss individual issues related to teachers, other staff members, specific students or their parent/guardian. Any of these matters brought to a school council member or any school council meeting should be referred immediately to the Principal.

Related Policies:

Human Rights - Policy #51

Safe Schools - Policy #48

Equity & Inclusive Education – Policy #54

Approved: May 26, 2015

Revised November 13, 2018