



**DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
ONTARIO NORTH EAST**

Policy No. 2.1.37

Section: System Policies and Procedures

Related References:

Appendices:

Approved: June 2, 2015

Revised:

Review Date:

TITLE: Public Concerns

1.0 Rationale:

District School Board Ontario North East is guided by their approved Values of Respect, Equity and Inclusivity, Integrity, Accountability, and Partnership.

District School Board Ontario North East believes that the process of public concerns is an opportunity to improve services for our parents, students and community.

It is the practice of District School Board Ontario North East that public concerns, interests and questions should be dealt with at a level nearest to the issue.

2.0 Definitions:

3.0 Policy:

District School Board Ontario North East is committed to encouraging a strong relationship with parents, students, and community. District School Board Ontario North East is committed to addressing public concerns in a fair, respectful, and effective manner.

PROCEDURES:

If a parent/guardian has a concern or interest about a school matter, the following are the steps that should be followed.

Step 1: Talk with Your Child's Teacher:

The parent/guardian should discuss a concern or interest with the classroom teacher at a mutually convenient time.

Step 2: Talk with Your School Principal:

If the parent/ guardian and the teacher are unable to resolve the concern or interest, it should be discussed with the school Principal (designate). The Principal (designate) will gather facts from everyone to clarify the concern or interest and work to resolve the matter within 36 hours. Basic to every investigation is the Board's expectation that employees and students will follow school board policies and procedures.

Step 3: Talk with Your Superintendent:

If the parent/guardian and the school Principal (designate) are unable to resolve the concern or interest, the parent/guardian may discuss the concern or interest with the school Superintendent. The Superintendent will review the matter as it relates to established policies and procedures. The Superintendent will respond to the parent/guardian about his/her concern or interest within 36 hours.

Step 4: Talk with the Director of Education:

If the parent/ guardian and the Superintendent are unable to resolve the concern or interest, the parent/guardian may discuss the issue with the Director of Education. The Director of Education will review the matter and respond to the parent/ guardian about the concern or interest within 48 hours.

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

From time to time the parent/guardian may believe or feel that they need support in order that they can adequately address their child's interests. 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 representation of their choosing in attendance at meetings with staff, subject to any limitations established in those procedures. Any costs/ expenses associated with such a representative are the responsibility of the parents/ guardians.

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

Although it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to choose their own representative, a list of individuals, agencies or organizations which may represent parents/ guardians at meetings with staff will be developed by the Board.

A representative supporting the parents/guardians must agree, at the onset of or in advance of the meeting, to respect and maintain the confidentiality of the matter discussed at a meeting (in camera) between parents/guardians, staff and the Trustees.

Matters that should NOT be discussed with Staff:

Although the subject matter of meetings between parents/guardians and staff (including meetings at which a representative or a parent/guardian is present) may be fairly broad, these meetings will generally relate to the education of the parents'/guardians' student(s) at the school in question. However, there are certain matters that staff are unable to discuss with parents or guardians.

Such matters that normally cannot be discussed include, for example, personal details or disciplinary measures concerning other student(s), and personal 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 (parents'/guardians ' students(s) at the school in question), as necessary, staff will bring closure to any meeting which becomes a discussion of personal details concerning other students or personal details about staff performance.

Role of Trustees:

Parents or guardians may contact trustees at any time. Trustees will facilitate the communication process between the parent/ guardian and the appropriate staff. Trustees will provide information and direction. Trustees shall direct the parent or guardian 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 have already undertaken to resolve the concerns at the time the Trustee is contacted) but shall not act as a representative/co-counsel of the parents or guardians.

Role of School Advisory Councils:

School councils were established to advise principals on matters such as School curriculum and code of student behaviour. They are not forums to discuss individual parent/guardian-teacher-student issues. Any of these matters brought to a School Council Member or School Council Meeting or the Parent Engagement Committee will be referred immediately to the school Principal.