

POLICY 2.10 ADDRESSING CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

The Board of Education recognizes that concerns and complaints may arise from time to time. The Board supports the practice that concerns or complaints about personnel, programs or procedures are dealt with in a manner that reflects mutual respect and should be dealt with at the point closest to where the matter first arises.

Unresolved matters, where the decision significantly affects the education, health or safety of the student, may be appealed to the Board of Education utilizing the Board's Appeal Bylaw. The Board acknowledges that employee decisions that do not significantly affect the education, health or safety of a student are within the final authority of the Superintendent as the Board of Education's chief executive officer.

The Board believes that staff should be protected from unnecessary, inappropriate or spiteful criticism. In the process of resolving a concern or complaint, hearsay and rumour will be discounted in favour of considering facts directly related to the matter.

Any individual expressing a concern or a complaint is encouraged to be accompanied, to any meetings by an advocate of their choosing.

The key principles for raising and addressing concerns or complaints include that:

- They are addressed as near the source as possible.
- They will be discussed with the goal to resolving matters in a mutually satisfactory manner.
- They are made, and dealt with, in a courteous and constructive manner.
- Personnel against whom complaints are made have an opportunity to respond.
- They are handled in a timely, objective and fair manner.
- Persons who have brought forward concerns or complaints will be kept informed in a timely manner.

This Policy is intended to articulate a fair, effective and transparent response for addressing concerns and complaints.

Processes for Addressing Concerns or Complaints

1. Every effort should be made to resolve the matter at the earliest possible stage. Persons receiving or hearing concerns or complaints should encourage the complainant to follow these processes.
2. Staff disputes are subject to processes defined in the appropriate union Collective Agreement or individual contract.
3. When a specific process is provided in legislation, in an employee collective agreement, a Local Education Agreement, or elsewhere in Board policy those complaints shall be handled in the manner specified.
 - 3.1. Where the matter involves alleged physical or sexual abuse against an employee the complaint is subject to the Child Abuse/Neglect policy and must be reported to the Ministry for Children and Family Development and/or the RCMP.
 - 3.2. Where the matter involves discrimination, the process to be followed is outlined in Board policy regarding Discrimination.
 - 3.3. Where the matter involves bullying and harassment the process to be followed is outlined in Board policy regarding Bullying and Harassment or Respectful Workplace.
4. The sequential steps to addressing a concern or complaint are:

Step 1 – Expression of concern or complaint, verbally, in writing, or in person to the individual responsible for the decision or action.

Step 1a – Arrange a meeting to respectfully address the matter, focusing on the issues.

Step 1b – Work together to develop a plan and a timeline for resolution.

Step 2 – If concern or complaint is not resolved, refer the matter in writing to the immediate supervisor (school principal or manager)

Step 2a – Attend a meeting to discuss the matter.

Step 2b – Work together to develop a plan and a timeline for resolution

Step 3 – If the concern or complaint is not resolved at this level, refer the matter to the Assistant Superintendent.

Step 3a – Attend a meeting to discuss the matter.

Step 2b – Work together to develop a plan and a timeline for resolution

Step 4 – If the matter is not resolved, the matter may be appealed to the Board. The Board Appeal Bylaw contains all the details regarding filing such an appeal.