



**DURHAM CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
*Learning and Living in Faith*

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE – 440-6**

### **Concern/Complaint Resolution Process**

Area: Operations  
Policy Reference: Communications (PO440)

Approved: February 16, 2016  
Revised: April 14, 2023

#### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to outline the process for the resolution of concerns/complaints of parents/guardians/caregivers and community members.

#### **2. Definitions**

Nil

#### **3. Procedures**

##### **3.1 Process for Addressing Concern(s)/Complaint(s)**

- 3.1.1 Concern(s)/complaint(s) raised by members of the public pertaining to Board matters shall be directed to the appropriate school Board [department](#). Issues that cannot be resolved at the department level may be referred to the Director's office.
- 3.1.2 Individuals with concern(s)/complaint(s) pertaining to school-based matters, are advised to follow resolution steps 1-4 below.
  - Step 1: Classroom Level
    - The individual should respectfully review the concern/complaint with the staff member most directly involved such as the child's classroom teacher or early childhood educator at a mutually convenient time to seek a collaborative approach to resolution.

- Step 2: School Administrator Level
  - If the concern/complaint is not resolved at the classroom level, it should be discussed with the school principal (or designate). Note: in the case of a concern/complaint expressed by a community member who is not a parent/guardian/caregiver, 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: Senior Administration Level
  - If the concern/complaint is not resolved at the school administrator level, the individual may request that the matter be referred to the family of schools superintendent or other appropriate member of senior administration, including the Human Rights and Equity Advisor. The superintendent/member of senior administration will review and investigate the concern/complaint as it relates to established policies and procedures and will respond to the individual.
- Step 4: Director of Education Level
  - If the concern/complaint is not resolved at the senior administration level, the individual may request that the matter be referred to the Director of Education who will review and investigate the concern/complaint and respond to the individual. The decision/response of the Director of Education will be final.

## 3.2 Meeting Considerations

### 3.2.1 Accessibility

- a) When scheduling a meeting, staff will inquire if attendees have any accessibility requirements, and endeavour to accommodate any stated needs.
- b) If any individual requires accessibility related accommodations for attendance at a meeting, they should notify the organizer of the meeting in advance so that arrangements can be made.
- c) Upon request, the Board will provide, or arrange for the provision of, accessible formats and communications supports for persons with disabilities to facilitate their access to the services of the Board.
- d) Accessible formats and communications support will be provided in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs and at a cost no greater than the regular cost charged to other persons.

- e) The Board will determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support and, in so doing, will consult with the person making the request.

### 3.2.2 Protection of Privacy

- a) Although the subject matter of meetings between parents/guardians/caregivers and staff may be fairly broad, the topics of conversation should be limited to matters pertaining to their own children. Staff are prohibited from sharing or discussing personal details concerning other student(s), and matters related to employee relations such as specific disciplinary measures.
- b) In the event that discussion exceeds the scope of the subject matter that led to the meeting, a subsequent meeting may be scheduled, or if required, the individual will be re-directed to the appropriate personnel to address their additional concern(s)/complaint(s) or becomes a discussion of personal details concerning other students or matters related to employee relations such as specific disciplinary measures, staff will endeavour to re-direct the conversation accordingly. bring closure to the meeting.

### 3.2.3 Human Rights & Equity

- a) In keeping with DCDSB's Anti-Racism Policy (PO200) and its related administrative procedures, supplementary information specific to concerns/complaints related to Human Rights and Equity can be found on DCDSB's [Human Rights, Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination webpage](#).

## 3.3 Roles and Responsibilities

### 3.3.1 Role of Trustees

- a) Members of the community may contact individual Trustees at any time.
  - On all operational matters, Trustees will facilitate the communication process between the individual and the appropriate staff by referring the concern(s)/complaints to the Director of Education. Trustees may direct the parent/guardian/caregiver to the process which should be followed in resolving any concerns/complaints but shall not act as a representative of the individual.
  - On matters of governance (i.e., policy), where appropriate, individual Trustees will bring concerns/complaints from the community to the attention of the whole Board.
- b) Individuals who wish to bring a policy consideration or concern to the attention of the Board of Trustees, should refer to the Public Delegations Policy and Procedure (PO219/AP219-1)

### 3.3.2 Role of Catholic School Councils

- a) Catholic School Councils are established to advise Principals on matters that relate to improving student achievement and enhancing the accountability of the education system. They are not a forum to discuss individual issues related to educators, other staff members, specific students or their parent/guardian/caregiver. Any of these matters brought to a school council member or any school council meeting should be referred immediately to the Principal.

### 3.3.3 Parents/guardians/caregivers/community members shall strive to:

- a) present their concerns/complaints in a respectful manner which allows the opportunity for due consideration of the concern;
- b) allow for a reasonable timeline for addressing and resolving the concern/complaint;
- c) address the concern/complaint first to the staff person(s) responsible for the area to which the concern/complaint directly relates, unless circumstances warrant raising the concern with staff at a higher level;
- d) maintain an openness to receiving information and advice that may be offered by staff or trustees as possible solutions to a concern; and
- e) commit to a mutually respectful, collaborative process, where confidentiality will be respected as much as possible in working towards resolution.

### 3.3.4 Representative of the Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/Caregiver(s)

- a) Parents/guardians/caregivers have the right to have a representative of their choosing in attendance at meetings with staff as additional support to address their child's interests. Parents/guardians/caregivers who wish to invite a representative to support them must notify the principal and/or staff member in advance of a school meeting as to who is anticipated to be in attendance.

### 3.3.5 All Staff, in addressing concerns/complaints shall strive to:

- a) cultivate a climate of respect and trust which focuses on working towards mutually acceptable solutions;
- b) ensure that individuals with a concern/complaint have an adequate opportunity to express the concern/complaint fully;
- c) encourage individuals to address the concern at the level at which the concern is related, except where circumstances warrant otherwise.

- d) adhere to DCDSB related policies and procedures in responding to concerns/complaints, including but not limited to:
- Anti-Racism Policy (PO200) and its attendant administrative procedure AP200-1;
  - Responding to Student Incidents of Racism and Discrimination Administrative Procedure (AP200-1);
  - Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Policy (PO201);
  - Electronic Meetings Policy (PO205);
  - Acceptable Use of Information and Communications Technology Policy (PO431) and its attendant administrative procedure AP431-1; and
  - Accessibility Policy (PO434) and its related administrative procedures.

3.3.6 The Superintendent of Education/Member of Senior Administration shall:

- a) refer concerns/complaints to the appropriate school administrator or staff member and be available to support as needed or requested;
- b) respond to, investigate, and address individuals' concerns/complaints that have been referred to the Senior Administration level.

3.3.7 The Director of Education or designate shall:

- a) provide advice to Board staff and Trustees as needed;
- b) designate resources for ensuring the implementation of and compliance with this administrative procedure;
- c) address individuals concerns/complaints that have been referred to the Director of Education level;
- d) communicate the outcome(s) of concerns/complaints raised with local Trustees, where appropriate;
- e) apprise the Chair of the Board of any local concerns/complaints that may have system-wide implications or may require a system response or Board motion.

#### **4. Sources**

- 4.1 Ontario Human Rights Code
- 4.2 Safe and Accepting Schools Act
- 4.3 Education Act

## **5. Appendices**

Nil

## **6. Related Policies and Administrative Procedures**

- 6.1 Anti-Racism Policy (PO200)
- 6.2 Responding to Student Incidents of Racism and Discrimination Administrative Procedure (AP200-1)
- 6.3 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Policy (PO201)
- 6.4 Electronic Meetings Policy (PO205)
- 6.5 Acceptable Use of Information and Communications Technology Policy (PO431)
- 6.6 Acceptable Use of Information and Communications Technology Administrative Procedure (AP431-1)
- 6.7 Accessibility Policy (PO434)
- 6.8 Customer Service Accessibility Standards Administrative Procedure (AP434-1)
- 6.9 Use of Support Person by the General Public Administrative Procedure (AP434-4)
- 6.10 Monitoring and Feedback on Accessible Customer Service Administrative Procedure (AP434-5)
- 6.11 Accessible Information and Communications (AP434-8)
- 6.12 Code of Conduct Policy (PO610)
- 6.13 Code of Conduct Administrative Procedure (AP610-1)