

REGULATIONS

SUBJECT: PUBLIC CONCERNS

Rationale

The Lambton Kent District School Board is committed to providing the best quality learning opportunities for all students. Every day parents/guardians, volunteers, teachers, and support staff work together with the goal of ensuring student success.

In order to work together effectively, the relationship between home and school must be strong. This relationship can be strengthened through open, receptive and honest two-way communication. It is important to realize that decisions are based on established policies, regulations and procedures.

From time to time there may be a misunderstanding, a lack of communication, or a serious situation that needs to be addressed. When this happens everyone must work together to resolve the issue. A parent or guardian has the right to express concerns, a staff member has the right to respond, and the Board has an obligation to support students, parents/guardians and staff.

If a parent/guardian has a concern about a school matter, the following steps should be followed to resolve the issue:

Step 1: Talk to Your Child's Teacher

The parent/guardian should discuss their concern or issue with the classroom teacher at a mutually convenient time. The parent should write a note or call the school to set up an appointment. Most situations can be resolved at this level.

Step 2: Talk with Your School Principal

If the parent/guardian and the teacher are not able to resolve the issue, the matter should be discussed with the school principal (or designate). The principal (or designate) will gather facts from the parties involved to clarify the problem and work to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. The basis of each investigation will be the Board's expectation that employees and students will follow school code of conduct and Board policies, regulations and procedures.

Step 3: Talk to the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of your School

If the parent/guardian and the school principal are not able to resolve the issue, the parent/guardian may contact the administrative assistant of the school superintendent. The administrative assistant will refer the matter the LKDSB Administrative Officer for review as it relates to established policies, regulations and procedures and will respond to the parent/guardian about his/her concern. The LKDSB Administrative Officer will contact the parent/guardian and the school principal to resolve the matter.

Step 4: Talk with Your School Superintendent

If the parent/guardian and the school principal, with the assistance of the LKDSB Administrative Officer, are not able to resolve the issue, the parent/guardian may contact the school superintendent. The superintendent will review the matter as it relates to established policies, regulations and procedures and will respond to the parent/guardian about his/her concern.

Step 5: Talk with the Director of Education

If the parent/guardian and the school superintendent are unable to resolve the issue, the parent/guardian may contact the Director of Education to discuss the concern. The Director will investigate the matter and respond to the parent about the concerns. In an exceptional situation where a resolution cannot be reached the Director may consider scheduling a mediation session with the parties involved.

If an individual has followed the steps outlined above and still does not feel the matter has been resolved at the local level, the individual may contact the office of the Ontario Ombudsman at www.ombudsman.on.ca. The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Legislature who investigates complaints from the public about Ontario government services, recommending improvements for governance and resolving individual issues. According to the 2014-2015 Ombudsman Annual Report, "We do not replace existing complaint mechanisms; we ensure they work as they should."

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.

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

From time to time the parents/guardians 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 staff employed by the Board.

Parents/guardians have the right to have a representative of their choosing in attendance at meetings with staff. Any costs/expenses associated with such a representative are the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

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

Role of the School Council

School councils were established to act in an advisory capacity to school principals and to the Board on educational matters and are not forums to discuss parent/guardian-teacher-student issues.

Role of the Trustee

Trustees play a very important role in education here in the Lambton Kent District School Board. As representatives of their communities and advocates for students, parents and community members, the local Trustee can assist to facilitate communication between the parent/guardian and the appropriate staff member at the school or Board level. 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.

Concern about a Trustee:

If a parent/guardian/community member has a concern about a Trustee, the individual should contact the Chair of the Board to determine the appropriate steps to resolve the issue. If the concern is about the Chair of the Board, the individual should contact the Director of Education to determine the appropriate steps to resolve the issue.

Concern about a Member of Senior Administration:

If a parent/guardian/community member has a concern about a Superintendent, the individual should contact the Director of Education to resolve the issue. If a parent/guardian/community member has a concern is about the Director of Education, the individual should contact the Chair of the Board.

Implementation Date: August 25, 2015,
Revised: September 13, 2016
Reference: Board Policy