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Belief Statement

The Sudbury Catholic District School Board believes that effective and ongoing communication at every level of the system is fundamental to encouraging strong relationships with parents, students and community. The Board is committed to addressing complaints and concerns in a fair, transparent, respectful and effective manner.

Policy Statement

This policy applies to all parent(s)/guardian(s), adult learners or ratepayers that have a concern regarding a school related issue or with any policy of the Board.

It is the practice of the Sudbury Catholic District School Board that complaints, concerns and questions are addressed at the level at which the complaint or concern originates.

All information shared is bound by the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act as governed by legislation in Ontario. Confidentiality is to be maintained by all parties concerning student and personnel matters.

Policy Guidelines

a) Guidelines for All

Only those concerns or complaints will be considered by Board staff where the complainant or inquirer provides their name and contact information for correspondence purposes.

Parent(s), guardian(s), adult learners or ratepayers will be directed, as appropriate, to address concerns and complaints at the level at which the complaint/concern originates.

b) Guidelines for Trustees

Parents, guardians, adult learners or ratepayers may contact Trustees at any time. Trustees may act on constituent complaints/concerns to help find a resolution by working with appropriate staff (usually the Director of Education or designate). Trustees concern themselves with the implementation of Board Policies as they relate to parent/guardian/ratepayer complaints and/or concerns. Trustees should facilitate the communication process between parent/guardians/stakeholders and the appropriate staff and provide information and direction. Trustees should direct the parent/guardian/stakeholder to the process which should be followed in resolving any complaint/concern or to the appropriate person or step in the process (dependent on the steps the parent/guardian/stakeholders have already undertaken to resolve the complaint/concerns at the time the Trustee is contacted). If in the course of reviewing the complaint/concern, a Board policy is deemed to require review, the Trustee will refer the policy to the Board of Trustees for review and or amendments as appropriate.

c) Guidelines for the Director of Education

Where a Superintendent is unable to satisfy the complaint, he/she shall advise the Director of Education of the matter. The Superintendent will ensure that the Director of Education is apprised of any local concerns that may have system-wide implications or may be the object of media interest or may require a review of policy; the Director of Education will ensure that the Chair of Board is apprised.

The Director of Education will apprise respective Trustees, as appropriate, of the resolution of a particular matter which was initially brought to the Trustee's attention by a parent / guardian / stakeholder.

d) Guidelines for Superintendents

Where a matter cannot be resolved at the school level, the School Superintendent will consult with the Principal regarding the concern or complaint and endeavour to resolve the issue in accordance with Board policies and administrative guidelines. The Superintendent will inform the parent/guardian/stakeholder of the outcome to the extent that it does not contravene any privacy legislation and contractual obligation.

e) Guidelines for Principals

Where a complaint or concern is raised by a parent(s), guardian(s), adult learner or ratepayer, the Principal will consult with the School Superintendent, as appropriate, and endeavour to resolve the issue at the school level in accordance with Board policies and administrative procedures.

Where a complaint or concern cannot be resolved at the school level to the satisfaction of the parent(s), guardian(s), adult learner or ratepayer, the Principal will refer the matter to the School Superintendent.

f) Guidelines for Catholic School Councils

Catholic School councils were established to advise principals on matters such as the 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 Catholic school council member or any Catholic school council meeting will be referred immediately to the principal.

Communication Protocol

If a parent, guardian or stakeholder has a concern about a school matter, the following procedures for review of the issue are available to the parent, guardian, or stakeholder.

Step 1: Review of the Issue with the Student's Teacher/Staff Member

Contact the classroom teacher/staff member to resolve the matter. It is important to maintain regular contact with the school throughout the year.

Step 2: Review by the School Principal

If the parent/guardian/stakeholder and the teacher/staff member are not able to resolve the matter, the parent/guardian/stakeholder may request that the matter be reviewed by the school principal (or designate). The principal (or designate) will review the issues and work to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

Step 3: Review by the Superintendent of Education

If the parent/guardian/stakeholder and the school principal are not able to resolve the matter, the parent/guardian/stakeholder may request that the matter be reviewed by the school's Superintendent of Education. The Superintendent will review the matter and will respond to the parent/guardian/stakeholder about his/her concern.

Step 4: Review by Director of Education

If the parent/guardian/stakeholder and the School Superintendent are not able to resolve the issue, the parent/guardian/stakeholder may request the matter be reviewed by the Director of Education. The Director of Education (or designate) will review the matter and respond to the parent/guardians/stakeholder about the concerns.

Representatives of Parents/Guardians/Stakeholders

From time to time parents/guardians/stakeholders may believe or feel that they need to enlist the support of a representative (e.g., social worker) to adequately address their child's interests. This support may be necessary while parents/guardians/stakeholders are attending meetings with the staff employed by the Board. In all instances where parents/guardians/stakeholders enlist the support of a representative, they should notify the school board contact at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

Parents/guardians/stakeholders 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/stakeholders.

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

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

Matters that should not be discussed by Staff

Although the subject matter of meetings between parents/guardians/stakeholders and staff 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 members are unable to discuss with parents/guardians/stakeholders, including personal details or disciplinary measures concerning other student(s), and matters related to staff performance issues.

In the event that a discussion cannot be limited to the subject matter that led to the meeting, staff will bring closure to any meeting that becomes a discussion of personal details concerning other students or matters related to staff performance issues.

Glossary of Key Policy Terms: N/A

Documents Referenced:

Good Complaints Handling by School Boards of Trustees - Ombudsman of Ontario

Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act (2009)

Good Governance: A Guide for Trustees, School Boards, Directors of Education and Communities (2014)

Policies Referenced:

[EL40 External Relations](#)

[EL60 Internal Relations](#)

[BDR10 Director of Education Role and Job Description](#)

[BDR30 Delegation of authority and accountability to the Director of Education](#)