



A) Purpose:

In our Mission/Vision Statement, we state our belief that our stakeholders should receive accurate and timely information and feedback regarding the implementation of the system's vision. We also believe in inviting open communications and listening attentively to all constructive suggestions to improve our educational service. The purpose of this Policy is to affirm our beliefs and to set in place communications procedures that can facilitate consistency between who we say we are and what we do.

The intent of these communication guidelines is to facilitate positive and timely exchange of information as well as to resolve concerns in a timely manner, enhancing the public image of the school system and creating a more positive learning environment.

B) Procedure

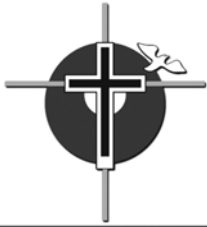
The Communications Officer, under the direction of the Executive Assistant to the Director, has the overall responsibility for public communications for the school system. Inquiries concerning communications or interpretations of this Policy should be directed to the Executive Assistant to the Director for coordinating public communications.

Principals will ensure that the parent communication guidelines are published annually in the school newsletter. Principals will provide all staff with a copy of the parent communication guidelines (refer to Section C).

For the purposes of this policy, the term "staff" means any employee of the Board.

Principals will provide a copy of this policy to their Catholic School Council and will discuss its contents with the Catholic School Council.

Parents, students, staff, volunteers and Trustees have a right to receive public affirmation for their positive effort and, likewise, the right to know when concerns arise, what the concerns are, and who has raised them. All public and interpersonal communications must recognize the dignity of the individual and be conducted fairly and with respect. When concerns arise, they will be dealt with directly by the individuals involved in compliance with Part 1 of this policy.



C) Part 1: Parent Communication Guidelines:

When a parent has a concern or suggestion, it is expected that the concern/suggestion will first be taken up with the individual with whom the parent has the concern/suggestion – for example with the staff member involved. Therefore, the following process is in order:

Step One: Speak to the staff member ...(issue resolved)...(If the issue is not resolved, proceed to step two).

Step Two: Speak to the principal. If you have not yet spoken to the staff member involved, the principal will ask you to do so first.

The Role of the Principal: The principal will involve the staff member in any discussions with the parent(s). The principal may request, at any step in the process, that concerns be put in writing. The principal may involve, at any time in the process, others who may be helpful in resolving the concern: supports from the school board, employee group representatives, the local parish, community agencies.

The Role of Trustees: Parents may contact their local trustee at any time. The trustee will direct the parent to follow the process outlined above in Part 1 for school issues (refer to communication guidelines chart).

The Role of the Catholic School Council: The Catholic School Council is not a forum to discuss parent-teacher-student issues. If these matters are brought to any Catholic School Council member or any Catholic School Council meeting, the concern is to be referred immediately to the principal who will ensure the proper process is followed.

For all other inquiries for school concerns, refer to the School Principal (see part 1).

The effective use of these communication guidelines by all concerned will result in the fair and quick resolution of concerns.

D) Part 2: Public Communication by Board Staff:

School administrators and senior staff are encouraged to communicate with their stakeholder communities and the local news media on a regular basis to ensure the good news of the school system is publicly communicated through all available means.



In order to assist this proactive, positive communication – and to safeguard the public image of the school system – the Communications Officer will:

- Promote, encourage and co-ordinate media access to schools on “good news” stories (e.g. Website Board Highlights)
- Be immediately informed (either directly by the Principal, by the Principal via their Supervisory Officer), of all contentious issues involving or likely to cause public concern and/or result in media interest.
- Manage (in consultation with the appropriate Principal, appropriate Supervisory Officer, Director of Education, Executive Assistant to the Director) media access to students, staff and facilities on all contentious issues.
- Once the Board’s Emergency Plan is initiated, include information on the internet and to the media as required.
- Maintain a log of all media contact with schools on non-contentious issues. Principals will report all such media contacts to the Communications Officer on an FYI basis.
- Manage development, maintenance and content of the Board’s web site to facilitate access to Board information.

E) Part Three: Trustee Communication:

Our Trustees are partners in education. Consequently, communications with our Board of Trustees is encouraged. When contacted by a parent, the trustee will not resolve problems but will instead ensure that concerns are directed back to administration as per item C) Parent Communication Guidelines. For inquiries of a serious nature, the trustee will inform the Superintendent, Board Chair and/or Director of Education who will facilitate a resolution. To facilitate communication with Trustees, the Board web page, www.cdsbeo.on.ca includes a Trustee section. The Trustees’ home phone numbers, email addresses and committee assignments are presented. Beyond the web page, Trustees can be reached by mail or phone at:

Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario
Box 2222
Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0
(613) 258-7757 or 1-800-443-4562, ext. 204.



With respect to overall Trustee communications, Principals shall provide the local trustee and/or Chair/Vice-Chair with the following.

- A copy of the school's newsletters.
- A copy of the school events to which Principals wish to extend a standing invitation
- An invitation to Secondary School Graduation ceremonies.
- A list of Catholic School Council meeting dates, and copies of the CSC minutes and newsletters.

It is understood that due to their work schedules, some Trustees may be unavailable for day time events. However, when a Trustee is able to attend, they will communicate their plans directly with the School Principal.

F) Trustee Communication To Parents of Students in Schools:

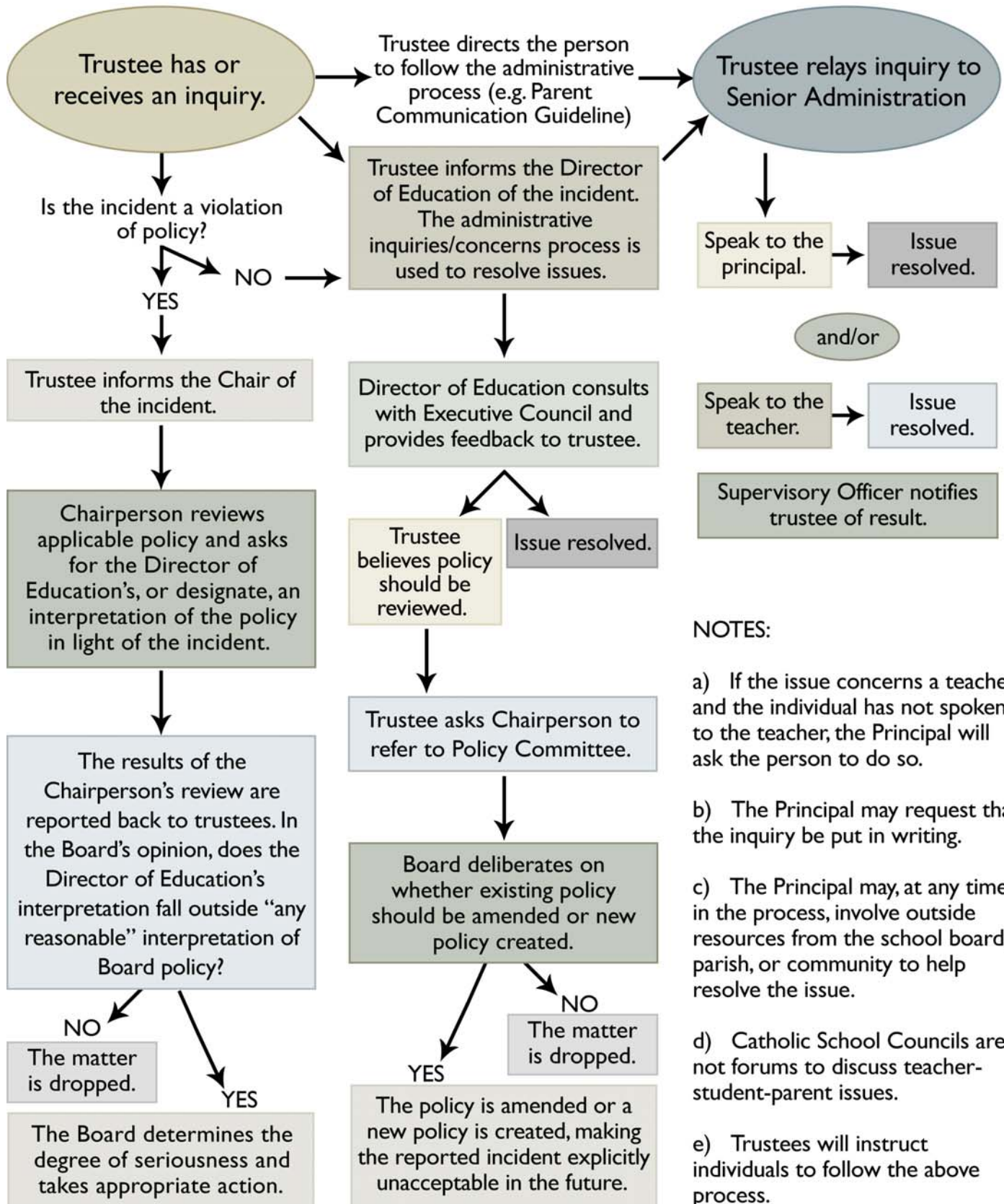
Trustee communications, such as newsletters, that have mass distribution and are paid for with Board funds, will adhere to the following. This applies to communications sent by trustees to all CDSBEO Student families in their counties. These communications include newsletters, brochures, announcements and other forms of written communications. This does not apply to letters sent to individual constituents, Catholic School Councils, school-community groups, letters of congratulations sent home with students, or communications required by Board policy.

- A monthly Trustee newsletter will be created based on board business and distributed to the schools on behalf of Trustees by the Board.
- Trustees are responsible for the content of their communications and will retain full editorial control. Trustees are entitled to access copy from Board minutes (public) documents and Board publications or department updates.
- Trustee newsletters or similar trustee publications produced and paid for by the Board and intended for mass distribution to constituents shall not contain criticisms of other trustees or statements that could cause the Board embarrassment or liability. Copies of circulated newsletters will be forwarded to the Chair of the Board, the Director of Education and the local School Superintendent.



CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

Board Communications Guidelines



NOTES:

- If the issue concerns a teacher and the individual has not spoken to the teacher, the Principal will ask the person to do so.
- The Principal may request that the inquiry be put in writing.
- The Principal may, at any time in the process, involve outside resources from the school board, parish, or community to help resolve the issue.
- Catholic School Councils are not forums to discuss teacher-student-parent issues.
- Trustees will instruct individuals to follow the above process.