

A) Purpose

The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario is committed to encouraging a strong relationship with parents, students and community, which includes a commitment to addressing public concerns in a fair, respectful and effective manner. The purpose of this communication guideline 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.

The CDSBEO, guided by the Board Mission and Vision, believes that the process of public concern is an opportunity to improve relationships with our parents, students and community. We also believe in inviting open communications and listening attentively to all constructive suggestions to improve our educational service.

B) Procedure

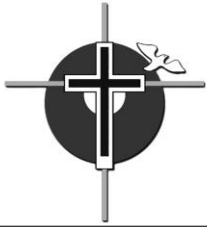
The Communications Officer, under the direction of the Executive Assistant to the Director, has the overall responsibility for public communications for the school system. Inquiries concerning communications or interpretations of this Policy should be directed to the Executive Assistant to the Director 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) **Parent Communication Guidelines:** If a parent/guardian has a concern about a school matter, the following procedures for review of the issue are available to the parent/guardian.

Step One: Review of the Issue with the Child's Teacher

The parent/guardian should review a concern or issue with the classroom teacher at a mutually convenient time.

Step Two: Review by the School Principal

If the parent/guardian and the teacher are not able to resolve the issue, the parent/guardian 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 Three: Review by the Superintendent of Education

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

Step Four: Review by the Director of Education

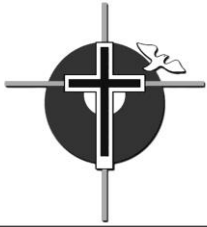
If the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the Superintendent are not able to resolve the issue, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may request the matter be reviewed by the Director of Education. The Director of Education (or designate) will review the matter and respond to the parent(s)/guardian(s) about the concerns. The concern must be submitted in writing, including all details of previous meetings. The Director will provide a written response.

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

From time to time the parent/guardian 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 the staff employed by the Board.

Parents/guardians 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.

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



A representative 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 with Staff

Although the subject matter of meetings between parents/guardians and staff (including meetings at which a representative or a parent/guardian is present) 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 are unable to discuss with parents or guardians.

Such matters that cannot be discussed include, for example, personal details or disciplinary measures concerning other student(s), and personal details related to staff or performance issues related to staff.

In the event that discussion cannot be limited to the subject matter that led to the meeting (generally the education of the parents'/guardians' student(s) at the school in question), as necessary, staff will bring closure to any meeting which becomes a discussion of personal details concerning other students or personal details about staff or issues relating to staff performance.

Role of the Catholic School Council

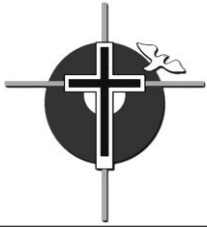
Catholic school councils were established to advise principals on matters such as the school curriculum and code of student behaviour. They are not forums to discuss individual parent/guardian-teacher-student issues. Any of these matters brought to a Catholic school council member or any Catholic school council meeting will be referred immediately to the principal.

D) 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) Trustee Communication

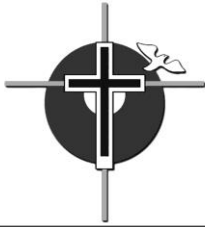
Parents or guardians may contact trustees at any time. Trustees will facilitate the communication process between the parent/guardian and the appropriate staff and provide information and direction. Trustees shall direct the parent or guardian to the process which should be followed in resolving any concerns or to the appropriate person or step in the process (dependent on the steps the parents/guardians have already undertaken to resolve the concerns at the time the trustee is contacted) but shall not act as a representative of the parents or guardians.

To facilitate communication with Trustees, the Board web page, www.cdsbeo.on.ca includes a Trustee section. The Trustees' home phone numbers, and email addresses 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.

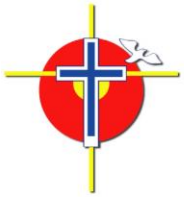
F) Trustee Communication To Parents of Students in Schools

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.

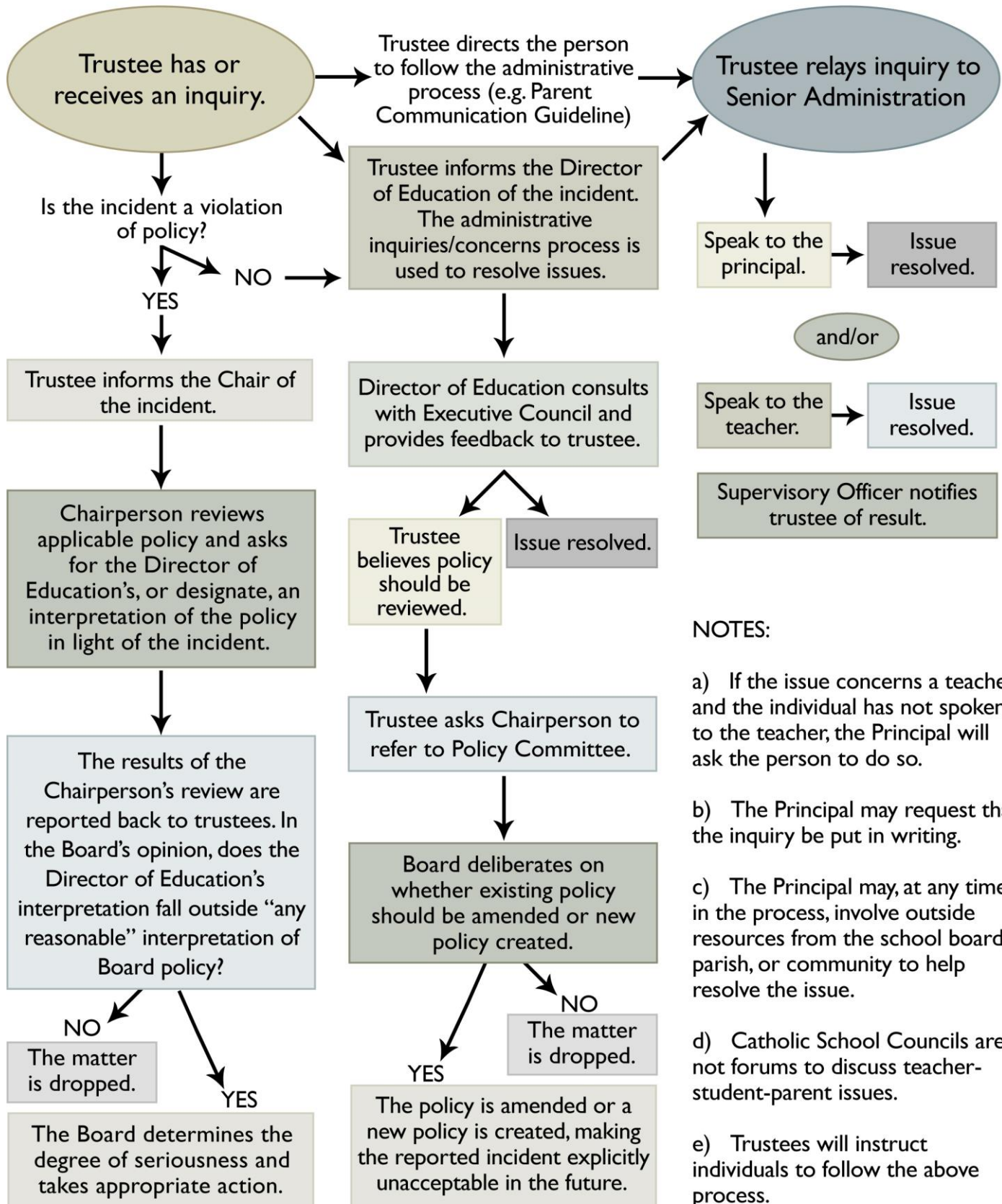
G) Related Documents

B2:15 Duty to Report
B2:13 Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity
B2:17 Staff Response to Inappropriate Student Behaviour
E1:3 Harassment, Workplace Violence and Discrimination
E4:1 Discipline, Suspension and Dismissal – All Staff
F2:1 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy



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.