

POLICY 2.30 – ADDRESSING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

The Board of Education welcomes feedback from students, parents, employees, and the public, which is based upon a sincere desire to improve the quality of education.

Concerns or complaints must never become vehicles for frivolous or vexatious objections or interpersonal conflicts. The Board believes that staff and volunteers should be protected from unnecessary, inappropriate, or spiteful criticism. Additionally, those bringing forward a concern or complaint are to be treated with courtesy and respect.

The facts, issues and circumstances pertaining to concerns or complaints are unique to each and every case. Therefore, this policy sets out guidelines for dealing with expressed concerns or complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness that are intended to support the parties to resolve matters in a positive manner.

The key principles for raising and addressing concerns and complaints include that:

- They are made, and dealt with, in a courteous and constructive manner
- They are addressed as near the source as possible
- They are handled in a timely, objective and fair manner
- Staff will have an opportunity to respond
- Information regarding the progress of the complaint will be communicated; however, any related discipline outcomes cannot be shared

This policy does not replace redress for staff in accordance with provisions within the respective collective agreements.

Unresolved matters, where the decision significantly affects the education, health or safety of the student, may be appealed to the Board using the Board's Appeal Bylaw. The Board acknowledges that employee decisions that do not significantly affect the education, health or safety of a student are within the final authority of the Superintendent.

The Board recognizes that concerns and complaints will occasionally arise and are to be resolved using the following guidelines:

GUIDELINES

1. No anonymous concerns or complaints shall be considered.

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2. Persons receiving or hearing concerns or complaints should encourage the complainant to follow these processes.
3. In the process of resolving a concern, hearsay and rumour will be discounted in favour of considering facts directly related to the matter.
4. Parents, students and/or the public are encouraged to take concerns directly to the staff member involved.
 - 4.1. Where there is a communication breakdown with the staff member, the Principal shall address the concern.
5. Support staff are expected to take concerns to the staff member involved or to seek assistance from a Principal or supervisor.
6. Teachers are expected to take concerns to the staff member involved consistent with the collective agreement and the BCTF Code of Ethics.
7. Concerns regarding school level matters directed to District Office will be referred to the Principal who shall notify the appropriate staff member to address the concern.
8. Concerns directed to a Parent Advisory Committee executive member shall be referred to the Principal.
9. Concerns directed to a Trustee shall be referred to the Superintendent.
10. When a specific process is provided in legislation, in an employee collective agreement, or elsewhere in Board policy those complaints shall be handled in the manner specified.
 - 10.1. Where the matter involves alleged child abuse or neglect against an employee the complaint is subject to child protection policies and must be reported to the Ministry for Children and Family Development and/or the RCMP.
 - 10.2. Where the matter involves workplace bullying and harassment the process will be guided by WorkSafe BC requirements.
11. All partner groups will make every reasonable effort to communicate this policy to their members.
12. The steps to address a concern or complaint are outlined below:
 - 12.1. The complainant will be referred to the staff member or volunteer concerned for resolution of the complaint.

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- 12.2. If the complainant refuses to meet with the staff member or, if resolution is not achieved above the complainant will be referred to the Principal/Vice-Principal who will arrange a meeting with the staff member, the complainant, and the Principal/Vice-Principal in a timely fashion.
- 12.3. If, after the meeting above resolution is not achieved, the complainant will be referred to the Assistant Superintendent/Secretary-Treasurer or designate as appropriate; the staff member will be notified..
- 12.4. In Steps (12.2) and (12.3) the staff member will be provided an opportunity to provide information and be accompanied by an individual of their choosing.
- 12.5. In Steps (12.2) and (12.3) the complainant will be provided an opportunity to provide information and be accompanied by an individual of their choosing. If the complainant is a parent, the parent will be provided with resource material on parent advocacy organizations they can access.