Lambton Kent District School Board

REGULATIONS NO: R-AD-163-26

REGULATIONS

SUBJECT: PUBLIC CONCERNS

Rationale

The Lambton Kent District School Board (LKDSB) is committed to providing the best quality learning opportunities for all students. Parents/guardians, staff, volunteers, and community members work together daily with the goal of ensuring student success.

In order to work together effectively, it is essential to foster and nurture healthy relationships between home and school. This relationship can be strengthened through open and transparent communication. It is important to realize that decisions are based on established policies, regulations and procedures as guided by the protected grounds of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

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. The LKDSB will work to support the resolution of concerns, while supporting the principles of fairness, equity, and inclusion, as well as the human rights and dignity of all.

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/guardian should contact the teacher as per the typical means of communication or contact the school to set up an appointment.

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 understand the concerns and work to resolve the matter in an appropriate and timely manner.

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 and the rights of all individuals as described by the protected grounds of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

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, or if the concerns are involving the school administrator, the parent/guardian may contact the administrative assistant of the school superintendent. The administrative assistant, with direction from the Superintendent, may refer the matter to an LKDSB Administrative Officer for review as it relates to established policies, regulations and procedures who will respond to the parent/guardian about their concern.

Step 4: Talk with Your School Superintendent

If the parent/guardian and the school principal are not able to resolve the issue (following steps 1 to 3), the superintendent will review the matter as it relates to established policies, regulations and procedures and will respond to the parent/guardian about their concern.

Step 5: Talk with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

If the parent/guardian and the school superintendent are unable to resolve the issue, the parent/guardian may contact the CEO to discuss the concern. The CEO will investigate the matter and respond to the parent/guardian about the concerns. In the case where a resolution cannot be reached, the CEO 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 Ontario Ministry of Education Regional Office or 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.

Student and Family Support Office

Parent/guardians have the option of contacting the Student and Family Support Office (SFSO), which can be reached via Sarnia Education Centre/Chatham Regional Education Centre Reception (in-person or phone), email: supportoffice@lkdsb.net, or the SFSO form on the LKDSB website. As per Policy/Program Memorandum No. 170 – *School Board Communication with Parents*, inquiries will be acknowledged within two business days and responded to within five business days. The manner that inquiries are addressed will follow the process outlined above.

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 student(s) at the school in question. For the protection of student personal information, staff are only able to discuss specific personal information about the child of the parent/guardian. 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 which 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.

Staff may not be able to discuss matters that are part of an ongoing investigation by an outside authority, for example police investigation or Children's Aid investigation.

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

From time to time the parents/guardians may feel that they need support in order to 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 an advocate of their choosing in attendance at meetings with staff. Any costs/expenses associated with such a representative are the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

Parents/guardians will notify Principals and staff 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 individual parent/guardian-teacher-student issues.

Role of the Trustee

Trustees play a very important role in education in the Lambton Kent District School Board. As representatives of their communities and advocates for students, parents/guardians and community members, the local Trustee can facilitate the connection 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 outlined above, which should be followed in resolving any concerns, or to the appropriate person, but shall not act as a representative of the Board, as per the Board policy.

Community Member Concern about a LKDSB employee

If a community member has concerns about a LKDSB employee regarding their role as a LKDSB employee or representative of the Board, the community member should contact the school principal or contact the LKDSB Education Centre to be directed to the most appropriate individual to discuss the concern. If the issue cannot be resolved, the community member should follow the steps outlined above to address the concerns with the appropriate person at the Board level.

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

Implementation Date: August 25, 2015

Revised: September 13, 2016, November 24, 2020, September 8, 2026

Reference: Board Policy
Navigating Concerns One-page Reference Document