

**MOOSE FACTORY ISLAND  
DISTRICT SCHOOL AREA BOARD**

<b>ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE NO. 170</b>	
Effective	June 15, 2011
Revision Date	

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**COMMUNICATIONS: ADDRESSING CONCERNS**

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**PURPOSE**

Moose Factory Island District School Area Board strives to engage in positive communication and consultation as described in Board Policy GOV-22 Communications.

This administrative procedure has been developed to support Board policy and to assist in developing trusting and harmonious relationships based on effective communication among all partners in the education system.

The Board and staff recognize that issues and concerns may arise from time to time, and believe that in such cases it is important to follow a common approach to resolve the issues in accordance with the procedures set out in this document and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

**DEFINITION**

**Concern/Complaint:** A concern or complaint is defined as any oral or written communication by an adult, who is not an employee of the Board, who is expressing dissatisfaction with, or criticism of, any actions or methods of an employee of the Board or of its policies, procedures, or programs of the school.

**PROCEDURES****1. Addressing Concerns**

- 1.1. No complaint will be considered unless the individual with the concern provides his or her name and an address or phone number for correspondence.
- 1.2. Wherever possible, concerns relating to school matters will be dealt with at the school level, and other matters will be dealt with by district administration or the Board of trustees, as appropriate.
- 1.3. All concerns will be handled promptly and with courtesy, diplomacy, and clear communication.
- 1.4. The person who has a concern may be requested to submit the concern in writing, with a description of the nature of the concern, including pertinent details. However, failure of the individual to comply with such a request does not exempt the staff

member or immediate supervisor from the responsibility of processing the complaint in accordance with the requirements of this procedure.

- 1.5. When required, details of the concern will be accurately recorded on the prescribed form, Form ADMIN 170-01 Recording and Disposition of Concerns, and shall include information such as names, dates, particulars of interviews, telephone calls, and meetings, action and decisions taken, and action regarding disposition or resolution. Records of concerns will be administered in accordance with the record management and Freedom of Information requirements.
- 1.6. Staff members will ensure that notes or minutes are taken of all meetings held to resolve a concern, and that these minutes can be provided, if requested.
- 1.7. The principal shall maintain a special file into which shall be placed a record of all concerns received and their disposition. The file shall remain in the school at all times and shall be maintained in accordance with established retention schedules. In the case of a serious or potentially serious concern, a copy shall be sent to the supervisory officer and the business administrator/treasurer.
- 1.8. A concerns file shall be maintained at the board office by the supervisory officer and business administrator/treasurer for retention and future reference.
- 1.9. The Board will be informed of all contentious issues which are liable to cause concern in the community.

## **SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES**

### **2. School Concerns Brought to Teacher/Staff Member**

- 2.1. The parent or community member with a concern is expected to discuss the issue with the teacher or other staff member most directly involved.
- 2.2. Most issues can be resolved through discussion and problem-solving at this level. If the issue is not resolved at this point, the concern proceeds to the next step.

### **3. School Complaints Brought to the Principal**

- 3.1. If a parent or community member brings a concern about a school policy, procedure, activity, event or situation to the principal, the principal will undertake one or more of the following actions depending on the nature of the concern and its circumstances:
  - a) contact the parent or community member and resolve the problem;
  - b) gather any relevant information to determine the facts and circumstances;
  - c) consult with the supervisory officer, or other board staff, to seek assistance in resolving the concern. In consultation with the supervisory officer, legal advice may be sought;
  - d) refer the matter for school council discussion and advice where the concern relates to a matter appropriate for school council consideration and does not involve parent-teacher-student issues;

- e) refer the concern to the supervisory officer if the parent or community member does not concur with the decision of the principal and wishes to appeal.
- 3.2. If the principal or the parent refers the matter to the supervisory officer, the supervisory officer will consult with the principal and the parent, make a final decision, and communicate the decision to the parent and the principal.
- 3.3. If the parent brings a concern about a policy or program matter which is beyond the scope or jurisdiction of the school to address, the principal will advise the parent of the appropriate person(s) to whom such concerns should be directed, and the principal will assist the parent with the referral if necessary.

#### **4. School Concerns Brought to the Supervisory Officer**

- 4.1. If a parent or community member brings a classroom, teacher-related, or school concern directly to the supervisory officer for response, the supervisory officer will undertake one or more of the following actions, depending on the nature of the concern and its circumstances:
- a) refer the parent to the principal where prior discussion with the principal has not taken place, and follow up with the principal on the outcome;
  - b) gather any relevant information to determine the facts and circumstances;
  - c) consult with the principal about the concern and advise the principal of options to consider, or make a recommendation to the principal for addressing the concern and inform the parent of the outcome;
  - d) make a decision about the concern in consultation with the principal and inform the parent and the principal about the outcome.

#### **5. School Concerns Brought to the Board Chairperson**

If a parent or parent group brings a concern to the chair of the Board, the matter is referred to the supervisory officer who will then report to the Board on the resolution of the concern.

#### **6. Guidelines for Staff**

- 6.1. In addressing parents' concerns, the staff will strive to:
- a) foster a climate of respect and truth that focuses on working towards mutually-acceptable solutions;
  - b) ensure that every parent with a concern has an adequate opportunity to express the concern fully;
  - c) encourage the parent to address the concern at the level at which the concern is related, except where circumstances warrant otherwise;
  - d) conduct a process for addressing a concern that is seen as fair by the parent and by all parties directly involved in addressing the concern;
  - e) maintain a written record of the concern(s);
  - f) provide the parent with timely updates, as needed, about the progress made in resolving the concern;

- g) follow Board policy, this administrative procedure, and any procedures governed by legislation.

## 7. Guidelines for Parents

7.1. In bringing concerns to the staff or trustees, parents will strive to:

- a) present their concerns to staff or trustees in a respectful manner which allows opportunity for due consideration of the concern;
- b) allow a reasonable timeline for addressing the concern;
- c) address the concern first to the staff person(s) responsible for the area to which the concern directly relates, unless circumstances warrant raising the concern at a higher level;
- d) direct the concern to the school council when the concern relates to a school policy or program matter which can be appropriately addressed by the school council;
- e) direct a concern about a Board policy or program to the supervisory officer or a trustee;
- f) maintain an openness to receiving information and advice that may be offered by the staff as possible solutions to the concern;
- g) ensure that confidentiality is maintained concerning personal or private matters addressed by all parties;
- h) address concerns directly to the Board only after employing all other steps.

## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

### ***Legal References:***

*Education Act sections 302-303 Boards to Consider Views of School Councils*  
Ontario Regulation 298—Operation of Schools, subsections 11(12-20) Duties of Principals Regarding School Councils  
Ontario Regulation 612/00—School Councils, Parent Involvement Committees  
*Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

### ***Board References:***

Board Policy GOV-01 Vision, Mission, and Values  
Board Policy GOV-07 Learning and Working Environment: Equity and Inclusion  
Board Policy GOV-11 Parent and Community Relations  
Board Policy GOV-22 Communications  
Form ADMIN 170-01 Recording and Disposition of Concerns