CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO
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BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

107 Communications Guidelines

DIRECTIONAL POLICY

Governance, Vision, and Strategic Priorities

Title of Administrative Procedure:

Communications Guidelines

Date Approved:

April 2026

Projected Review Date:

March 2031

Directional Policy Alignment:

The Communications Guidelines Administrative Procedure aligns with Directional Policy 100 - Governance, Vision, and Strategic Priorities by supporting the Board's commitment to ensure effective, respectful, and timely communication between the Board, Trustees, parents, students, and the community to support positive relationships and address public concerns.

Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Plan:

The Communications Guidelines Administrative Procedure outlines the Board's commitment to maintaining positive and proactive communications, which assists the Board in the implementation and promotion of its vision and strategic priorities.

CDSBEO Strategic Plan

Purpose

The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario is dedicated to fostering strong relationships with parents, students, and the community by addressing public concerns fairly and respectfully. These communication guidelines aim to facilitate timely exchanges of information and resolve issues efficiently, thereby enhancing the public image of the school system and creating a better learning environment. Guided by the Board Mission and Vision, the CDSBEO views public concerns as opportunities to improve relationships and believes in open communication and attentively considering constructive suggestions to enhance educational services.

Parent Communication Guidelines:

All public and interpersonal communications must recognize the dignity of the individual and be conducted fairly and with respect. 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.

1. **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.

2. **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.

3. **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 their concern.

4. **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 to the Director of Education in writing, including all details of previous meetings.

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, including Trustee contact information. Beyond the web page, Trustees can be reached by mail or phone at: Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, Box 2222, 2755 County Road 43, Kemptville, K0G 1J0, 1-800-443-4562

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 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 students (subject to Safe Schools legislation), and personal details related to staff or performance issues related to staff. These requirements are in keeping with all Ontario privacy laws which govern school boards in the province, including the Education Act, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and the Personal Health Information Protection Act.

Role of the Catholic School Council

Both PICs and Catholic School Councils, encourage parent involvement in support of student achievement, equity and well-being. All schools in Ontario have a school council. They are important advisory bodies to the schools and school board. The purpose of a Catholic School Council is, through the active participation of parents, is to provide a forum through which parents and other members of school communities can contribute to improving student achievement and increasing accountability of the education system to parents. 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.

Audio and Video Recording of Meetings

CDSBEO is required under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) to protect the personal information of students and staff, including information such as a person's image, voice, or views where they can be identified.

While the Criminal Code permits recording in certain circumstances, the Board must still meet its privacy obligations under MFIPPA. Meetings between parents/guardians and Board staff often involve personal information and take place where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. Recordings may capture personal information and result in it being shared or stored outside the Board's control.

To reduce the risk of unauthorized collection, use, or disclosure of personal information, parents/guardians and their representatives are not permitted to record meetings or conversations with Board staff or trustees, whether in person, virtual, or by phone. An exception may apply where recording is required as an accessibility accommodation, and the discussion is limited to information about the parent's own child. If a meeting is recorded without authorization, the Board may end the meeting or require that communication continue in writing.

Responsibilities

Trustees are responsible for:

- Ensuring alignment of this Administrative Procedure with the Governance, Vision, and Strategic Priorities Directional Policy
- Reviewing the Communications Guidelines Administrative Procedure as part of its regular policy and procedure review schedule
- Facilitating communication between parents/guardians and appropriate staff as per the Board Communications Guidelines
- Providing information and direction to parents/guardians about the resolution process for concerns
- Ensuring public communications do not contain criticisms of other Trustees or statements that could embarrass or cause liability to the Board
- Adhering to all provincial privacy legislation which governs Ontario school boards including the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Education Act

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- Designating resources for ensuring the implementation of and compliance with this Administrative Procedure
- Overseeing the overall public communications for the school system through the

Communications Lead
- Reviewing unresolved issues from parents/guardians as the final step in the concern resolution process
- Providing a response to parents/guardians when reviewing concerns
- Upholding the dignity of individuals and ensuring fair and respectful communication
- Adhering to all provincial privacy legislation which governs Ontario school boards including the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Education Act, and the Personal Health Information Protection Act

Superintendents of Schools are responsible for:
- Reviewing unresolved issues from parents/guardians if the school principal and parent/guardian are not able to resolve the issue
- Providing a response to parents/guardians when reviewing concerns
- Upholding the dignity of individuals and ensuring fair and respectful communication
- Handling issues of concern involving, or likely to cause public concern, in consultation with the Communications Lead
- Adhering to all provincial privacy legislation which governs Ontario school boards including the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Education Act, and the Personal Health Information Protection Act

The Communications Lead is responsible for:
- Overseeing all public communication for the school system
- Using all available public channels to share information on behalf of the board as appropriate, including social media, the board website, media releases, and direct parent email communication
- Ensuring that the parent communication guidelines are shared every September in the CDSBEO Parent Newsletter, and maintained on the CDSBEO website
- Upholding the dignity of individuals and ensuring fair and respectful communication
- Manage development, maintenance, and content for the Board website and social media channels to facilitate access to information
- Adhere to all provincial privacy legislation which governs Ontario school boards including the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Education Act, and the Personal Health Information Protection Act
- Manage all freedom of information requests

Principals and Vice-Principals are responsible for:
- Ensuring staff are familiar with the Communications Guidelines Administrative Procedure
- Providing the local Trustee and/or Chair/Vice-Chair with relevant school materials

including:

- A copy of the school newsletter
- A copy of the school events calendar
- An invitation to school events, such as moving-on elementary school celebrations, and Secondary School Graduation ceremonies
- A list of Catholic School Council meeting dates, and copies of CSC meeting minutes and newsletters

- Providing a copy of this policy to their Catholic School Council and discuss its contents
- Notifying parents/guardians if they have the right to have a representative of their choosing in attendance at meetings with staff, subject to any limitations established in the procedures
- Adhering to all provincial privacy legislation which governs Ontario school boards including the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Education Act, and the Personal Health Information Protection Act

Staff are responsible for:

- Maintaining the confidentiality of any matter discussed at meetings with parents/guardians
- Avoiding any disclosure of personal details or disciplinary measures performance issues concerning other students or staff in keeping with their professional obligations
- Adhering to all provincial privacy legislation which governs Ontario school boards including the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Education Act, and the Personal Health Information Protection Act

Parents/Guardians are responsible for:

- Familiarizing themselves with this administrative procedure
- Engaging in proactive communication and fostering a positive relationship with the school system
- Following the steps involved in the Parent Communication Guidelines

Progress Indicators

- Compliance with confidentiality requirements as per Ontario privacy legislation
- Effective resolution of parent inquiries
- Inclusion of this Administrative Procedure in Catholic School Council minutes

References

- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Education Act
- Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, S.O. 2004
- PPM 170: School Board Communication with Parents

Relevant Documents

- Freedom of Information
- Privacy Breeches