



YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Policy and Procedure #267.0, Supporting Community Concerns

Executive Summary

The Supporting Community Concerns policy and procedure reinforces the importance of high standards of practice with regard to service provision by the Board. Dialogue and collaborative relationships between trustees, staff members and members of the public are essential to increase student success and well-being, deliver effective and sustainable educational programs and ensure the effective management of Board resources.

Stakeholder Groups with Responsibilities under this Policy and Procedure:

- Board of Trustees
- Individual Trustees
- Director of Education
- Associate Directors and Coordinating Superintendent(s)
- Superintendents of Education
- Staff members
- Students
- Community members

Relationship to Board Priorities

This policy and procedure supports the priorities in the Multi-Year Plan with regard to student success and well-being, the delivery of effective and sustainable education programs and the stewardship of Board resources. It supports confidence in public education by fostering collaborative relationships and ensuring transparency and accountability in all Board operations.

Legislative Context and Related Documents

[Shared Solutions A Guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts](#)

[Policy #237.0, Parent, Family and Community Engagement](#)

[Policy #242.0, Standards of Conduct](#)

[Policy #240.0, Human Rights: Code-Related Harassment and Discrimination](#)

[Policy #250.0, Violence Prevention and Intervention and Non-Code Workplace Harassment - Employees](#)

[Policy #285.0, Board Policies, Procedures and Supporting Documents](#)

[Policy #407.0, Accessibility](#)

[Policy #668.0, Caring and Safe Schools](#)

[York Region District School Board Trustee Code of Conduct](#)

[Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)

It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property, or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities, will respect the policies and procedures of the Board. The term “parents” refers to both biological/adoptive parents and guardians in all Board policies and procedures.



Board Policy #267.0

Supporting Community Concerns

1. Policy Statement

The Supporting Community Concerns policy reinforces the importance of high standards of practice with regard to services provided by the Board. Dialogue and collaborative relationships between trustees, staff and members of the public are essential to increasing student success and well-being delivering effective and sustainable educational programs and ensuring the effective management of Board resources.

The York Region District School Board is committed to increasing confidence in public education through accountability and transparency and believes that community concerns should be addressed in a collaborative way between the community member and staff at the school and/or department. Community concerns should be supported in a fair and respectful manner that results in a shared understanding and reflects the Board's [Mission, Vision and Values](#).

2. Application

The Supporting Community Concerns policy and procedure reinforces the importance of engaging in dialogue, with staff at the school and/or department, to support student success. It outlines processes for addressing concerns that fall under existing Board policy and how day-to-day operational matters are to be addressed through staff.

Most situations can be resolved by cooperating to solve issues, building positive relationships and engaging in constructive dialogue with those closest to the issue. Individuals are encouraged to dialogue with their principal, manager, superintendent or supervisor to determine the most appropriate way to address the concern. The Supporting Community Concerns procedure outlines how concerns can be addressed in a positive and constructive way.

Where appropriate, and based on the unique circumstances surrounding a concern, individuals may be directed by the principal, manager, superintendent or supervisor to one of the following existing processes.

- a) [Human Rights: Code-Related Harassment and Discrimination](#) policy and procedure for reports of code-related harassment and discrimination.
- b) [Violence Prevention and Intervention and Non-Code Related Workplace Harassment – Employees](#) policy and procedure for reports of school or workplace violence and non-code related harassment involving staff.
- c) [Accessibility](#) policy and procedure for the provision of services under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

- d) [Trustee Code of Conduct and Complaint Protocol for the Trustee Code of Conduct](#) for reports of inappropriate conduct by a trustee.
- e) [Standards of Conduct](#) policy and procedure for reports of professional misconduct, inappropriate conduct or behaviours by the Director of Education, an employee or community member.
- f) [Caring and Safe Schools](#) policy and procedures for reports of inappropriate conduct by a student.

As representatives of their communities, trustees are available to support and facilitate the communication between members of the community and staff with regard to day-to-day operational matters. Trustees elevate the voice of parents, students and community members when engaging in dialogue about decisions of the Board. Trustees may be contacted at any time for guidance in determining who to reach out to and when. Their role is to support members of the community to navigate the system. They may not act as a direct representative of the community member(s).

In accordance with the [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#) or other applicable legislation, every attempt will be made to respect the confidentiality and personal rights of all parties. Specific details of any discussion and/or resolution involving individuals will only be disclosed to those who require the information to execute their duties.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- a) reviewing the Supporting Community Concerns policy in accordance with the priorities in the [Multi-Year Plan](#) and the approved policy review cycle;
- b) understanding and communicating with members of the community about the Supporting Community Concerns policy, as required; and
- c) addressing concerns related to the Director of Education in accordance with applicable Board policies and procedures.

3.2 Individual Trustees are responsible for:

- a) considering themes expressed by a member of the community formally or informally as part of their regular decision making at meetings of the Board;
- b) understanding the process by which day-to-day operational concerns should be addressed in accordance with the Supporting Community Concerns policy and procedure;
- c) supporting community members with navigating the Supporting Community Concerns policy and procedure;
- d) reaching out to the Director of Education, Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services or the Chair to seek clarity with regard to the process by which day-to-day operational concerns should be addressed, when required,
- e) providing guidance to community members in determining the appropriate process that should be used to address the concern;

- f) encouraging communication between members of the community and staff, where applicable;
- g) discussing [governance-related](#) matters with the Board Chair to determine appropriate next steps in accordance with applicable Board policy, procedure and Operational By-Law; and
- h) addressing concerns about how an operational matter has been handled with the Director of Education.

3.3 Board Chair is responsible for:

- a) providing advice and guidance to individual trustees; and
- b) working with trustees to address [governance-related](#) matters including but not limited to scheduling an item for discussion at an appropriate committee meeting.

3.4 The Director of Education is responsible for:

- a) implementing and operationalizing the Supporting Community Concerns policy and procedure; and
- b) supporting trustees' awareness of how concerns are addressed.

4. Contact

Director's Services, Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services
Education and Community Services

5. History

Approved: April 2016
Working Document: September 2015, October 2017, December 2019
Revision Drafted: May 27, 2020
Revised July 2018, June 2020



Board Procedure #267.0

Supporting Community Concerns

1. Procedure Statement

The Supporting Community Concerns procedure outlines the processes available to community members to address concerns at the local level.

2. Application

Where appropriate, and in order to facilitate dialogue and build relationships members of the community are encouraged to engage in informal discussion at the local level. To support this process participants may refer to the [Shared Solutions: A Guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts](#) for best practices and strategies to engage in constructive conversations.

For school and student-related matters;

- a) arrange a meeting with the appropriate staff member at a mutually convenient time,
- b) if further assistance is required, the school principal, or designate, may be contacted to review the matter, mediate and help facilitate the process, and
- c) contact the [superintendent of education](#) if the matter remains unresolved.

For non-school or non-student related concerns, the local superintendent of education should be contacted to consider the concern and engage the appropriate staff members.

Members of the community may contact their [local trustee](#) at any time.

If the matter remains unresolved following discussion with staff members, or in cases where the community member expressing the concern is uncomfortable working with the staff member(s) in the steps outlined above, the following process may be followed.

1. Contact the Director's Office. The concern will be reviewed to confirm if it falls within the jurisdiction of the Board. If the concern does not fall within the Board's jurisdiction, staff will advise the community member and recommend possible alternative options, where appropriate.
2. Where the concern falls within the jurisdiction of the Board and does not fall under another Board policy, and with the consent of the community member, an informal conversation will be scheduled with the appropriate staff member(s) to discuss the concern and needs. Both sides should seek to understand and work towards a potential solution. The outcome of the discussion and appropriate next steps will be shared with the Director's Office by the staff member(s) for information.

3. If the community member feels the concern requires further consideration, the Director may be contacted. The Director will determine appropriate next steps.

Accommodations to support the completion of a submission to the Director's Office or support participants in the process are available through the [Human Rights Commissioner's Office](#).

Following the completion of the steps outlined above, if a community member feels the appropriate process has not been followed, they may contact the [Ontario Ombudsman](#).

3. Responsibilities

3.1 The Director of Education shall:

- a) allocate staff and resources to support the Supporting Community Concerns procedure.

3.2 Director's Office and Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services shall:

- a) provide guidance to trustees and community members regarding the Supporting Community Concerns policy and procedure;
- b) forward concerns to the appropriate staff member or Board committee for action; and
- c) track the outcome of each concern.

3.3 The Associate Director(s) and Coordinating Superintendent(s) shall:

- a) engage appropriate staff members to consider concerns raised, where applicable;
- b) participating as needed to discuss the concern; and
- c) communicating the outcome(s) of concerns raised with the Director's Office and Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services, as applicable.

3.4 Superintendents of Education shall:

- a) support trustees, staff members, and community members during the process;
- b) engage appropriate staff members to respond to concerns raised, where applicable; and
- c) follow-up on concerns that have not been addressed by staff members.

3.5 The Director, Associate Director(s), Coordinating Superintendent(s) and Superintendent(s) of Education shall:

- a) engage in dialogue with members of the community who have concerns about system matters.

3.6 Principals shall:

- a) support staff members and members of the community during the process;
- b) engage in dialogue with members of the community who have concerns about school matters;

- c) review concerns to determine if there is another Board policy under which the matter falls and take appropriate actions; and
- d) ensure personal details about students or staff members are not discussed with members of the community.

3.7 Managers shall:

- a) engage in dialogue with members of the community who have concerns about department activities at the request of the Director, Associate Director, Coordinating Superintendents or Superintendent of Education.

3.8 Staff members shall:

- a) engage in dialogue with community members about school or department concerns, as required.

3.9 Community Members shall:

- a) when addressing a concern, follow the steps outlined in the appropriate Board policy and/or procedure;
- b) engage in dialogue with staff members about the school or department concern, as required;
- c) notify staff member(s) if they plan to bring a representative to any meeting;
- d) contact Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services if the concern persists to discuss possible next steps; and
- e) understand that day-to-day operational matters are to be addressed through school or department staff, and
- f) contact the local trustee for guidance in navigating the process.

3.10 Representatives shall:

- a) understand that the cost associated with participation in meetings is the sole responsibility of the community member; and
- b) ensuring that all information discussed at the meeting remains confidential.

4. Definitions

4.1 Community Members

Community members include, but are not limited to, committee members, parent(s)/guardian(s), volunteers, visitors, service providers, community partners and all other non-staff members who attend, visit and who are invited to or who perform work on Board property.

[Ontario Ombudsman](#) (As defined by Ombudsman Ontario)

An independent officer of the Ontario Legislature who investigates complaints from members of the public about Ontario government services, recommending improvements for governance and resolving individual issues.

4.2 Representative

A representative is a support person identified by the community member who may attend any meeting with staff.

5. Contact

Director's Services, Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services
Education and Community Services

6. History

Approved: April 2016

Revised July 2018

Working Document: October 2017, December 2019