

## COMMUNITY MEMBER CONCERN PROTOCOL

### Background

Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools supports the rights of parents and members of the public to make inquiries into the conduct of operations of the district. The District realizes that parent concerns or conflicts may arise and must be resolved in a timely manner. Through implementing a process for conflict resolution, the District will be better able to promote conflict resolution that is ethically sound and that responds to the needs of students, staff, parents, and the public good. To this end, the District values the instruction of the Gospel and adherence to the basic principles of natural justice in resolving matters of conflict. Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools always seeks resolution through a climate of respect, trust, and fairness in working towards mutually understandable solutions.

### Principles

1. As Christians we are called to uphold the inherent dignity and worth of our neighbours and to bring our concerns directly to those who may have offended us. Therefore, the District will enact approaches to conflict resolution that seek to obtain the truth and further a person's right to know the source of a concern.
2. The District recognizes the freedom of all members of the school community (students, staff, parents, and neighbours) to voice their concerns in an appropriate manner to the appropriate school personnel.
3. This procedure aligns with the basic Channels of Communication protocol for the District, as outlined within Administrative Procedure 151 – Channels of Communication.
4. Concerns or complaints must be made at an appropriate time, place, and manner as prescribed by Sections 27(1) and 16(2) of the *School Act*.
5. Concerns or complaints must not be made in front of students, during class time, or in the presence of co-workers.
6. Provisions within this administrative procedure will not influence the reality that conflict resolution protocols are always conducted according to the scope or severity of a concern that has been presented. Therefore their application will vary according to the District's need to assure:

- 6.1. the safety and well-being of students, staff, members of the public;
  - 6.2. responsiveness to legal statutes including the provisions of the School Act, Collective Agreements and District policies and administrative procedures;
  - 6.3. respect for the Codes of Conduct that are exercised by professional associations of employees within the District.
7. Notwithstanding the application of the previous principle, when investigations are required to understand matters that are in dispute between parties, the basic principles of natural justice and procedural fairness as they apply to a respondent will be supported in the following manner:
- 7.1. Notice – a respondent to a concern is given adequate understanding of the nature of a concern;
  - 7.2. Opportunity to Present One's Case – a respondent to a concern is given the opportunity to respond;
  - 7.3. Duty to Consider all Facts – a decision - maker is required to consider all relevant evidence and information pertaining to a concern prior to making a decision;
  - 7.4. Right to Representation – a respondent has the right to seek advice or assistance from an advocate in responding to concerns.

## **Procedures**

1. In making a formal inquiry, the person must be prepared to directly address his/her concerns in person or in writing to the person(s) involved, otherwise known as the “first contact.”
2. Inquiries or subsequent appeals that may be necessary will be limited to the impact of a decision on a parent's child and not regarding other children in a school community.
3. A school trustee, upon receiving an inquiry, will refer the parent or public member back to the school or department and will inform the Superintendent of the complaint.
4. Parents must address concerns directly to teachers before raising these concerns with the school administration when their concerns are about their child's teacher, program, and/or program support;
5. If a parent has a concern about the school administration, the parent is expected to deal with that concern with the school administration first, before raising these concerns with the Superintendent of Schools.
6. A concern or complaint must be handled in a confidential manner in accordance with the Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

7. As the Superintendent serves as the final appeal for employee matters, all unresolved concerns at the school level regarding employee matters will be referred to the Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources for resolution.
8. As outlined in Policy 13 – Appeals and Hearings Regarding Student Matters, since the Superintendent serves as the final appeal on all student matters not appealable to the Minister of Education, the Superintendent will engage the Assistant Superintendent, Learning Services to initially address such matters unresolved at the school level prior to establishing a formal hearing process as outlined in Administrative Procedure 380 – Student Appeal Procedures.
9. Failing resolution of a matter by the Superintendent, the individual will be afforded the opportunity to write a letter explaining his/her concern to the Board along with his/her suggestions for resolution.
10. Failing resolution of a matter at the Board level, the individual shall be informed of his/her rights to appeal Board decisions that apply to Section 103, 104, and 105 of the School Act.
11. In the event that a parent initiates a concern with an affiliate to the District other than the “first contact,” the attached “Protocol for Parent Concerns” as outlined in Appendix A, will be followed.
12. The school and all District support services and personnel have a responsibility to facilitate communication and to provide procedural direction to parents who initiate complaints or concerns in accordance with District practices.

References: Section 27, *School Act*

Section 16, *School Act*

Section 20, *School Act*

Section 27, *School Act*

Section 45.1, *School Act*

Section 113, *School Act*

Section 123, *School Act*

Section 124, *School Act*

Administrative Procedure 151 – Channels of Communication

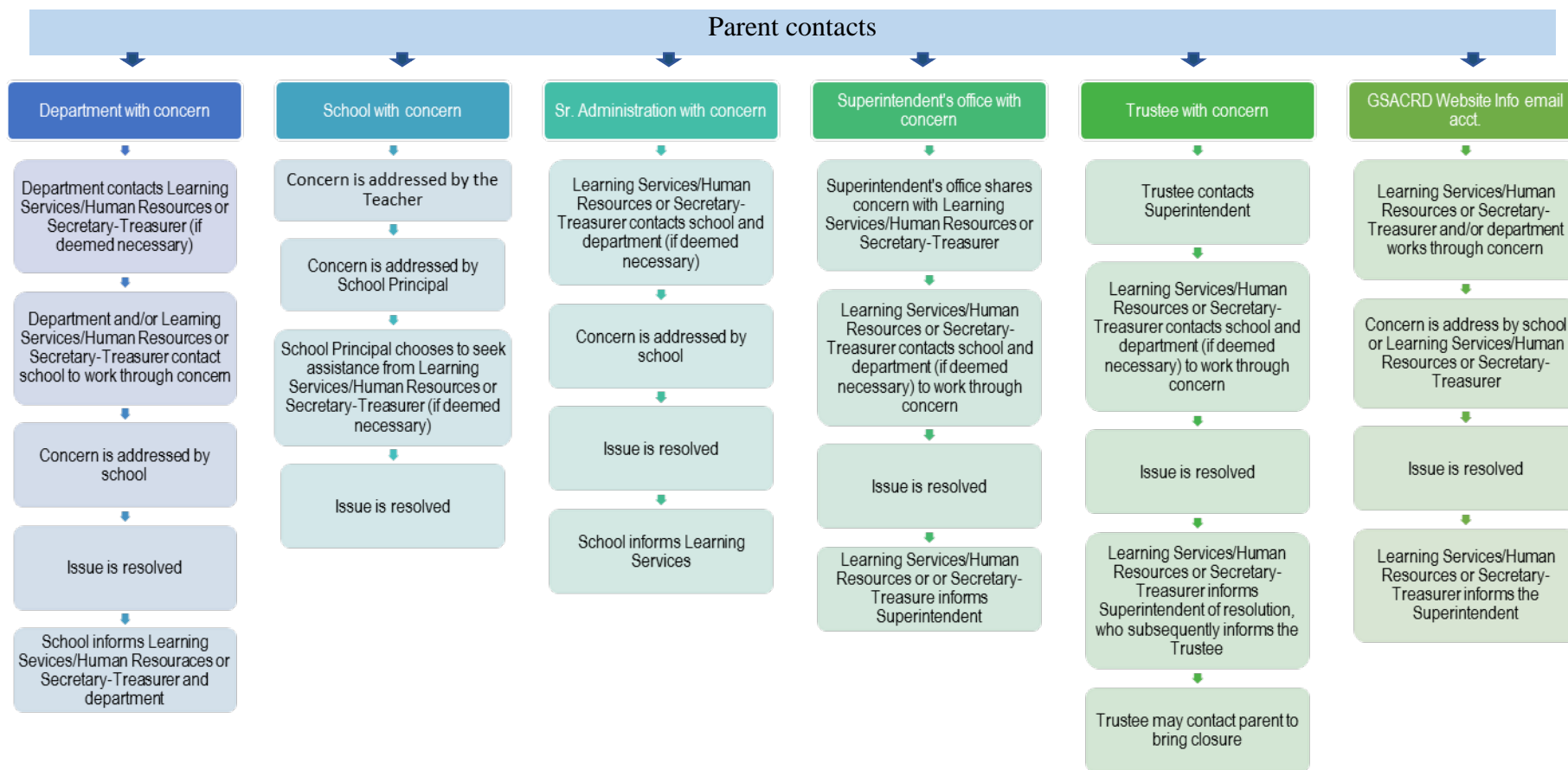
Administrative Procedure 154 – Public Civility on School / District Sites

Administrative Procedure 380 – Student Appeal Procedures

Policy 13 – Appeals and Hearings Regarding Student Matters

Implementation Date: May 12, 2017

Protocol for Parent Concerns



Notes:

- Departments that refer to the Secretary -Treasurer: Finance, Transportation, Operation Services.
- Departments that refer to Learning Services: Learning Technology Services, Student Services. Student matters are referred to Learning Services.
- Employee matters are referred to Human Resource Services.