

502.1AP – Addressing Parent Complaints

Purpose

The Board of Education of Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools (NLPS) recognizes that from time to time concerns regarding the operation of the school district will arise. The Board, acting on the basis of its policy-making role, believes it should deal with complaints concerning specific schools, personnel, programs or procedures only after the usual channels of communication and problem solving have been thoroughly explored. The Board also places trust in its employees and desires to support their action in a manner that frees them from unnecessary or unwarranted criticism and complaints.

Complaints, questions or expressions of concern should be dealt with in a manner that reflects mutual respect and the principles of fair process. Administrative procedures for dealing with such situations should ensure that:

- Complaints are handled as near to the source as possible,
- Complaints are investigated and resolved expeditiously,
- Complaints are dealt with in a courteous and constructive manner, and
- Personnel against whom complaints are made have an opportunity to respond.

The Board will be provided with information from Senior Administration regarding inappropriate employee behaviour within the requirements of the *BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Carefully limiting the awareness of the investigation to those who need to know will be the fundamental determinant in deciding what information should be transmitted to the Board of Education.

Procedure

When no procedure is provided in legislation, in an employee collective agreement or elsewhere in Board policy for complaints, those complaints shall be handled in the following manner.

When action or investigation is requested by the complainant, or where it is appropriate, the normal channel to follow will be from complainant to employee, to the employee's immediate supervisor, and then to senior administration. Every effort should be made to resolve the concern at the earliest possible stage. Persons receiving or hearing complaints should advise the complainant to follow the step below in consecutive order:

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- Step One:* Take the matter directly to the teacher or staff person. Discuss the concern regarding the action, policy, procedure or practice.
- Step Two:* Arrange a meeting with the staff person and the administrator of the school if *Step One* does not sufficiently address the concern. This meeting should focus specifically on the issue.
- Step Three:* Arrange a meeting with the administrator the school if *Step Two* does not sufficiently address the concern.
- Step Four:* Arrange a meeting with the district administrator of Student Services (if your child has special needs) or the Assistant Superintendent assigned to your child's school, if *Step Three* does not sufficiently address the concern.
- Step Five:* Upon following theses steps, students and/or parents who wish to appeal to the Board of Education a decision or action made by an employee which significantly affects the education, health or safety of the student may do so in writing directly to the Superintendent following the procedure for lodging an appeal under Section 11 of the *School Act* and *AP 325 - Appeals*.
- Step Six:* Upon delivering its decision, the Board of Education will also inform the appellant(s) of their right to appeal the decision to a Superintendent of Achievement in the Ministry of Education (see Section 11, the *School Act*).

See also the Board of Education of School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) Parent/Student Appeals Bylaw No. 2 pertaining to Appeals under Section 11 of the *School Act*.

Legal References:

The School Act
The Board Of Education Of School District 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) Parent/Student Appeals Bylaw No. 2
AP 325 – Appeals
Administrative Procedures Manual – *Notice of Appeal*
'Speaking Up!' – www.bccpac.bc.ca

Monitoring Method:

Board of Education / Superintendent

Monitoring Frequency:

Annual

Previous Policy Number:

AP424; AP325

Adopted:

1996.01.31

Amended:

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