

Administrative Procedure 152

PARENT / PUBLIC / STAFF INQUIRIES - DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Background

The Black Gold School Division is a publicly funded entity and as such has an obligation to be open and transparent in its operations as outlined in the Education Act and all other pertinent Acts and Regulations. The Division has historically provided many different types of information openly to the public through both routine disclosure and active dissemination and, where appropriate, will continue to do so. That obligation is balanced by the appropriate privacy of personal information (refer to Administrative Procedure 180: Freedom of Information and Privacy). Additionally, it is imperative that all communication whether verbal, written, or through social media be civil and respectful in tone and content.

Parents/Guardians

Background

Black Gold School Division acknowledges that parents/guardians have a legitimate right to participate in educational decision-making for their children and express their concerns within appropriate channels. At the same time, the Division does have a responsibility to provide its staff with a safe and respectful workplace environment free from harassment, abuse, or threats.

According to the Alberta Teacher's Association, harassment in the school context is defined as persistent parental or community criticism of or interference with school programs, staff performance, or interaction with students that is unwarranted and/or unsubstantiated. In some instances, harassment may constitute a contravention of the Education Act (Section 256). Threats to, or assaults upon school staff are criminal offences and are governed by the Criminal Code of Canada.

In order to maintain a high level of cooperative and collaborative parent-school interaction, the Division expects parents/guardians to foster positive and respectful relationships with teachers, Principals, other school support staff, and professionals who provide supports and services to students in the school (as per the Education Act Part 3 Section 32 d, e, f - Parent Responsibilities).

Procedures

1. The Division understands that all members of its school community contribute to the success of its schools, and we each share in the responsibility of ensuring our individual conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment.
2. As a parent/guardian of a student in the Division, you can expect to be treated as a valued partner in your child's education by your school. In return, you are expected to:
 - 2.1 Treat all staff with dignity and respect
 - 2.2 Interact with other parents and children in a polite manner

- 2.3 Work to resolve differences in a positive, proactive manner
- 2.4 Encourage your child(ren) to be respectful
- 3. Interactions with staff should always be:
 - 3.1 Private
 - 3.2 Professional and respectful
 - 3.3 Focused on your child's best interest
- 4. School grounds and buildings are the private property of the Division. There are procedures in place to ensure the safety of students, staff, and visitors. Parents/guardians are required to sign in to all buildings, and they are confined to the office area unless permission is specifically given otherwise. Additionally, no person shall:
 - 4.1 Disrupt the proceedings of the school
 - 4.2 Loiter or trespass in the building or grounds
 - 4.3 Conduct themselves in a manner that is disrespectful to students, staff, or other parents
- 5. Parents/guardians will communicate directly with the teacher if they have any questions about their child(ren)'s programming, behaviour, or other classroom-related concerns. As situations are best resolved at the school level, parents/guardians will use the following channels to address their concerns:
 - 5.1 First: Communicate concern(s) to the teacher
 - 5.2 Second: If the concern is not resolved after speaking with the teacher, communicate concerns to the school-level administration. (refer to Appendix B – Parents as Partners in Education).

The Division respects its employees' wellness. If you plan on communicating with teachers or school administration by telephone or email, please do so between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Staff will reply at their earliest practical opportunity.
- 6. Parents/guardians will support a safe, welcoming, caring environment online. Before parents/guardians post to social media, they are encouraged to ask themselves:
 - 6.1 Is it true?
 - 6.2 Is it necessary?
 - 6.3 Is it kind?
 - 6.4 Have I spoken to the people that can address this before posting online?
- 7. Actions may be taken against members of the public whose conduct has resulted in any form of harassment of employees, students, parents, volunteers, visitors or representatives of the Division. These may include, but are not limited to:
 - 7.1 Restricted access to property and person
 - 7.2 Charges of slander, libel or defamation
 - 7.3 Trespass notice

7.4 Charges being laid under the Criminal Code

Public

The Division acknowledges the right of members of the public to make inquiries into the conduct of operations of the Division. If the individual is making an inquiry regarding a school-based issue, the inquiry should first be directed to the school Principal. If the inquiry is directed towards a Division matter, the inquiry should be directed to the Superintendent/designate.

Procedures

1. Refer to Appendix B for the steps involved when making an inquiry.
2. In making a formal inquiry, the individual must be prepared to address their concern in writing to the Principal of the school, if addressing a school-based matter, or the Superintendent of Schools or designate if it is in relation to a Division matter.
3. Normally public inquiries concerning school operations can be resolved with the Principal. If the inquiry cannot be addressed satisfactorily by the Principal, the member of the public may, in writing, address the issue to the Superintendent or designate. The Superintendent of Schools is the final arbiter on administrative issues.
4. On occasion, the Superintendent or a trustee may receive a request to intervene in school or department affairs. In this event, the request will be resolved according to the process outlined in Appendix B.

Staff

The Division acknowledges that teachers must, in all aspects of their work, follow the *Teaching Profession Act* and uphold their *Code of Professional Conduct* which states in part: The teacher teaches in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical characteristics, disability, marital status, family status, age, ancestry, place of origin, place of residence, socioeconomic background or linguistic background. The teacher does not undermine the confidence of pupils in other teachers. The teacher acts in a manner which maintains the honour and dignity of the profession.

Non-Teaching Staff are expected to treat other staff, parents, and students courteously and respectfully. They are entrusted to keep school and student related information confidential at all times.

All staff are held to a high standard of professionalism in their dealings with matters both in and out of school.

Procedures

1. When dealing with an educational or procedural issue, the staff member will first inform their Principal of the matter in question to seek resolution.

2. When dealing with a student or parent issue, the staff member will first, through the teacher, address the concern with the student or parent professionally, courteously and in a timely manner.
 - 2.1 In the event that the issue cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the staff member will refer the issue to the Principal.
3. When dealing with an issue involving another staff member(s), the staff member will first inform the other staff member(s) that they are having issues with, of their concern and then, in confidence inform, the Principal.
4. In all issues requiring resolution in this area, it is appropriate to follow the process outlined in Appendix B – Parents as Partners in Education.

Reference: Section 32, 33, 40, 41, 42, 43, 52, 53, 196, 197, 222, 256 Education Act

Form: 152-1 Healthy Interactions: Resolving Interpersonal Conflict