Toronto District School Board

Operational Procedure PR505

Title: **PARENT/CAREGIVER COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL**

Adopted: May 31, 2000
Effected: May 31, 2000
Reviewed: January 19, 2012, October 24, 2018; **May 28, 2026**
Authorization: Chief Executive Officer
Department: Learning Transformation and Equity

1. OBJECTIVE

- To establish a transparent and accessible process for addressing Parent/Caregiver Inquiries and Concerns and creating school learning environments that are caring, accepting, safe, accessible, peaceful, nurturing, positive, equitable (interpretation/translation) and respectful, and that enable all students to reach their full potential; and

- To support implementation of Policy Program Memoranda (PPM) 170: School Board Communication with Parents.

2. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

All TDSB employees and Parents/Caregivers.

3. PROCEDURE

General Expectations

3.1. **Communication Practices:** TDSB will maintain accessible, culturally relevant and effective communication with Parents/Caregivers to support learning at home and school.

3.2. **Conduct:** TDSB staff and Parents/Caregivers must treat one another with kindness, dignity, and respect in alignment with the Board Code of Conduct (PR585).

Process to Address Inquiries and/or Concerns

3.3. The following three-step process is expected to be followed by Parents/Caregivers when bringing forward Inquiries and/or Concerns:

Step 1 – Classroom Related Matters: Contact the classroom teacher on any classroom related matters, including but not limited to:

- Classroom rules and expectations
- Homework and assignments
- Student evaluation including Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
- Questions about what is being taught, how it is being taught and how Parents/Caregivers can support learning at home
- Student instruction and assessment

Step 2 - School-Wide Matters: Contact the school Principal if Inquiries and/or Concerns were not resolved at Step 1 or for help with school-wide matters, including but not limited to:

- Unresolved Inquiries and Concerns from Step 1
- Concerns about an individual school
- Emergency preparedness and crisis response
- Racism, hate, and related human rights concerns
- Report card concerns
- Special education
- Safety and security
- School council
- School budget and fundraising
- Student registration
- Student schedules
- Student suspensions

Step 3 – Multiple School Matters & Unresolved Issues: Contact the local Superintendent, if Inquiries and/or Concerns were not resolved at Step 2 level or for help with issues impacting multiple schools, including but not limited to:

- Unresolved Inquiries and Concerns from Step 2
- Alternate attendance requests
- Concerns about your school/community
- Special education
- Suspension appeals
- TDSB policies, procedures, and programs

The Superintendent will review the Inquiry and/or Concern with the Principal. This may result in a confirmation of the decision of the Principal or a modified decision/outcome.

Student & Family Support Office (SFSO)

3.4. **SFSO:** Parents/Caregivers can contact the SFSO for assistance in navigating Board processes. The SFSO supports timely access to information, guidance, and appropriate staff and may provide additional guidance to support the addressing of concerns through existing Board processes. The office may be contacted in situations where concerns remain unresolved, after following the steps outlined above.

Response Timelines

3.5. **Acknowledgment:** Staff are expected to confirm receipt of an Inquiry and/or Concern within two (2) business days during work hours.

3.6. **Response:** Staff will provide an estimated date of response if the matter cannot be fully addressed within five (5) business days of receipt. Staff will strive to provide a resolution within 10-15 business days.

Expectations and Responsibilities

3.7. **Expectations for Staff Addressing Inquiries and Concerns:** In addressing Parents/Caregivers Inquiries and Concerns, staff are expected to:

(a) foster a climate of respect and trust which focuses on working towards mutually acceptable solutions;

(b) provide a response to the Inquiry and/or Concern in a clear manner that is easily understood by the Parent/Caregiver, and include relevant and accurate information that addresses the specific Inquiry and/or Concern;

(c) inform all involved parties of the importance of confidentiality and protection of personal information in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Policy (P094);

(d) engage relevant TDSB departments, where required, to assist in resolving the Inquiry and/or Concern;

(e) Maintain a written record of the Concern(s) where necessary;

(f) Secure and retain all related records in accordance with the Records and Information Management Policy (P097) and TDSB's records retention schedule; and,

(g) Adhere to applicable TDSB policies and procedures.

3.8. **Expectations for Parents/Caregivers Bringing Forward Inquiries and Concerns:** In bringing forward Inquiries and Concerns to staff, Parents/Caregivers are expected to:

(a) present their Inquiries and Concerns in a respectful manner;

(b) follow the process and consider the expected timelines for addressing and resolving the Inquiry and/or Concern outlined above; and,

(c) maintain an openness to receiving information and advice that may be offered by staff as possible resolutions to the Inquiry and/or Concern.

Inquiries and/or Concerns brought to the Board of Trustees and the Chief Executive Officer

3.9. **Referrals:** Any Inquiries/Concerns sent directly to the Board of Trustees or the Chief Executive Officer will be referred to the appropriate Superintendent, school Principal to follow up in accordance with the processes outlined in this Protocol.

Confidentiality and Communications

3.10. **Privacy and Records:** All parties must protect personal information as outlined in the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA). Staff will document and retain records according to the Records and Information Management Policy (P097).

3.11. **Public Access:** This Protocol will be posted on the TDSB website and shared with Parents/Caregivers.

3.12. **Notification Requirements:** Local school staff will notify Parents/Caregivers of the Protocol upon registration and at the start of each school year. Substantive updates will also be communicated to Parents/Caregivers.

4. DEFINITIONS

Concern: a classroom, school or Board level matter affecting TDSB student(s), Parent(s)/Caregiver(s).

Inquiry: a question or request for information about a matter affecting a Parent(s)/Caregiver(s)' child or learning in a school.

Parents/Caregivers: parents, guardians or any other caregiver legally recognized as acting in place of the parent, including an individual with customary care of an Indigenous student.

Principal: school Principal and includes Vice-Principal throughout this Protocol.

Superintendent: Superintendents of Education.

TDSB: Toronto District School Board, which is also referred to as the "Board."

5. EVALUATION

This Protocol will be reviewed and revised as required, but at a minimum every five (5) years.

6. APPENDICES

Not Applicable

7. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Policies/Procedures:

- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (P094)
- Records and Information Management (P097)
- Board Code of Conduct (PR585)

Legislative Acts and Directives

- *Education Act*
- *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- Policy Program Memoranda (PPM) 170: School Board Communication with Parents