



DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Background

The Superintendent expects that school staff, parents and students maintain open and direct communication channels. This Dispute Resolution procedure exists to provide a path forward for effectively resolving conflicts and settling disputes when communication breaks down.

It is in the best interest of all parties to endeavour to resolve disputes as quickly and as fairly as possible. The process for dispute resolution shall always begin with a meeting of the parties most directly involved and/or impacted by the dispute.

Procedures

1. The Superintendent expects that procedural fairness, including collaborative, productive and cooperative methods for dispute resolution, shall be used by all parties throughout the process of resolving disputes; for legislative clarity:
 - 1.1 Parents and/or guardians, teachers, and principals as partners in education, shall conduct themselves in a manner that contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment (Education Act s. 32(d); s. 197(a.1));
 - 1.2 No person shall disturb or interrupt the proceedings of a school (Education Act s. 256(a)); and
 - 1.3 No person shall conduct themselves in a manner detrimental to the safe operations of a school (Education Act s. 256(d)).
 - 1.4 Emotional outbursts, anger, disruptive behaviour, profanity and/or abusive language may justify a suspension of the process.

Dispute Resolution and Classroom Matters

2. Dispute resolution regarding classroom matters of concern, whether or not those matters impact the education of a student, begin with the student's teacher;
 - 2.1 Matters shall be discussed directly with the teacher whose action or decision is being questioned;
 - 2.2 If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the parent, guardian, or independent student within seven (7) school days of the teacher's decision, the parent, guardian, or independent student may take the matter to school administration (Principal or Assistant Principal) after having informed the teacher.



Dispute Resolution and School Matters

3. Dispute resolution regarding school concerns, whether or not those matters impact the education of a student, are to be discussed with the school administration (Principal or Assistant Principal).
 - 3.1 Matters involving substitute teachers shall be raised to the attention of school administration directly.
 - 3.2 After all avenues to resolve the matter of conflict have occurred with school administration, and if the parent, guardian, or independent student is of the view that the matter was not resolved to their satisfaction, then the parent, guardian or independent student may take unresolved school matters directly to the Office of the Superintendent.
 - 3.3 The Office of the Superintendent may designate an individual or body, as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent, to review and, ideally, resolve the matter raised by the parent, guardian, or independent student.
 - 3.4 A trustee upon receiving an inquiry will refer the parent, guardian, or independent student back to the school and inform the Superintendent of the complaint. The complaint will then be dealt with as outlined above.
 - 3.5 The decision of the Superintendent is final. Board of Trustees has delegated its authority to hear appeals under the Education Act to the Superintendent.

Dispute Resolution and School Division Matters

4. Dispute resolution regarding a school division matter, or any matter that does not directly relate to the school and or school principal, are to be resolved, where possible, by the Office of the Superintendent.
 - 4.1 The Office of the Superintendent may designate an individual or body, as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent, to review and, ideally, resolve the matter raised by the parent, guardian, or independent student;
 - 4.2 The Office of the Superintendent, or designate, shall confirm the determined outcome of the resolution through dated correspondence (email or letter) with the parent, guardian, or independent student.
 - 4.3 A trustee upon receiving an inquiry will refer the parent, guardian, or independent student back to the Superintendent. The complaint will then be dealt with as outlined above.



Appeal Process Regarding Student Matters

5. The Board of Trustees has delegated its authority to hear appeals under the Education Act to the Superintendent, except those matters that may be appealed to the Board as per the Education Act (section 42).
6. If the Superintendent is not the final authority on the matter at hand, and if the matter significantly affects the education of a student, then the process, toward resolution of the dispute, may be escalated by correspondence (email or letter) to the Board of Trustees as described in Policy 13: Appeals and Hearings on Student Matters;

Dispute Resolution Procedures for Staff Matters

7. Before making a formal complaint, the staff member must be prepared to address their concern in person or in writing to the person/s involved unless it is a matter of personal safety.
 - 7.1 If the individual feels their concern has not been adequately addressed by the person against whom the complaint has been lodged, a formal complaint can be filed as outlined below:

Teacher or Support Staff > School or Site Administration/Supervisor > Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources > Superintendent
 - 7.2 Additionally, in cases where a teacher (including school administrators) is making a complaint regarding an individual who is also a teacher (including school administrators), does not feel the issue has been resolved, the teacher making the complaint has an opportunity for additional reporting pursuant to the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and Teacher Leaders, which should be followed. Teachers are encouraged to contact the Alberta Teachers' Association to seek advice.
 - 7.3 Those who have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment/abuse are encouraged to refer to Administrative Procedure 160: Safe and Caring Schools and have additional reporting obligations, pursuant to the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and Teacher Leaders, which should be followed. Teachers are encouraged to contact the Alberta Teachers' Association to seek advice.

Reference: Section 31, 32, 33, 34, 41, 42, 52, 53, 55, 67, 68, 196, 197, 204, 222, 225, 226 Education Act
Administrative Procedure 160: Safe and Caring Schools
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and Teacher Leaders