



# HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC

District School Board

## Student and Family Support Office & Parent Communication Protocol

<b>Adopted:</b>	<b>January 26, 1998</b>	<b>Policy #:</b>	<b>P 2.1.16.</b>
<b>Revised:</b>	<b>February 23, 2026</b>	<b>Policy Category:</b>	<b>2.1. School Operations</b>

### **BELIEF STATEMENT:**

The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board (the Board) believes that all persons are created in the image and likeness of God and are entitled to dignity, respect, and compassionate treatment.

The Board believes that when parents feel connected, informed, and welcomed, they are more likely to be actively involved in their child’s learning. Increased parent engagement strengthens the parent-school partnership, fosters a sense of community, and supports shared responsibility for student success. By responding promptly and effectively to parent inquiries, school boards and educators can build trust and confidence in the school system’s ability to meet the educational needs of each child.

The Board believes that conflict resolution is most effective when it is proactive, ethically grounded, and rooted in the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. Through open communication and collaborative problem-solving, the Board seeks to promote understanding, cooperation, and mutually acceptable solutions that reflect the best interests of students, schools, the Church, and the broader school community.

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

This policy was formerly titled “Parent Communication Protocol” and has been updated to reflect provincial requirements related to the establishment of Student and Family Support Offices.

It is the policy of the Board that communication with parents and guardians is conducted in a manner that is respectful, transparent, and consistent with the dignity of all persons, recognizing parents as valued partners in their child’s education.

The Board affirms that questions, concerns, and complaints raised by parents and community stakeholders shall be addressed fairly, in good faith, and at the lowest appropriate level whenever possible, while ensuring that clear pathways exist for escalation when matters are unresolved. The Board is committed to confidentiality and procedural fairness, in accordance with applicable legislation, Board policy, and Catholic teaching.

In alignment with the authority of the Minister of Education under the *Education Act* and the requirements of Policy/Program Memorandum No. 170, School Board Communication with Parents, the Board is committed to:

- providing parents with clear, consistent, and reliable information to support their active engagement in their child's education;
- establishing and maintaining standards for acknowledging and responding to parent inquiries that promote transparency, accountability, and trust; and
- ensuring that parents are informed of available information, supports, and communication protocols upon registration and at the start of each school year.

The Board affirms its responsibility to establish and maintain a Student and Family Support Office as a Board-level structure, in alignment with provincial direction. The purpose of the Office is to strengthen existing communication pathways by supporting the consistent, fair, and timely resolution of parent and guardian inquiries that have not been resolved through school-level processes. The Student and Family Support Office provides an additional avenue of support while respecting the distinct roles of Board governance and administration and does not replace the responsibility of schools to address concerns at the local level.

The Board expects that standards for acknowledging and responding to parent inquiries are clearly established, publicly communicated, and aligned with the requirements of Policy/Program Memorandum No. 170. The Director of Education is responsible for ensuring that administrative procedures are in place to support implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement. The Board shall receive assurance, as appropriate, that communication standards are being met and that system trends are reviewed to strengthen transparency, responsiveness, and public confidence.

### **Board-Level Matters and Trustee Role**

Concerns or complaints that relate to matters within the governance authority of the Board of Trustees, including Board policy, budget decisions, governance direction, or accommodation reviews, may be brought to the attention of the Director of Education, the Chair of the Board, or a Trustee of the Board.

The Board recognizes that Trustees are often a trusted and accessible point of contact for parents and community members who are seeking support, clarity, or assistance navigating the school system. Trustees may assist by listening respectfully, helping families understand Board policies and governance decisions, and directing parents to the appropriate staff member or process for timely follow-up in accordance with Board communication standards.

The Board affirms that Trustees act collectively and within their governance role. Trustees do not investigate, mediate, or attempt to resolve individual operational complaints, nor do they direct staff in the management of school-based matters. This distinction supports procedural fairness, confidentiality, and consistent service standards for all families, including the timely response expectations established under Ministry direction.

Where matters shared with a Trustee identify potential system-level concerns, patterns, or policy implications, Trustees may bring these forward for information and governance consideration by the full Board, as appropriate and in accordance with Board bylaws and governance practices.

Operational matters concerning individual students, staff, programs, or schools are the responsibility of the Director of Education and Board administration and are addressed through established administrative processes.

There will be a report back mechanism from the Director of Education to the Board of Trustees.

## Other Statutory and External Avenues

Nothing in this policy is intended to limit or restrict the right of parents, guardians, or community stakeholders to raise concerns with independent or statutory oversight bodies, where appropriate.

Depending on the nature of the concern, stakeholders may contact:

- the Ombudsman of Ontario, regarding concerns about the manner in which a school board has handled a complaint or concern;
- the appropriate professional regulatory body, such as the Ontario College of Teachers or the College of Early Childhood Educators, regarding concerns about professional conduct;
- the Ministry of Education or a local Member of Provincial Parliament, regarding matters within provincial jurisdiction; or
- the Ontario Human Rights Commission, regarding alleged violations of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

## Navigating the School System

The Board is committed to ensuring that parents and guardians are informed about how to navigate the school system and access information, supports, and communication protocols related to their child's education. In alignment with Ministry of Education requirements, the Board expects that information about this policy and the Ministry's *Parent Guide to Our School System* is made available to parents upon student registration and at the start of each school year.

The Director of Education is responsible for ensuring that administrative procedures are in place to support consistent implementation across all schools.

### DEFINITIONS:

- N/A

### REFERENCES:

- Policy and Program Memorandum 170 (Government of Ontario)

### RESOURCES, APPENDICES AND FORMS:

- Child Youth and Family Services Act, The College of Teachers Act and the College of Early Childhood Educators Act; [OESC Good Governance Guide](#) – Page 66
- The Board shall consider the protection of the identity of staff and students when receiving information considering statutes and regulations intended to protect privacy.
- Complaints Procedures - [www.ombudsman.on.ca](http://www.ombudsman.on.ca)
- Board Administrative Procedure AP 2.1.13 Parent Communication Protocol