



## Administrative Procedures Memorandum

### APC001 Communication Guidelines

**DATE OF ISSUE:** July 1999  
*Revised:* August 2002; February 2004; March 2011; November 2013; September 2015

**MEMO TO:** All Staff

**FROM:** Director of Education

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#### **PURPOSE**

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board believes our stakeholders should receive accurate and timely information and feedback regarding the implementation of the system's vision. We also believe in inviting open communication and listening attentively to all constructive suggestions to improve our educational service. The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to affirm our beliefs and to set in place clear, concise and easily followed communication procedures.

#### **FORMS**

n/a

#### **APPENDICES**

n/a

#### **REFERENCES**

- Board Policy I 001 - "Ends"
- Board Policy IV 002 "Treatment of the Public"
- Board Policy IV 004 – "Treatment of Staff"
- Freedom of Information/Protection of Privacy Legislation
- WCDSB System Emergency Response Plan

#### **COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES**

1. The Chief Managing Officer – as assigned by the Director of Education -- has overall responsibility for public communications for the school system. Inquiries concerning communications or interpretations of this Administrative Procedure should be directed to the Chief Managing Officer at 578-3660 extension 2236.
2. This memorandum addresses three key areas of communication:
  - a) Personal communication between parents/stakeholders and board staff;
  - b) Public communication by board staff; and,

c) Trustee communications.

3. Principals will ensure these communication guidelines are provided annually to their staff, Catholic School Council and families of students.
4. For the purposes of this memorandum the term “staff” means any employee of the Board.
5. Parents, students, staff, volunteers and Trustees have a right to receive public affirmation for their positive efforts and, likewise, the right to know when concerns arise, what the concerns are, and who has raised them. All public and interpersonal communications must recognize the dignity of the individual and be conducted fairly, honestly and with respect. When concerns arise, they will be dealt with directly by the individuals involved in compliance with Part 1 of this memorandum.

## **PART ONE: PARENT /STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES**

When a parent or board stakeholder has a concern or suggestion, it is expected that the concern/suggestion will first be taken up with the staff member with whom the parent / stakeholder has the concern/suggestion. Therefore, the following process will be followed:

**Step One:** Speak to the staff member...(issue resolved)...(If the issue is not resolved, proceed to step two).

**Step Two:** Speak to the Principal. If the complainant has not yet spoken to the staff member involved, the Principal will ask the complainant to do so first.

**Step Three:** If, having spoken to the Principal the complainant believes the issue is not resolved the complainant may speak to the Superintendent of Learning responsible for the school.

**Step Four:** If, having spoken to the Superintendent of Learning responsible for the school the complainant believes the issue is not resolved the complainant may speak to the Director of Education.

**Step Five:** If, having spoken to the Director of Education the complainant believes the issue is not resolved the complainant may register as a delegation to address the Board of Trustees. Information on how to register as a delegation to the board is available on page 12 of the WCDSB General Operational & Procedural Bylaw available online at: [www.wcdsb.ca/ap\\_memos/policies/Board\\_Policies/Bylaws.pdf](http://www.wcdsb.ca/ap_memos/policies/Board_Policies/Bylaws.pdf)

**The Role of the Principal:** The Principal will involve the staff member in any discussions with the complainant. The Principal may request, at any step in the process, that concerns be put in writing. The Principal may involve, at any time in the process, others who may be helpful in resolving the concern: supports from the school board, employee group representatives, the local parish, community agencies.

**The Role of Trustees:** Parents and other school board stakeholders may contact any Trustee at any time. The Trustee will assist the complainant in following the process outlined above.

**The Role of the School Council:** The School Council is not a forum to discuss parent-teacher-student issues. If these matters are brought to any School Council member or any School Council meeting, the concern is to be referred immediately to the Principal who will ensure the proper process is followed.

For all other school-related concerns/suggestions that do not involve taking the matter up first with a staff member, the communication should be directed to the school Principal.

The effective use of these communication guidelines by all concerned will result in the fair and quick resolution of concerns.

## **PART TWO: PUBLIC COMMUNICATION BY BOARD STAFF**

School administrators and senior staff are encouraged to communicate with their stakeholder communities and the local news media on a regular basis to ensure the good news of the school system is publicly communicated through all available means.

In order to assist this proactive communication process – and to safeguard the public image of the school system -- the Chief Managing Officer will:

- Promote, encourage and co-ordinate media access to schools on “good news” stories;
- Be immediately informed (either directly by the Principal, by the Principal via their Supervisory Officer, or by the Senior Manager involved) of all contentious issues involving or likely to cause public concern and/or result in media interest;
- Manage (in consultation with the appropriate Principal, appropriate Supervisory Officer, Director of Education and Freedom of Information/Protection of Privacy Coordinator) media access to students, staff and facilities on all contentious issues.

## **PART THREE: TRUSTEE COMMUNICATIONS**

WCDSB Trustees are partners in education. Consequently, communication with the Board of Trustees is encouraged. When contacted, individual Trustees will not personally resolve problems but will instead ensure that concerns are directed to the appropriate staff member via the Director of Education. To facilitate communication with Trustees, the Board web page, [www.wcdsb.ca](http://www.wcdsb.ca) includes a Trustee section where telephone and email contact information is provided. Beyond the web page, Trustees can be reached at:

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board,  
35 Weber Street, Unit “A”  
P.O. Box 91116,  
Kitchener, Ontario  
N2G 4G2  
(519) 578-3660

To further assist with proactive communication involving the Board of Trustees Principals are encouraged to provide ALL Trustees with the following:

- A copy of the school’s monthly newsletter;
- A copy of school events to which Principals wish to extend a standing invitation to Trustees;
- An invitation to ALL trustees to attend Secondary School Graduation ceremonies;
- A list of School Council meeting dates to which School Councils wish to extend a standing invitation for Trustees to attend.

It is understood that due to their personal schedules some Trustees may be unavailable for day time events. However, when a Trustee is able to attend, they will communicate their plans directly with the school concerned.