

# 137 CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION

## Belief

Maskwacis Education Schools Commission (MESC) believes in following cultural and traditional teachings, in particular Wahkohtowin, to guide our actions. Wahkohtowin is the belief that all things are related and connected, that all of existence has spirit and that living in a good way requires us to maintain good relationships with each other and other aspects of existence. To maintain good relationships, MESC recognizes its parents/guardians and employees deserve to have their concerns and complaints resolved through consensus building, focusing on people and relationships.

## Guidelines

One way to determine the difference between concerns and complaints is how they are received. Concerns are typically verbal, whereas complaints are usually submitted in writing. The process for responding to concerns and complaints is the same.

Supervisors respond to concerns and complaints at the school or department level. Supervisors consult with their immediate Supervisor and People Services if they have questions on best handling concerns or complaints.

Complainants will be directed to follow the appropriate levels for resolution as outlined below:

Level 1: Employee being complained about (teacher, support staff, principal, etc.).

Level 2: Principal or Supervisor of the employee being complained about.

Level 3: People Services.

Level 4: Superintendent.

*If a resolution of the issue is not achieved at the Superintendent level, the complainant shall be advised of their right to an appeal to the Board in writing if the matter significantly affects the education of a student.*

Significant concerns and complaints, ones beyond the supervisors' capacity to handle, must be directed to People Services.

## Procedures

1. When considering concerns and complaints, Supervisors redirect complainants as needed before getting involved (level 1).
  - 1.1 If a parent has a problem with something happening in the classroom, Supervisors invite parents to talk to the teacher first.
  - 1.2 If employees have concerns about other employees, Supervisors ask employees to address those concerns with the other employees first.

2. If a concern or complaint is not resolved at level 1, a written complaint must be submitted to the Principal/Supervisor of the employee being complained about (level 2). The recipient of the complaint shall assist the complainant with a written report if necessary.
3. Principals/Supervisors responding to complaints at level 2 will use the [Process for Resolution](#) form to keep a written record of; circumstances that led to the complaint, relevant data/information, meetings/conversations, and conclusions.
4. The Principal/Supervisor receiving the complaint must notify those named in the complaint and ask them for a written response, collect other relevant data and information as needed, and review everything that is submitted to determine the severity of the complaint and how to resolve it. This procedure must be completed within fourteen (14) calendar days of receiving the complaint. Examples of how supervisors can resolve concerns and complaints include:
  - 4.1 Cultural or Traditional Circles. Elders facilitate these circles to resolve issues in a traditional and culturally appropriate way.
  - 4.2 Individual meetings. These meetings include supervisors meeting with people individually or separately to work through the issue.
  - 4.3 Collective meetings. These meetings include supervisors facilitating a meeting with those involved to work through the issue together.
  - 4.4 Restorative Justice Circles. These circles include Elders, supervisors and trained facilitators to help those involved work through the issue together.
5. If the complaint is not resolved at level 2, the Principal/Supervisor will refer the completed [Process for Resolution](#) form to People Services (level 3). Within fourteen (14) calendar days of receiving the complaint, People Services will:
  - 5.1 Advise or support the Principal/ Supervisor on resolving the issue at the school or department level; or
  - 5.2 Handle the complaint at the district level; or
  - 5.3 Conduct a workplace investigation to resolve the complaint at the district level.
  - 5.4 Direct parent complaints to the Superintendent.
6. If the complaint is not resolved at level 3, People Services will complete the [Process for Resolution](#) form and refer it to the Superintendent (level 4).
7. When complaints are raised to level 4, the Superintendent will ensure, in cooperation with the Principal/Supervisor, that parent/guardian/employee is provided with the opportunity to express their complaints and are heard fairly. This procedure must be completed within fourteen (14) calendar days of receiving the complaint.

- 7.1 On occasion, the Superintendent may directly receive a complaint. In this event, the Superintendent will ascertain if all levels for resolution have been considered. If not, the complainant will be referred to the party who is the object of the complaint as the first means of achieving resolution. The party who is the object of the complaint will then be directed to address the complaint as outlined above.
8. On occasion, a Board Governor may directly receive a complaint. In this event, the complaint will be resolved according to the following:
  - 8.1 The Board Member shall inquire with the Superintendent if the proper internal communication protocol for registering concerns has been followed. If not, the individual shall be directed to the appropriate person, and the Board Member shall take no further action.
  - 8.2 The Board Member shall not offer any evaluative comments or solutions.
  - 8.3 If the internal protocol has been followed and the concern has not been resolved through that action, the Board Member shall explain to the individual that the Board has delegated certain responsibilities to the Superintendent, and that the Board holds the Superintendent accountable. Indicate that the Superintendent will be asked to ensure that the matter is looked into and respond directly.
  - 8.4 The Board Member shall ask the individual to contact him or her again if the matter has not been addressed within a reasonable time period.
  - 8.5 The Board Member shall inform the Superintendent or individual designated by the Superintendent of the complaint, and request that it be handled.

Reference:

People Services Handbook for Supervisors

GP-15: Handling of Operation Complaints - MESC Board of Governors Policy Manual