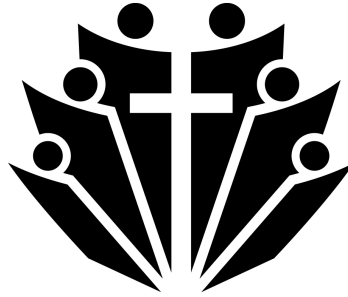


HAMILTON-WENTWORTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Schools
150 years of "Believing, Achieving, Serving"

**Parent Concern Protocol
and
Guidelines for the
Management
of Parental Harassment**

January 2006



PREAMBLE

A school is a place that promotes responsibility, respect, civility and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment.

All students, parents, teachers and staff have the right to be safe, and feel safe, in their school community. With this right comes the responsibility to be law-abiding citizens and to be accountable for actions that put at risk the safety of others or oneself.

The Ontario Code of Conduct sets clear provincial standards of behaviour. It specifies the mandatory consequences for student actions that do not comply with these standards.

The Provincial standards of behaviour apply not only to students, but also to all individuals involved in the publicly funded school system – parent or guardians, volunteers teachers and other staff members – whether they are on school property, on school buses or at school-authorized events or activities.

(Ontario Schools Code of Conduct, 2001)

The Catholic School is directed towards the formation of the individual, individuals experience a sense of security when they believe that they belong to the community; when they believe they can impact on the decisions made within that community; when they believe they are responsible for their own actions and relationships; and when they believe that interpersonal problems can be solved in a positive, constructive and conciliatory manner.

(Code of Student Conduct, HWCDSB, 2001)

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board invites the involvement of all members of its inclusive school community in establishing and sustaining a safe and nurturing school environment that is an example of Christian community in our Catholic schools and is one that is Christ centred and visibly and demonstrably Catholic. It is an environment in which all stakeholders are called upon to be role models of Gospel values, Catholic doctrines, teachings and beliefs. Everyone who contributes to our Catholic school community is welcome.

- All members of our Catholic community are expected to apply Christian values to life's opportunities, challenges and choices.
- The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board encourages visits to the schools and school sites, operated by the Board, from those with a statutory right to visit and from those whose presence will be of benefit to the pupils.

- The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board discourages visits to the schools and school sites from those who, by conduct, life-style or attitude, demonstrate or promote a philosophy, tenet, practice or teaching that is incompatible with:
 - ▷ The denominational philosophy, tenets, practices or teachings of Catholicism;
 - ▷ Honour and respect for the Queen and country;
 - ▷ The mission statement, objectives or policies of the Board;
 - ▷ The effective operation of the schools; or
 - ▷ The physical or mental well being of the pupils or staff.
- Control of access to school premises under the Board's jurisdiction shall be in accordance with the provisions of s.53, s.212, s.265(m), and s.305 of the Education Act and Regulation 474/00 made under the Education Act.
- The Board further authorizes principals, vice-principals or another person authorized by Board policy to exercise rights as occupiers under the provisions of the Trespass to Property Act, the Occupiers Liability Act, Regulation 474/00 made under the Education Act and the Use of School Facilities Board Policy.
- As a school system founded on Catholic beliefs and traditions, the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is committed to resolving disputes in ways that take into consideration the common good of the whole community.
- As Catholic educators, it is our duty to encourage and support mutual respect among our community members. This is particularly true in times of disagreement when the dignity and well-being of individuals may be challenged. With Christ as the exemplar, we have the privilege of leading our students toward a higher calling in social responsibility where peace, justice and service to others are paramount.

SECTION A



PARENT CONCERN PROTOCOL

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board understands that parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children. The Board is committed to supporting parents/guardians in their efforts to provide their children with an excellent Catholic education which meets academic, emotional, physical, social and spiritual needs within an inclusive educational community.
- 1.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is also committed to addressing parent/guardian concerns about the education of their children in an efficient, effective and respectful manner. Every reasonable effort will be made to resolve issues brought to the attention of the Board and its professional staff.
- 1.3 The "*Parent Concern Protocol*" is intended to describe for parents/guardians the process which they are encouraged to follow when they have a concern about the education of their children.

2.0 Nature of Issues and Concerns

- 2.1 Differences in beliefs, interpretations, opinions, and values are inevitable in any diverse community. This is also the case within a Catholic school community. While the beliefs and values rooted in our faith are what we hold in common, there is ample room within the sphere of the education of children and adolescents for a diversity of views. Thus differences are to be expected.
- 2.2 The concerns which parents/guardians have with respect to the education of their children tend to focus on four different aspects or levels of the educational process:
 - classroom activities, procedures and programs (e.g. disciplinary methods, homework assignments, learning difficulties);
 - school practices and procedures (e.g. school uniforms, transportation procedures, student medical problems);
 - policies and procedures of the school board (e.g. school boundaries, transportation policies); and
 - policies and procedures of the Ministry of Education (e.g. school curriculum, funding of Education).

- 2.3 When parents/guardians begin to be concerned about a particular aspect of their children's education, it is important that they first attempt to identify where the problem originates – at the classroom, school, school board or Ministry of Education level. This will allow the parent/guardian to begin the problem-solving process by speaking with those individuals who understand the activity, policy, procedure and/or program which is affecting their children.
- 2.4 If the parent/guardian is not sure to whom they should be speaking about their concern, it is always advisable to begin at the classroom level by speaking to their child's teacher. If the teacher is unable to address the parent's/guardian's concern, he/she will be able to direct the parent/guardian to those individuals who are able to help.

3.0 **Problem-Solving Procedures**

3.1 Classroom Level

If the parent/guardian has a concern about an activity, program, procedure or any other aspect of what is happening in the classroom, it is suggested that he/she arrange to meet with their child's teacher. It is best to make these arrangements by telephoning or meeting face-to-face with the school secretary and scheduling an appointment with the teacher. It is also suggested that the parent/guardian inform the teacher about the nature of their concern before the meeting takes place. This will allow the teacher to investigate the concern and to have options to present to the parent/guardian which may solve the problem. It is suggested that the Plan of Action that is agreed to by the teacher and the parent/guardian be put in written form with a copy for the parent/guardian. Regardless of whether or not a written Plan of Action is agreed to, parents should always record the decisions made at each meeting they have with their child's teacher. Students do not normally attend the problem solving meeting. It is not advisable for the parent/guardian to arrive at the teacher's classroom expecting to speak with the teacher without an appointment.

3.2 School Level

If the concern of the parent/guardian relates to a procedure or practice which applies to all of the students in the school, it is best that they speak with the Principal of the school or his/her designate (Vice-Principal, Principal Assistant or Principal Intern). Again, it is suggested that the parent/guardian telephone or meet face-to-face with the school secretary to schedule an appointment with the Principal. It is also helpful if the parent/guardian outlines the nature of their concern so that the Principal can investigate before the meeting. It is suggested that the Plan of Action that is agreed to by the Principal and the parent/guardian be put in written form with a copy for the parent/guardian. Again the parents should maintain their own record of the meetings they attend. It is not appropriate for the parent/guardian to arrive at the school office expecting to meet with the Principal without an appointment.

3.3 School Board Level

Parent/guardian concerns that relate to the policies and procedures that apply to all students within the school board need to be discussed with a Superintendent of Education of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board. The most appropriate way to discuss a concern with a Superintendent of Education is to telephone the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (905-525-2930) identify the name of the school which your child attends and ask to speak to the secretary of the Superintendent of Education who is responsible for your child's school. The Superintendent of Education's Secretary will record the nature of the concern and will discuss it with the Superintendent of Education who will either contact the parent/guardian directly or will request that another staff member of the Board who is responsible for, or knowledgeable about, the policy/procedure in question contact the parent/guardian to discuss the concern. It is suggested that the Plan of Action agreed to by the Superintendent and the parent/guardian be put in written form with a copy for the parent/guardian. Parents should also maintain their own written record of the meeting. It is not appropriate for the parent/guardian to come to the Catholic Education Centre and expect to meet with the Superintendent of Education without an appointment.

3.4 Ministry of Education Level

When the concern is related to educational legislation or policies of the Government of Ontario, the parent/guardian needs to contact the Ministry of Education Area Office which is located in London, Ontario. It is suggested that the parent/guardian telephone the Ministry of Education Area Office (1-800-265-4221) and identify the school your child attends, the name of your school board (Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board) and the nature of your concern. The receptionist will then put you in contact with an Education Officer of the Ministry of Education who can assist you. Parents will also want to record the advice given to them by the Ministry of Education officials.

3.5 Regardless of the nature of the concern or the level of the educational system which the parent/guardian is dealing with, it is important to keep in mind that the focus of the discussion or the meeting is on problem-solving. The most effective problem-solving discussions are those in which a priority is placed on meeting the educational needs of the child rather than trying to find someone to blame for the problem. An emphasis on blame usually ensures that the problem will not be solved.

4.0 Mediation Procedures

4.1 The outcome of an effective problem-solving discussion or meeting is a plan of action designed to solve the problem or address the issue in a timely fashion. If such a plan of action is not developed and agreed upon, the parent/guardian needs to understand the steps that should be taken to ensure that an effective plan of action is established:

- if the parent/guardian is not satisfied with the problem-solving which has occurred at the classroom level, he/she needs to schedule a meeting with the Principal of the school;
- the Principal may wish to invite members of the school board's Professional Support Staff (Consultants, Psychologist, Resource Teachers, Social Workers, Speech Language Pathologists) to attend this meeting as well to assist with the problem-solving;
- if the parent/guardian remains dissatisfied after discussing the matter with the Principal and the Professional Support Staff of the school board, they are advised to contact the Superintendent of Education responsible for their child's school;
- if the problem is not resolved after speaking or meeting with the Superintendent of Education, then the parent/guardian is encouraged to obtain a copy of the Parent Concern Reporting Form (Appendix A) from the Superintendent of Education, complete it and forward it to the Director of Education;
- if the parent/guardian believes that the problem is still not resolved after speaking with the Director of Education, they may wish to discuss the issue with their Trustee;
- if the parent/guardian is still not satisfied after discussing the issue with the various individuals within the Board, they are advised to contact the Ministry of Education Area Office at (1-800-265-4221) to obtain assistance;
- if the parent/guardian believes the Ministry of Education has not resolved the problem, they may contact their Member of the Provincial Parliament (MPP).

5.0 Specialized Procedures

5.1 Special Education

Specific procedures related to dealing with issues and concerns with respect to students who are receiving special education programs and services are outlined in the document entitled "*Parents Guide to Special Education Programs and Services*" which may be found on the Board's website (www.hwcdsb.ca). A copy of this document may also be obtained from your child's school.

5.2 Disciplinary Procedures

Procedures which parents/guardians follow if they wish to appeal the suspension or expulsion of their child from school are outlined in the letter which is sent to the parent/guardian by the school Principal informing them of the fact that the child has

been suspended or expelled. More information about suspension and expulsion procedures is available by contacting the Manager of Social Work Services at the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (905-525-2930).

5.3 Other Extraordinary Circumstances

Sometimes due to a variety of factors, a parent/guardian may become emotionally upset about the problem which their child is experiencing at school. If the parent/guardian begins to lose emotional control during a meeting with their child's teacher or Principal or if a parent/guardian arrives at the school in a very emotionally upset condition, a series of steps will be taken by the school staff to manage the situation:

- the staff will listen empathically to the parent/guardian and will attempt to understand the reasons for their emotional upset – in the majority of situations, this helps to calm the parent/guardian and a plan of action to address the problem can be implemented;
- if the parent/guardian's emotional upset continues to escalate and they begin to complain about physical symptoms (e.g. chest pains), the school staff will call 911 and request that a paramedic team come to the school to address the parent/guardian's health needs;
- if the parent/guardian's emotional upset continues to escalate and they begin to make threats towards members of the school staff, the teacher or the Principal will request that the parent/guardian discontinue this behaviour. If the parent/guardian complies, then the discussion or meeting may continue. If the parent/guardian refuses to comply, the teacher or the Principal will request that the parent/guardian leave the school. If the parent/guardian refuses to leave, the teacher or Principal will contact 911 and request that a Police Officer come to the school to escort the parent/guardian off the school property, in accordance with section 305(4) of the Education Act: -
 - ▷ the school Principal will then send a "Cease-and-Desist" letter to the parent/guardian which outlines the nature of the unacceptable behaviour and the fact that, if the parent/guardian engages in this behaviour again with school personnel, they will be excluded from being on school property on a permanent basis in accordance with section 265(1)(m) of the Education Act;
 - ▷ if the parent/guardian returns to the school property after being excluded, the school staff will contact the Police who will remove the parent/guardian from school property and charges will be laid under the Trespass to Property Act;
 - ▷ if the parent/guardian does not return to school property but continues to threaten or harass the school staff through telephone calls, facsimile transmissions, e-mail, websites or any other means, the school Principal may

consult with the Police to determine if criminal charges should be laid and/or may consult with the Board's Solicitor to determine if a civil action needs to be undertaken;

- ▷ finally, if a parent/guardian, who has been excluded from their child's school wishes to have this order rescinded they must apply to the Superintendent of Education of their child's school.

PARENT CONCERN PROTOCOL

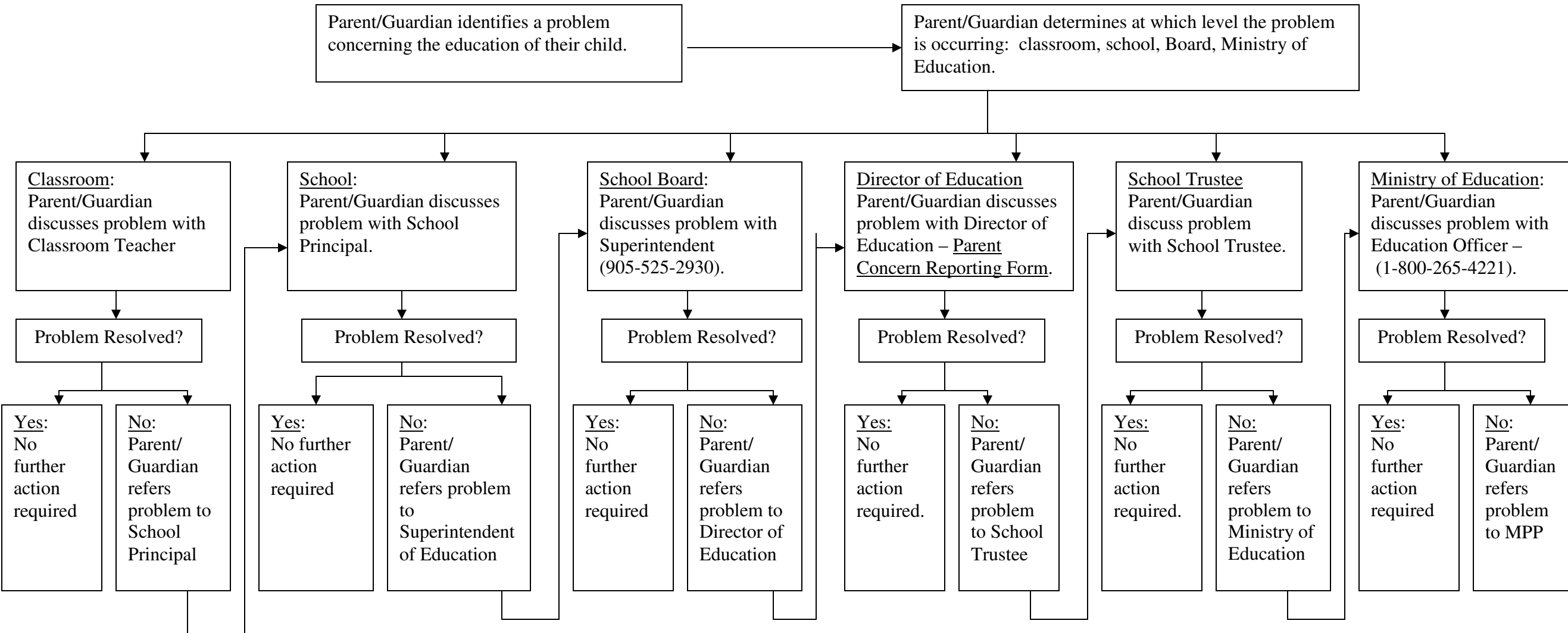


Figure 1: Flowchart of the problem solving and mediation process.

SECTION B



PARENTAL HARASSMENT OF SCHOOL BOARD STAFF (CPCO, CUPE, LIUNA, OECTA, PASS) & AGENTS OF THE BOARD

1.0 Parental Harassment

Black's Law Dictionary defines harassment as:

*Words, conduct or action (usually repeated or persistent) that, being directed at a specific person, annoys, alarms, or causes substantial emotional distress in that person and serves no legitimate purpose.*¹

The Alberta Teachers' Association has described harassment in the following manner:

Harassment, then is behaviour that

- *is unwelcome,*
- *is directed at or is offensive to someone,*
- *consists of objectionable conduct, comment, material or display that demeans, belittles, intimidates or humiliates another person.*

*Further, the person committing the act knows, or ought reasonably to know, that his or her behaviour is unwelcome.*²

The concept of parental harassment is discussed in "An Educator's Guide to the Role of the Principal" written by Eric Roher & Simon Wormwell as follows:

An appropriate definition of parental harassment could also include the following:

- *unwanted comments, interferences or suggestions;*
- *various forms of intimidation and aggressive behaviour;*
- *verbal threats;*
- *verbal and emotional abuse;*
- *the application of force or physical assault;*
- *"bullying" which is an attempt to undermine an individual through cruel or humiliating behaviour; and/or*
- *"mobbing" which involves a collective effort to psychologically harass a person.*³

Robert Keel and Nadya Tymochenko in "An Educator's Guide to Parental Harassment"⁴ indicate that there are two categories of harassment recognized by law: civil harassment and criminal harassment. They also point out that within each of these categories, there are five types of harassment: oral; physical; telephone; written; and Internet. In general, fear for one's safety is an essential element for a criminal harassment charge.

2.0 School Board Staff and Agents of the Board

The guidelines for the management of parental harassment apply to all staff members of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board including the Director of Education, the Superintendents, the School Principals, the Teachers, the Educational Assistants, the School Secretaries, the School Caretakers and Assistant Caretakers and all of the Support Staff of the Board. The guidelines also apply to agents of the Board including Lunch Room Supervisors, School Bus Drivers, Contractors hired by the Board, Volunteers and Trustees of the Board. In the discussion which follows, where reference is made to staff member, please note that this term also includes agents of the Board.

3.0 De-escalating Potential Conflict

3.1 Despite a staff member's best efforts to avoid problems with parents, they do occur. In these cases it is important to recognize the warning signs of potential conflict and implement strategies to de-escalate the conflict.

Warning Signs of Potential Conflict:

- frequent, unscheduled, or inappropriate presence in the school, or phone calls;
- frequent difficult telephone conversations or meetings, e-mails, faxes;
- refusal to meet in person to discuss a concern;
- refusal to sign communications from the school;
- student defiance that is endorsed by parents;
- complaints from more than one parent, possibly with a ringleader organizing the action;
- a reminder of a parent's position of authority (e.g. police officer, lawyer, etc.);
- threats to involve legal counsel or media without reasonable discussion.

3.2 As soon as a staff member picks up on the warning signs that relations are strained, it is important to take steps to prevent the matter from escalating:

- notify the Principal and/or the Superintendent;
- reflect on what has been happening in your relationship with the student;
- document all telephone contacts with parents, meetings with the Principal, notes sent home, notes received from the parents, description of disruptive incidents, and request for assistance. It is important to date and sign everything and avoid expressing opinions about the complainant;
- gather background information regarding how these parents have behaved in the past;
- meet with the parents, invite the Principal and/or the Superintendent if these meetings are difficult and provide the parent with a copy of the "*Parent Concern Protocol*";
- a staff member may invite another staff member and/or a union representative to attend the meeting if he/she feels that representation is required. Such a request

should be discussed with the Principal, Superintendent or supervisor and the local union/association office.

Prior to a parent meeting, the staff member should discuss with the Principal the ground rules for how the meeting will be conducted. Examples of such ground rules are:

- a purpose for the meeting will be established;
- both parties will have the opportunity to speak and to listen;
- all parties will be treated with respect;
- the meeting will stop if it gets out of hand;
- fair expectations will result from the meeting;
- a course of action to be taken will be developed;
- a written summary of decisions will be shared with all parties.

4.0 **Managing Serious Parental Issues**

- 4.1 When a parent's behaviour begins to threaten one's professional reputation, disrupts one's ability to perform effectively or becomes a danger to one's health, then the situation can be deemed as Parental Harassment.

Signs of Serious Parental Issues:

- parents refuse to meet with board officials;
- conducting meetings or telephone or e-mail campaigns with other parents;
- demanding that a staff member be moved, disciplined or fired;
- a written complaint to a third party without discussing concern with the staff member first (e.g. Principal, Superintendent, Ontario College of Teachers, etc.);
- harassing or abusing a staff member;
- making unsubstantiated allegations of abuse/assault against the staff member.

When all efforts at trying to resolve the problems have failed and a staff member is experiencing harassment or abuse from a parent, the staff member must notify their Principal and/or Superintendent that he/she expects support and protection, by filling out the Parental Harassment Concern Form (Appendix B). It is the Board's responsibility to protect employees and agents of the Board from unfair practices of parents and others who may interfere with the school program and jeopardize the staff member's rights.

- 4.2 **The Board's Options for Dealing with Problem Parental Behaviour**

Provisions of several Acts, including the Education Act, Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Trespass to Property Act, provide options for dealing with persons who pose a threat to the physical or mental well-being of the students and/or staff.

An alternative is to have the Board's Solicitor draft a "Cease-and-Desist" letter. Such a letter should explain the nature of the wrong doing and the potential legal consequences

if such conduct continues. A parent may need to be made aware of how inappropriate the behaviour has become, the real threat posed to a staff member's reputation and well-being and what the Board's intentions are in the event that the actions continue (Refer to Administration Protocol).

Once action has been taken by the Board, the staff member should complete the Board Response to the Parental Harassment Concern Form (Appendix B) as a follow-up to how the concern was handled. It is suggested that a copy be submitted to the Superintendent of Education, the Principal and the local union/association office.

4.3 The Staff Member's Options for Dealing with Problem Parental Behaviour

In this situation the staff member is advised to:

- speak to the school Principal and/or the Superintendent of Education about the problem;
- in the case of a school Principal who is being harassed, it is suggested that he/she contact their Superintendent of Education;
- contact the local union/association office (CPCO, CUPE, LIUNA, OECTA, PASS);
- notify the school Principal and the Superintendent of Education in writing using the Parental Harassment Concern Form (Appendix B) and send a copy to the local union/association office.

If the staff member feels that the parental harassment concern has not been resolved, he/she may:

- make a report to the Health and Safety Officers of the Board, who in turn will bring the issue to the Health and Safety Committee;
- if the issue is not resolved at this point, it may then be referred to the Ministry of Labour.

4.4 The Options of Agents of the Board for Dealing with Problem Parental Behaviour

In this situation, Agents of the Board are advised to:

- speak to the school Principal and/or the Superintendent of Education about the problem;
- contact their local union/association if they have one.

4.5 When to Involve the Authorities

Staff members are strongly encouraged to involve the Police in cases of assault and/or stalking.

Assault is defined in the Criminal Code of Canada as follows:

A person commits an assault when:

- *without the consent of another person, he applies force intentionally to that other person, directly or indirectly;*
- *he attempts or threatens, by an act or gesture, to apply force to another person, if he has, or causes that other person to believe on reasonable grounds that he has, present ability to effect his purpose; or*
- *while openly wearing or carrying a weapon or carrying a weapon or imitation thereof, he accosts or impedes another person or begs.*

This section applies to all forms of assault, including sexual assault, sexual assault with a weapon, threats to a third party or causing bodily harm and aggravated sexual assault.

Stalking is defined in the Criminal Code of Canada as follows:

No person shall, without lawful authority and knowing that another person is harassed or recklessly as to whether the other person is harassed, engage in conduct referred to in subsection (2) that causes that other person reasonably, in all the circumstances to fear for their safety or the safety of anyone known to them.

(2) The conduct mentioned in subsection (1) consists of,

- *repeatedly following from place to place the person or anyone known to them;*
- *repeatedly communicating with, either directly or indirectly, the other person or anyone known to them;*
- *besetting or watching the dwelling house, or place where the other person, or anyone known to them, resides, works, carries on business or happens to be; or*
- *engaging in threatening conduct directed at the other person or any member of their family.*

If a parent becomes violent or utters threats of physical violence, it is imperative that the Police be contacted immediately. Notify the school Principal and/or the Superintendent of Education as well as the union/association that the police are involved.

In extreme cases where a staff member is being repeatedly followed or watched at work or at home, the behaviour may be considered stalking. If this occurs, the staff member and the school Principal and advised to contact the Police for their assistance and advice, as well as the Superintendent of Education and their union/association representative.

4.6 Dealing with the Emotional Stain of Parental Harassment

The emotional cost of being harassed must also be addressed by the staff member. If a staff member has had to take time off work because of the stress of Parental Harassment, a Workplace Safety and Insurance Board claim may be appropriate. The staff member is advised to:

- consult his/her Doctor;
- contact the Employee Assistance Program;
- document days, and time absent from work;
- complete a Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Form.

SECTION C



1.0 Regulations

- 1.1 The Board recognizes that the following persons are permitted to be on school premises pursuant to Regulation 474/00 – Access to School Premises:
- a person enrolled as a pupil;
 - a parent or guardian of such pupil (may include persons who act as temporary guardian of pupils such as Grandparents, Neighbour, Sibling, Day Care Provider or Foster Parents as specified by parent or guardian to Principal);
 - a person employed or retained by Board;
 - a person who is otherwise on the premises for a lawful purpose (delivering mail, voting) but only while and in connection with the discharge of their respective duties, for example –
 - ▷ a person who is invited to attend an event, a class or a meeting on school premises, provided the person is on the premises for that purpose;
 - ▷ a person who is invited onto school premises for a particular purpose by the Principal, Vice-Principal or another person authorized by Board policy, provided the person is on the premises for that purpose.
- 1.2 Persons authorized to be on school premises are not automatically entitled to have access to all areas of the school premises.
- 1.3 The Board has the right to lock the school premises when the premises are being used for a purpose authorized by the Board.
- 1.4 An authorized person is not permitted to remain on school premises if in the judgement of the Principal or designate, his or her presence is considered detrimental to the safety or well being of a person on the premises.
- 1.5 An authorized person is not permitted to remain on school premises if he/she fails to report their presence on the premises in the manner specified by this policy.
- 1.6 No person in respect of whom a determination has been made (regarding) the presence of such person on any school premises shall enter or remain on school premises unless or until a contrary determination has been made.
- 1.7 The Principal or designate shall exercise the rights of the Board as an occupant under the provisions of the Trespass of Property Act, the Occupiers Liability Act, the Education Act 265(m), the Safe Schools Act, 2000 s. 305(4)(5) and Regulation 474/00 with respect to an individual determined to be in non-compliance with the provisions of the policy.
- 1.8 Each Supervisory Officer of the Board and each person designated by the Director of Education is hereby authorized to make a determination as to whether the presence of a

person on any school premises is detrimental to the safety or well-being of a person on such school premises.

1.9 In addition, the Board recognizes that there are other persons who have a legal right to visit under the Education Act:

- Trustee of the Board;
- Member of the Provincial Legislature for the school in his/her constituency. (Refer to 10(a) #1 and #2 herein);
- a member of the clergy for the Roman Catholic Church who has pastoral charge of the area in which the school is situated.

1.10 Persons Whose Visits Are Encouraged

This group includes persons invited by the Director, the appropriate Supervisory Officer, the Principal or a teacher to make instructional or other presentations to and for the benefit of the pupils or the staff of the school. Presentations must be in harmony with the expectations for the Ontario Catholic School Graduate. Care must be taken to ensure that the person or group does not fall into the category whose attendance is opposed by the Board. For this reason, appropriate staff is required to scrutinize the aims, objectives and methods of those invited to make presentations in the school.

1.10.1 Announcements by Political Parties (Provincial)

- Between provincial elections, the Governing Party shall have the ability to hold announcement in our schools related to Education and Early Childhood policies. Requests for access shall be made through the Director of Education prior to the event. All provisions of Policy S.S. 04 shall be adhered to.
- During a writ period of a provincial election no political parties may make public announcement in the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board.

1.11 Persons Whose Visits Are Permitted

This group is composed of persons to whose presence the Board has no objection, so long as their presence does not interfere with the needs of the school and so long as they respect the personal and property rights of others, including the Board. The group includes those authorized to use Board facilities pursuant to other Board policies (e.g. Public Health Nurses, facility renters).

1.12 Persons Whose Visits Are Opposed

The Board is opposed, in addition to the persons described in a general way in the statement of this policy, to the presence of the following persons:

- those whose presence, in the judgement of the principal, would be detrimental to the safety or well-being of the pupils or others who have a legitimate right to be in the school; and

- those demonstrating a lack of regard for the personal and property rights of others, including the Board.

1.13 Contravention to Access to School Premises

Where a contravention to the Policy and Procedures with respect to Access to School Premises is brought to the attention of the school administration, the Principal shall:

- investigate the circumstances of the contravention and, if a first occurrence is minor in nature, remind the individual(s) involved of the Board Policies and school expectations. This reminder may be followed up in writing;
- for repeated incidents and/or where safety is involved, the following course of action, on an escalating basis may be utilized: (see also templates in appendices).

GROUP	ACTIONS
STUDENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact parents • issue suspension • send letter of trespass • involve police
STAFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inform Superintendent • issue possible reprimand in writing
PARENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • issue letter of trespass (see Appendix A) • involve police
VOLUNTEERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revoke volunteer status • issue letter of trespass
COMMUNITY GROUPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recommend revoking use of facilities through the use of School Facilities Board Policy
VISITORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deny access • issue letter of trespass • involve police
NON-AUTHORIZED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involve police

1.14 Safety Practices

In order to ensure safety of all members of the school community, the Principal shall:

- ensure that procedures are in place to identify volunteers and visitors to the school (e.g. the use of name tags or badges consistent with applicable Board policies);
- ensure that where staff has access to the premises outside of regular school hours, the appropriate Entry/Exit procedure complying with the School Security System be followed and that a Sign In/Out procedure is implemented.

- ensure that all visitors to the school, including parents, report to the office. visitors shall sign a Visitor's Book that is maintained in the office if they are there for a purpose other than dropping off, picking up students (see 1.16 below);
- address other safety issues specific to their premises that would enhance the teaching/student environment.

1.15 Appointment to Visit

School communities plan and schedule activities for the general benefit of the pupils enrolled in the school, or for individual pupils. Visitors to the schools, during such times, may disrupt these activities to the detriment of the pupils involved. In all cases, therefore, visitors are expected to make an appointment in advance so that mutual convenience and minimal disruption may be assured.

1.16 Report to the Office

Upon arrival at the school, during normal school hours, all visitors are required to report to the office, thus giving the Principal the opportunity to meet and welcome them. Visitors will be requested to sign the Visitor's Book, stating name, reason for the visit, as well as sign in and sign out times, unless the Principal has set aside this requirement for special celebrations, and on entry and dismissal times when parents/guardians/supervisors are arriving for the specific purpose of picking up/dropping off pupils in the school.

1.17 Tobacco-Free Policy

To convey a warm, welcoming atmosphere to the school and to provide information regarding the Board's no smoking policy, the following sign or a facsimile thereof will be conspicuously posted at entrances to the school;

*"Welcome to our school.
You are required to visit the office to inform us of your presence.
We provide a tobacco-free environment."*

1.18 Identification of the Visitor

Because of the obligation of the Board, the Principal, the teachers and other staff to safeguard the welfare of the pupils, in appropriate cases the Principal must be satisfied that the visitor is the person whom he/she purports to be.

Unless the visitor is known to the Principal, proper identification should, with sensitivity and discretion, be insisted upon. This may be accomplished, among other ways, by:

- a personal identification of the visitor by someone in the school;
- production of current driver's license;

- verification of information given by the visitor against information contained in school records.

1.19 Refusal of Access

Where, because of demeanor or other reason, the Principal determines that the presence of the visitor would be detrimental to the safety or well-being of a particular pupil, the pupils generally and/or others who have a statutory right to be in the school, the Principal has the power under the Education Act to, and should, refuse admission to the visitor. However, the Principal is required to advise the visitor that he/she has the right to appeal that refusal directly to the Board through the Director of Education (see also Notes 1 & 2).

1.20 Access to Pupils

The right of a person to visit a school operated by the Board does not carry with it the inherent right to visit with or speak to a pupil in the school. Staff should consult the specific policy of the Board related to such access (see also Note 2).

1.21 Access to Information

The right of a person to visit a school operated by the Board does not carry with it the inherent right to have access to information in the possession of the Board. Staff should consult the specific policy of the Board related to such access (see also Note 2, and O.S.R. Guideline, 2000).

1.22 Children's Aid Societies

A special set of circumstances arises in those rare cases in which a Children's Aid Society seeks to interview or remove a pupil from school. The Board has specific policies related to such circumstances. Staff should consult the specific policies of the Board related to such matters (see also Note 3).

1.23 Police

A special set of circumstances arises in those rare cases in which the Police seek to interview or remove a pupil from school. Staff should consult the specific policies of the Board related to such matters, including specifically Police/Board Protocol included in the Board's Safe School Manual. (see also Note 2).

1.24 Informing the Local School Trustees

The school Principal will inform the local school trustee prior to the visit of specially invited visitors to the school including members of the federal or provincial legislatures, municipal politicians, or representatives of the Crown or the church hierarchy, such as the Bishop or Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese.

The school Principal may inform the local school trustee prior to the visit of other invited visitors to the school building including:

- members of the clergy and religious other than the local pastor and associate pastor;
- special guests invited by the Principal or the Director of Education.

Note 1:

In any case in which there is some question, doubt, or difficulty, the Principal should seek the guidance of the appropriate Supervisory Officer.

Note 2:

Some of the Board's policies referred to in this document specifically address the topics of visitors access to pupils, pupil information, child abuse, and apprehension or arrest of pupils. For details, staff may wish to consult the Board's Policy Manual and/or the Board's Safe Schools Manual.

Note 3:

The guide, *"Together We Can Help...A Child Protection Protocol"*, contains specific details and instruction regarding the reporting of suspected child abuse. Copies are available in each school. Additional copies can be obtained from the Social Work Services Department.

2.0 Proactive and Reactive Responses

- 2.1 Based on the acts and the regulations, the school administrator has a variety of responses available to him/her when responding to situations in which parents have a concern about the education of their child or about other issues related to the education system in general.
- 2.2 Figure 2. Administrator Guide Parent Concern Protocol Proactive Response outlines the steps followed when addressing a parental concern.
- 2.3 Figure 3. Administrator Guide Parent Concern Protocol Reactive Response describes the steps followed when responding to harassing behaviour on the part of a parent of a student.

**ADMINISTRATOR GUIDE TO PARENT CONCERN PROTOCOL
PROACTIVE RESPONSE**

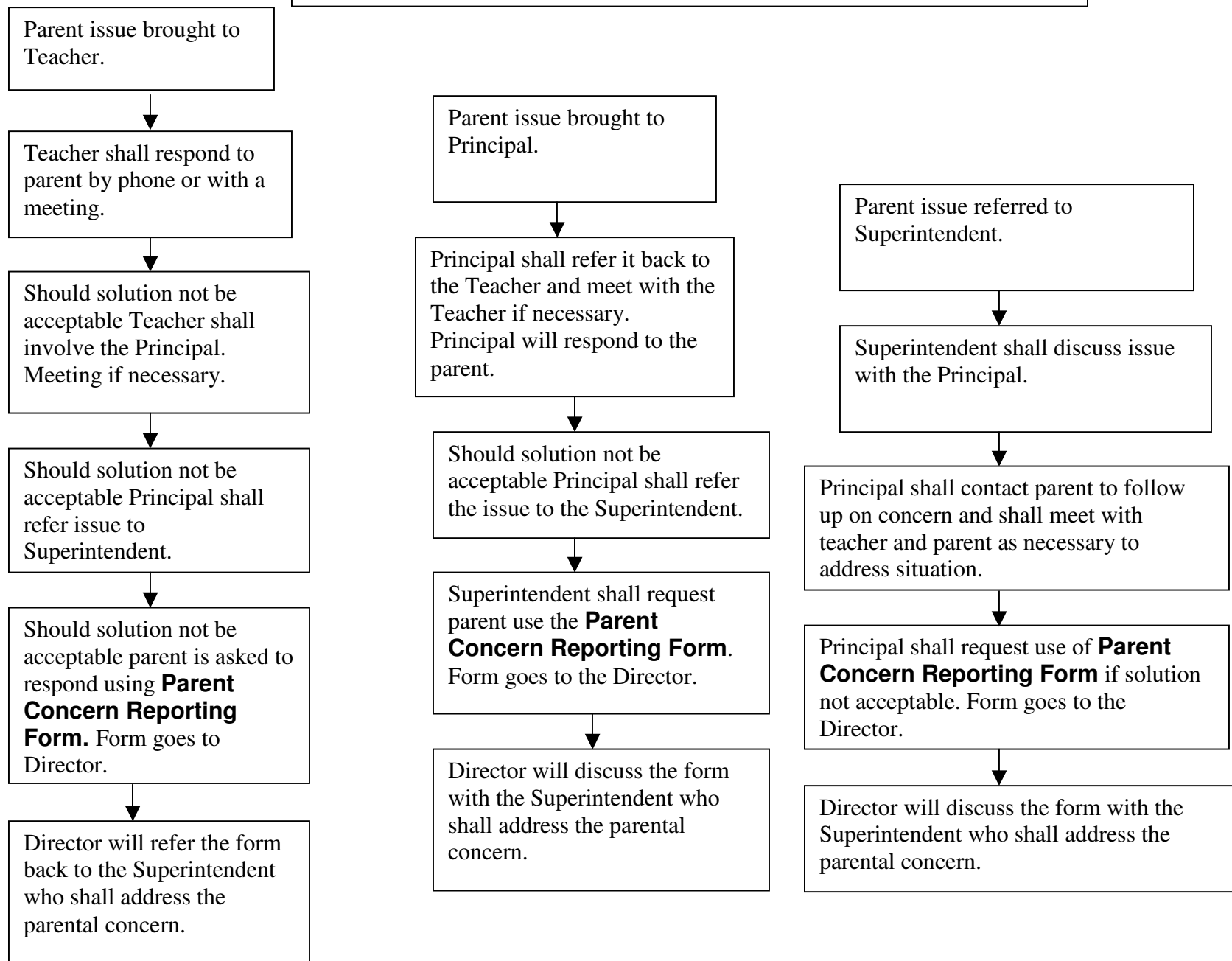


Figure 2. Administrator Guide to Parent Concern Protocol: Proactive Response.

**ADMINISTRATOR GUIDE TO PARENT CONCERN PROTOCOL
REACTIVE RESPONSE**

Where concerns lead to harassment, which is characterized by the following actions: 1. Parent repeatedly phones, e-mails or interrupts class to address concerns; 2. Parent threatens, bullies or uses improper language in the school or directed to staff; 3. Parent writes petition or involves other parents; 4. Parent defames staff or administration or board personnel and undertakes a campaign of intimidation.

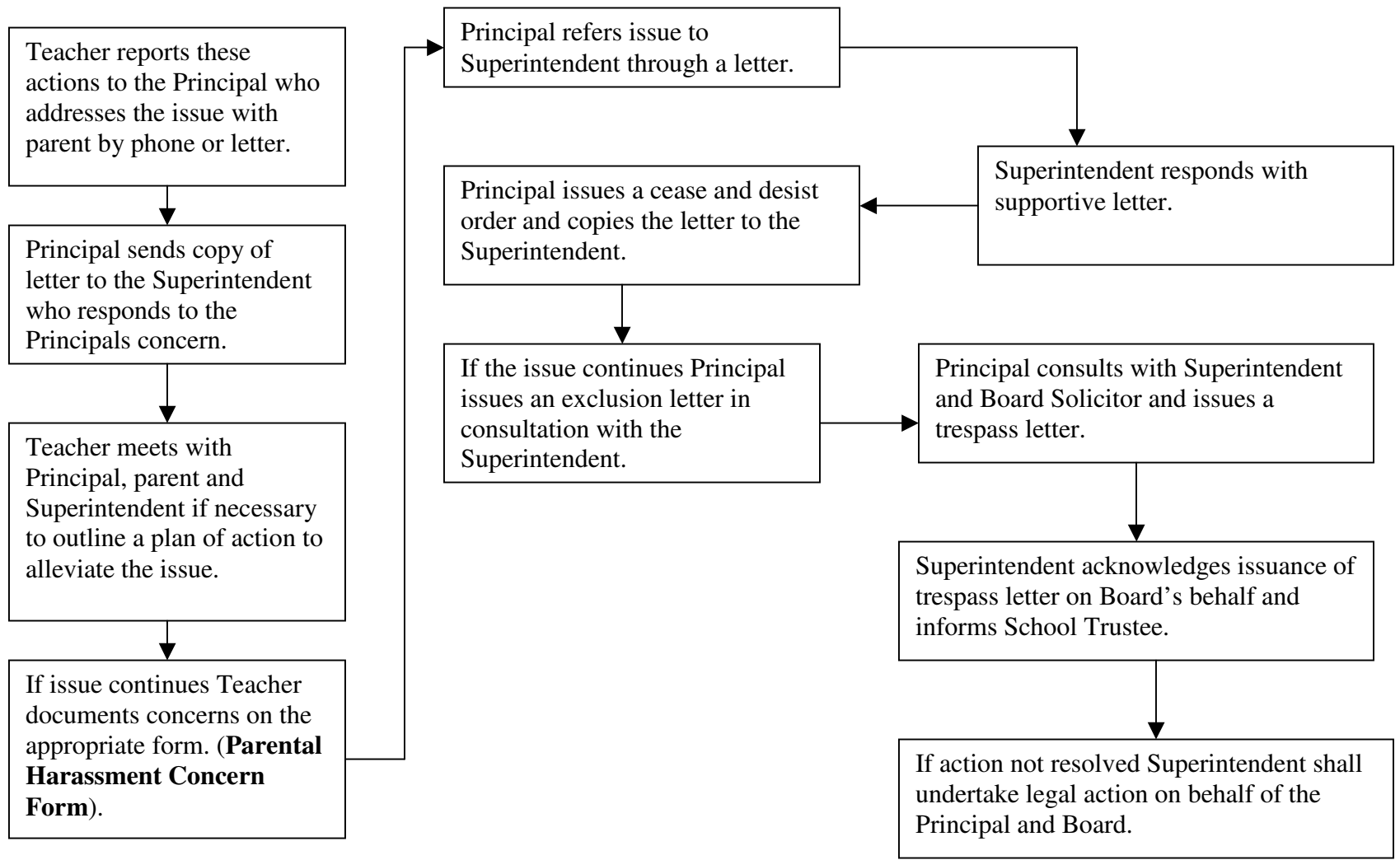


Figure 3. Administrator Guide to Parent Concern Protocol: Reactive Responses



REFERENCES

1. Black's Law Dictionary, 7th Edition, St. Paul: West Group, 1999.
2. Alberta Teachers Association. Towards a definition of harassment, 2003.
3. Eric Roher & Simon Wormwell. An educator's guide to the role of the principal. Aurora : Aurora Professional Press, 2000.
4. Robert Keel & Nadya Tymochenko. An educator's guide to parental harassment. Aurora : Canada Law Book, Inc., 2004.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A - Parent Concern Reporting Form
- Appendix B - Parental Harassment Concern Form
 - Board Response to the Parental Harassment Concern Form

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B

