

Policy 14 – Appeals Process (Bylaw 18)

WHEREAS Section 11 of the [School Act](#) provides that a parent/guardian and/or student in the School District may appeal a decision of an employee or employees of the Board if that decision significantly affects the education, health or safety of the student;

AND WHEREAS the Board wishes to enact its process for the conduct of such appeals;

NOW THEREFORE the Board enacts as follows:

1. School District No. 34 (Abbotsford) Appeal Procedure Bylaw 1997 is hereby repealed.
2. This bylaw may be cited as School District No. 34 (Abbotsford) Appeal Procedure Bylaw No. 18 (2008).
3. The definitions contained in the [School Act](#) shall apply to this bylaw.

1. Decisions Which May Be Appealed

The Board of Education recognizes the right of a student and/or parent of a student under Section 11 of the [School Act](#) to appeal a decision of an employee of the Board where such decision significantly affects the education, health or safety of the student.

The following decisions shall be deemed to significantly affect the education, health or safety of a student:

- 1.1 disciplinary suspension from school for a period in excess of five (5) days;
- 1.2 refusal to offer an educational program to a student who is sixteen (16) years of age or older;
- 1.3 requirement to complete all or part of an educational program by distributed learning as a disciplinary measure, where space and facilities are available in a school;
- 1.4 exclusion from school for a health condition;
- 1.5 failure to provide an IEP to a student with special needs;
- 1.6 failure to offer to consult with a parent regarding the placement or IEP of a student with special needs;
- 1.7 denial of an educational program by failure to take action in respect of a complaint of bullying, intimidation, harassment, or threat or use of weapons or violence by one or more students against another student; and

1.8 any other decision that, in the opinion of the Board, significantly affects the education, health or safety of a student.

A “decision” for the purposes of this bylaw includes the failure of an employee to make a decision. “Parent” is as defined in Section 1 of the [School Act](#).

2. Refusal to Hear Appeals

The Board may refuse to hear an appeal where:

- 2.1 the appeal has not been initiated within a reasonable time of the decision being appealed;
- 2.2 the student or parent appealing the decision has not first discussed the decision being appealed with any persons identified by the Board; or
- 2.3 the Board determines that the decision does not significantly affect the student’s education, health or safety.

3. Appeal Procedure

An appeal must be submitted to the Board in accordance with this Policy.

3.1 Before filing an appeal

Before an appeal is filed, it is the Board’s expectation that the student and/or parent will discuss the issue in dispute in a constructive manner with those responsible at the school or district level. In this regard, the Board expects, at a minimum, the following steps will be taken before an appeal is filed:

Step 1: The student and/or parent will discuss the issue with the principal where the decision was made at the school level, or the responsible administrator, where the decision was made at the district level; and

Step 2: The student and/or parent will discuss the issue with the Superintendent and/or administrator(s) appointed by the Superintendent.

3.2 Time Limit for Filing Appeal

An appeal must be commenced within thirty (30) days of the date the student or parent was informed of the decision being appealed from, unless the student or parent initiating the appeal (the “Appellant”) can demonstrate that there are reasonable grounds to extend this time limit.

3.3 Filing an Appeal

3.3.1 An appeal shall be initiated by filing a notice of appeal in writing with the Secretary-Treasurer to the Board.

3.3.2 The notice of appeal shall include the following information:

3.3.2.1 the name, address, email address (if applicable), and telephone phone number of the Appellant, including the student’s name, school, grade level, and home room teacher;

3.3.2.2 a description of the decision that is being appealed and its effect on the education, health or safety of the student;

3.3.2.3 the name of the employee who made the decision;

3.3.2.4 the date the Appellant was informed of the decision being appealed;

3.3.2.5 the grounds of the appeal and the action requested; and

3.3.2.6 the steps that the Appellant has taken to discuss the matter directly with the person who made the decision or with other school or district employees.

3.3.3 Where the Appellant is a student under the age of nineteen (19) years, the Board shall provide a copy of the notice of appeal to the parent(s) of the student.

3.3.4 Upon receiving the notice of appeal, the Secretary-Treasurer will notify the Board, the Superintendent and the employee whose decision is being appealed, of the appeal.

3.3.5 The Superintendent may appoint a person to be responsible for carrying out the responsibilities of the Superintendent under this Bylaw.

4. Pre-Hearing Procedure

4.1 The Secretary-Treasurer or his/her designate is responsible for reviewing the notice of appeal and for communicating with the Appellant and others on matters related to the appeal.

4.2 Where, in the opinion of the Secretary-Treasurer, the appeal does not comply with the requirements for an appeal established under this Bylaw or Section 11 of the [School Act](#) (e.g. it is

not a decision of an employee which significantly affects the student's education, health or safety; the appeal was not filed in a timely manner), the Secretary-Treasurer shall refer the preliminary matter to the Board for a determination.

- 4.3 The Board may ask for written submissions from the Appellant and/or the Superintendent on the preliminary matter.
- 4.4 The Board shall notify the Appellant and the Superintendent of any preliminary decision it may make, including a refusal to hear the appeal.
- 4.5 Where, in the opinion of the Secretary-Treasurer, there is no preliminary matter to be determined, arrangements will be made for the hearing of the appeal by the Board.
- 4.6 Prior to the date established for the hearing of the appeal, the Superintendent will provide a report to the Board regarding the matter under appeal. The Appellants and the employee whose decision is being appealed shall be entitled to a copy of this report.
- 4.7 The Board may provide directions for the hearing of the appeal.
- 4.8 The Board may, prior to the Board hearing the appeal or at any other time, require the Appellant discuss the decision being appealed with persons directed by the Board.
- 4.9 The Board may establish a committee of one or more persons who have not been involved in the decision under appeal, for the purpose of investigating an appeal and the committee shall report to the Board as directed.

5. Board Hearing

- 5.1 The Board may hold an oral hearing in respect of the appeal and/or may decide the appeal based upon written submissions. Oral hearings will be held in a closed session.
- 5.2 The Board may make any interim decision it considers necessary pending the disposition of the appeal.
- 5.3 The Board shall advise the Appellant, the Superintendent and the employee whose decision is being appealed, whether the appeal will be determined based upon written submissions and/or an oral hearing and on any directions established for the hearing of the appeal, including the time frame for oral and/or written submissions.
- 5.4 Where the Board decides to hold an oral hearing, the Appellant, the Superintendent and the employee whose decision is being appealed, shall be provided with written notice of the date, time and location of the hearing.

- 5.5 The Board may ask questions of any person appearing at the appeal hearing.
- 5.6 The Board may adjourn the hearing at any time to obtain additional information where it considers such information would assist the Board in determining the appeal.
- 5.7 During the appeal process, the Appellant may be accompanied by an advocate, support person and/or interpreter/translator.

6. Decision

- 6.1 The Board shall make any decision that it considers appropriate in respect of the matter that is being appealed and any preliminary matters.
- 6.2 The Board shall decide the appeal based on the oral and/or written submissions presented to it and any other information obtained by the Board in accordance with this Bylaw.
- 6.2 The Board must make a decision within 45 days from the date the notice of appeal was received in an acceptable form.
- 6.4 The Board shall promptly notify the Appellant, the Superintendent and the employee whose decision was appealed of the decision of the Board and shall provide written reasons for the decision as soon as practicable.*

*[*An Appellant may have a right to appeal a decision of the Board made under this Bylaw. For more information contact the [Student Appeals Branch of the Ministry of Education.](#)]*

READ A FIRST TIME THE 7th DAY OF April , 2008.

READ A SECOND TIME THE 7th DAY OF April , 2008.

READ A THIRD TIME, RECONSIDERED AND FINALLY ADOPTED THE 7th DAY OF April , 2008

Appendices

[Appendix 1 – Guidelines for Parents](#)

Appendix 1 – Guidelines for Parents

1. Before filing an Appeal

1.1 The parent/guardian and/or the student (Appellant) will discuss the issue in dispute in a constructive manner with those responsible at the school or at the district level. The following steps must be taken:

1.1.1 The Appellant will discuss the issue with the principal at the school.

1.1.2 The Appellant will discuss the issue with the Assistant Superintendent at the district level.

2. Filing an Appeal

2.1 An appeal must be filed within thirty (30) days of the date the Appellant was informed of the decision of the Assistant Superintendent unless the Appellant can demonstrate that there are reasonable grounds to extend this time limit.

2.2 An appeal is initiated by filing a notice of appeal in writing with the Secretary-Treasurer's office. The notice of appeal must include the following:

1.1.3 The name, address, email address (if applicable), and telephone number of the Appellant, including the student's name, school, and grade level.

1.1.4 A description of the decision that is being appealed and its effect on the education, health and safety of the student.

1.1.5 The name of the Assistant Superintendent who made the decision.

1.1.6 The date the Appellant was informed of the decision being appealed.

1.1.7 The grounds of the appeal and the action requested.

1.1.8 The steps that the appellant has taken to discuss the matter directly with the person at the school, the school principal, or with the Assistant Superintendent.

3. Pre-Hearing Procedure

3.1 The Secretary-Treasurer is responsible for reviewing the notice of appeal and for communicating with the Appellant and others on matters related to the appeal.

3.3.1 Appeal does not comply with the requirements for an appeal

3.3.1.1 If, in the opinion of the Secretary-Treasurer, the appeal does not comply with the requirements for an appeal, the Secretary-Treasurer will refer the matter to the Board to determine whether or not the matter will be heard.

3.3.1.2 The Board may ask for written submissions from the Appellant and/or the staff on this preliminary matter.

3.3.1.3 The Board will determine whether or not the appeal will be heard by the Board.

3.3.1.4 The Secretary-Treasurer will notify all parties of the Board's decision to hear/or not hear the appeal.

3.3.2 Appeal complies with the requirements for an appeal

3.3.2.1 The Secretary-Treasurer will make arrangements for the Board to hear the appeal. Both the Appellant and the staff involved will be notified in writing regarding the date and time of the appeal.

4. Board Hearing

4.1 The Board may hold an oral hearing and/or may decide the appeal based upon written submissions. Oral hearings are strictly confidential.

4.2 Written submissions by both the Appellant and the staff will be copied and forwarded to both parties and to the Board.

4.3 Neither party may introduce new documents that the other has not had an opportunity to review prior to the hearing.

4.4 All parties will be present when reports are presented.

4.5 The staff/administration will first present their report. This presentation should be no longer than 20 minutes.

4.6 The Appellant will present their report. This presentation should be no longer than 20 minutes.

4.7 It is the Board's expectation that all parties will conduct themselves in a respectful and courteous manner. Failure to do so may result in the case being dismissed.

4.8 All parties will be excused from the boardroom except the Superintendent, the Secretary-Treasurer, the Trustees, and the recording secretary.

4.9 The Board will caucus to determine if there is any further information they require or any further questions they would like to ask.

4.10 The Chair may ask questions of both parties on behalf of the Board. The purpose of these questions is not for debate, but for ensuring clarity of the information presented.

4.11 The staff will summarize their position.

4.12 The Appellant will summarize their position.

- 4.13 At the conclusion of the hearing process, all parties will be excused except the Superintendent, the Secretary-Treasurer, the Trustees, and the recording secretary.
- 4.14 The Board will hold a formal in camera meeting and will attempt to reach a decision on the matter before them.
- 4.15 Only Trustees may vote in that meeting.
- 4.16 The decision will be communicated to both parties as quickly as possible, outlining the grounds for the decision.