

HOPKINTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY

SCHOOL-RELATED PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS

From time to time, parents or community members may have a concern or complaint that they would like a school or the school district to resolve. Although the School Committee does not deny the right of community members to bring appropriate and otherwise lawful concerns to a School Committee meeting, it will refer them to the appropriate administrator for investigation and solution. Complaints that concern Committee actions or operations are an exception, and may be brought directly to the School Committee as a whole or to the Chair.

School department personnel to whom concerns are brought are expected to respond in a reasonable time frame, taking into account the urgency of the situation or concern. School personnel should acknowledge receipt of the concern or complaint within two school days at the latest, barring mitigating circumstances such as sickness or school cancellation.

Concerns or complaints are handled as close to the point of origin as possible in order to be most effective, efficient, and timely. If a resolution is not reached at this level, the concern or complaint can be brought to the next level.

Concerns or complaints should be channeled as follows:

1. Teacher, Guidance/Adjustment Counselor, Librarian: The parent should first raise any concern regarding a school-related matter with the staff member most directly involved, such as a teacher, a guidance counselor, librarian, or other school-based educator. Issues brought to these professionals might include:
 - a. Student homework assignments, quizzes, and tests;
 - b. A child's progress or difficulty learning;
 - c. Course content, instructional materials, extra help;
 - d. Issues related to classroom discipline, relationships with other pupils and the teacher;
 - e. Problems between school and home, or child and other students;
 - f. Personal matters relating to student development, behaviors, interactions with others;
 - g. Student placement issues in a class, program, instructional level. (At the elementary schools the principal should be contacted.);
 - h. Course selections and student schedule at the Middle School and High School;
 - i. Concerns about condition or content of textbooks or library books;
 - j. College placement and career information;

2. Principal: If the matter remains unresolved or the matter involves an issue broader than any one classroom or teacher, the parent should contact the building principal. Principals have authority to make final judgments regarding student discipline and other building policy matters. The principal or his/her designee will address the following:
 - a. Reports of bullying behavior;
 - b. Complaints, dissatisfaction, or concerns regarding school personnel;
 - c. Issue arising within the school when a staff member cannot be specifically identified;
 - d. Instructional and co-curricular program or textbook issues;
 - e. Matters related to the physical plant;
 - f. Student records;
 - g. Discipline issues;
 - h. Transportation/Bus issues, which the principal may at times refer to Transportation Office;
 - i. Field trip fee waivers or reductions (per **JLB** Financial Assistance Policy);
 - j. Concerns about athletics that cannot be resolved by the Coach or Athletic Director.

3. Superintendent: If the parent believes that the problem is not resolved at the principal level, the parent may contact the Office of the Superintendent for guidance or resolution. Issues brought to the Superintendent may include:
 - a. Complaints or concerns regarding school personnel or services that have not been resolved at the principal's level;
 - b. Application of School Committee policies or procedures;
 - c. School Committee meeting and agenda items;
 - d. School system records or documents;
 - e. Budget;
 - f. Transportation (if not resolved by Transportation Coordinator or Director of Finance);
 - g. Distribution of flyers and printed information;
 - h. Requests to attend the Hopkinton Public Schools when intending to be a resident within a reasonable amount of time (per Policy JF School Admissions and Residency Requirements).

4. School Committee: If the matter is in the legal purview of the School Committee and remains unresolved, it may be brought to the attention of the School Committee, generally through the Chair. These include:
 - a. Matters pertaining to School Committee policy or procedures;
 - b. Requests that specific courses and programs be included in the program of studies;
 - c. Complaints regarding the Superintendent;
 - d. Complaints regarding a School Committee member;
 - e. School Committee minutes and agenda items;
 - f. Budgetary matters;
 - g. Long-range planning (facilities, programs etc.).

Certain concerns or questions should be channeled to other school professionals as follows:

5. Student Services: The Director of Student Services oversees Special Education and English Language Learner services. Each school has an assigned Special Education Team Chair who would be contacted first about special education information or concerns.

The following questions or concerns should be channeled through the Team Chairs:

- a. Requests for information about special education or evaluation of children with a disability;
- b. Concerns about a child's Individual Education Program (IEP);
- c. Questions about parents' rights under federal and state law and regulation.

The Director of Student Services would address the following questions or concerns:

- d. Any question or concern that could not be resolved through the Special Education Team Chair;
- e. Concerns about §504 Plan;
- f. Questions or concerns about the Special Education program as a whole or English Language Learner services;
- g. Requests by hearing impaired adults for an interpreter at a meeting.

6. Assistant Superintendent

- a. Suggestions or requests for change in the curriculum or assessment, or questions about either;
- b. Concerns or questions about school safety or the Crisis Plan;
- c. Appeals under Civil Rights law (including §504) and regulations.

7. Athletics: The Athletic Director oversees interscholastic and intramural sports, but similar to classroom concerns, any complaints about a sport should go first to the coach.

The Coach handles the following:

- a. Concerns about coaching practice and team rules;

- b. Questions about practice or game schedule or cancellation;
- c. Questions about the conduct of student athletes.

The Athletic Director addresses the following questions or concerns:

- a. Concerns that could not be resolved by the coach;
- b. Concerns related to the conduct of a coach;
- c. User fees;
- d. Out of season competition;
- e. School and Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules;
- f. Treatment of injuries or health concerns;
- g. Buses or transportation to and from athletic events;
- h. Equipment issues;
- i. Disability discrimination.

8. The Director of Finance oversees the transportation program, lunch program, and financial assistance. The Director addresses the following questions or concerns:

- a. Fees, including reductions or waivers;
- b. Student transportation;
- c. Online payments.

The following questions or concerns should be channeled through the following people in the Business department:

Transportation Coordinator

- a. Questions about transportation routes and bus stops;
- b. Concerns about bus behavior.

Director of Food Service

- a. Questions about food, including menu, food ingredients, food prices;
- b. Questions about account balances.

9. Attendance Officer

- a. Concerns about student attendance or tardiness;
- b. Questions about admissions and residency requirements (Policy JF School Admissions and Residency Requirements).

First Reading	April 28, 2011
Second Reading	May 12, 2011
Third Reading	June 9, 2011
Adopted	January 6, 2005
Policy Amended	June 9, 2011
Legal References	
Policy Cross Reference	JF School Admissions and Residency Requirements JH School Attendance JLB Financial Assistance JICFB Bully Prevention KHCB Dissemination of Information by Non-School Groups
Procedure Reference	