



Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School
PO Box 1799, 182 Ba'as Road
Port Hardy, BC V0N 2P0
Phone (250) 949-7743 Fax (250) 949-7422
Website: www.gnschool.ca



APPEALS/COMPLAINTS POLICY

RATIONALE

The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School recognizes that parents, students, teachers and support staff form an integral part of the school community. From time to time, issues may arise where members of the community may differ in their perspectives.

AVOIDING BIAS

"Bias" may occur when the mind of the decision-maker is in some way pre-disposed to a particular result, or is closed with respect to particular issues and as a result the decision.

The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School will follow the following guidelines to avoid bias or the appearance of bias:

1. Staff will not prejudge the evidence of the particular circumstances of the student's case, or give the appearance (e.g., in public statements) of having done so, even if you have strong convictions on such matters.
2. When selecting persons to deal with discipline, hear a case or an appeal of a decision, the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School will avoid those who have a close out-of-school relationship, family ties or adversarial relationship with the student or student's family, or a staff member who is closely involved in the incident.
3. In situations where it may be difficult to find persons who do not have an appearance of bias regarding a particular case or an appeal of a decision, the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School may appoint a person(s) from outside the school community to handle the case or appeal. If this is the case the school may have Federation of Independent School Associations (FISA) appoint an Ombudsman.

NOTE: The Ombudsperson is not an arbitrator and does not have the ability to make a binding decision in a matter. The Ombudsperson, however, does provide an opportunity for an external review of a decision or action of a school.

The Ombudsperson, having completed an investigation, can make a recommendation to the school or school authority in an attempt to resolve the complaint. If the Ombudsperson is not satisfied with the school's response to the written report, the Ombudsperson may issue a report of the circumstances to the Association and to the FISA.

POLICY

Within the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School all complaints must be dealt with in a timely manner. Each member of the community is expected to follow the appropriate complaint procedure as described below. All parties involved must maintain confidentiality with respect to all aspects of this procedure.

PROCEDURES

1. The issue must be dealt with first by the persons directly involved.
2. If the issue cannot be resolved the matter must be brought to the attention of the Principal of the school.
3. The Principal will clarify the issue of disagreement and document all matters pertaining to the issue and its resolution.
4. The Principal having made a judgment to resolve the issue, both parties must be promptly notified of the resolution in writing. In this written notification, the parties must be informed of the available appeal procedures.
5. If the Principal's resolution is not accepted, the matter may be appealed to the Band Council Education Committee. The appeal must be submitted in writing no more than seven days after the Principal's decision has been received.
6. The Band Council Education Committee has the authority to make a decision regarding the appeal. This committee must always include the Band Manager. The committee will study the documentation and then call a meeting to hear presentations from the complainant and the Principal. Both parties will be in attendance and be given the opportunity to respond.
7. After this, the Band Council Education Committee will take the steps necessary to implement the decision.
8. The Band Council Education Committee shall notify the parents and the principal of its decision within seven days of the meeting. The decision shall be communicated in written form.
9. When the complaint is about the Principal, the process should start at #1. However, if there is no resolution at the end of this, the process should skip to #6 and following.
10. The decision of the Band Council Education Committee shall be final. Refusal of the employee to accept the decision of the Board of Directors may result in removal from office or termination of employment. If parents refuse to accept the decision of the Band Council Education Committee and persist in pursuing the issues, disciplinary action may result in the removal of the child(ren) from the school.
11. Requests for extensions of the timelines mentioned in this policy, will, for valid reasons, ordinarily be approved.