

**A Guide for  
Addressing Complaints  
from Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and the Public**



**Dufferin-Peel  
Catholic District  
School Board**

**A Tradition of Excellence in Catholic Education**



## MISSION STATEMENT

*The Mission of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, in partnership with the family and church, is to provide, in a responsible manner, a Catholic education which develops spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, social, and physical capabilities of each individual to live fully today and to meet the challenges of the future, thus enriching the community.*

## Introduction

Recent amendments to Ontario's *Education Act* established through the *Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act, 2009* have redefined the role of school board trustees. The school board, as a corporate body, is the legislative source of all decisions, and individual trustees are granted no authority through the *Education Act*. It is through the process of collaborating and engaging in joint decision-making as members of the board that trustees work with the values, priorities, and expectations of the community to translate them into policy.

Trustees play a key leadership role in ensuring that school boards operate within the standards established by the province, and that programs and services remain responsive to the communities they serve while ensuring a balanced budget under the *Education Act* and meeting the province's regulatory requirements for financial reporting and accountability.

School board trustees, as individuals, do not have authority to make decisions or take action on behalf of the board. They are members of the board and it is the board as a whole that exercises authority and makes decisions and does so in the interest of all students of the board. Individual trustees have no independent decision-making authority over the board, schools or its employees. The *Education Act* requires school board trustees to entrust the day-to-day management of the board to its staff through the Director of Education.

Trustees are required to uphold the implementation of any board resolution after it is passed by the board. As trustees communicate with ratepayers and hear their concerns, they must at the same time convey that changes to existing board policy require consideration by the board as a whole.

Trustees facilitate the concerns of ratepayers by advising them as to which board staff can answer their questions and deal directly with their concerns.

Together, the board of trustees advocates for excellence in education; trustees act as role models to engender confidence in publically funded Catholic education. In addition, Catholic school board trustees have a clearly defined role as stewards and guardians of Catholic education.

The law plays a significant role in defining governance structures and processes for school boards. School boards are "creatures of statute", and their powers and accountability frameworks are, to a significant extent, prescribed by provincial legislation and regulations.

(Adapted from: Good Governance: A Guide for Trustees, School Boards and Directors of Education and Communities.)

# Duties and Powers of Schools Boards

The *Education Act* (section 169.1) stipulates that every school board shall:

- (a) promote student achievement and well-being;
- (b) ensure effective stewardship of the board's resources;
- (c) deliver effective and appropriate education programs to its pupils;
- (d) develop and maintain policies and organizational structures that,
  - (i) promote the goals referred to in clauses (a) to (c), and
  - (ii) encourage pupils to pursue their educational goals;
- (e) monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies developed by the board under clause (d) in achieving the board's goals and the efficiency of the implementation of those policies;
- (f) develop a multi-year plan aimed at achieving the goals referred to in clauses (a) to (c);
- (g) annually review the plan referred to in clause (f) with the board's director of education or the supervisory officer acting as the board's director of education; and
- (h) monitor and evaluate the performance of the board's director of education, or the supervisory officer acting as the board's director of education, in meeting,
  - (i) his or her duties under this Act or any policy, guideline or regulation made under this Act, including duties under the plan referred to in clause (f), and
  - (ii) any other duties assigned by the board. 2009, c. 25, s. 15.

## Premise

The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board's motto *A Tradition of Excellence in Catholic Education* captures the history, culture and collaboration of the board as trustees, parents and staff have worked together for more than forty years to provide a learning environment based on gospel values, excellence, respect, positive relationships, and fair and equitable policies and practices.

The core principles identified in the Strategic System Plan 2010-2015: Catholicity, Community Engagement, Learning Environment, Parish - Home - School, and Physical Environment are shaping our schools, classrooms, corporate decision-making and the direction that the system has undertaken in providing a learning environment focused on student achievement.

This guide has been developed to support best practices for the implementation of Board policies relating to the management and resolution of concerns or complaints arising from parent(s)/guardian(s), or individual members of the public specifically related to: *academics, non-academics, employees and transportation of students*.

The following Board policies form the foundation of this guide:

- *Board Policy 2.00: Complaints - Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Public to Trustees*
- *Board Policy 2.01: Complaints - Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Public to Senior Officials*
- *Board Policy 7.05 Transportation of Students*

As the *Education Act* requires trustees to entrust the day-to-day management of the Board to its staff through the Director of Education, when parent(s)/guardian(s) or individual members of the public raise concerns or complaints, it is the staff that will investigate, manage and provide resolutions to the identified issue in a timely manner in accordance with relevant Board policies.

## Guidelines for All

Only those concerns or complaints will be considered by Board staff where the complainant or inquirer provides their name and contact information for correspondence purposes.

Parent(s)/guardian(s), adult learners or ratepayers will be directed, as appropriate, to address concerns and complaints at the level at which the concern originates.

All information shared is bound by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* as governed by legislation in Ontario ensuring confidentiality is maintained by all parties concerning student and personnel matters.

## Guidelines for Trustees

When a Trustee receives a complaint from a parent(s)/guardian(s), adult learner or ratepayer, the Trustee shall review the process as outlined in this guide with the individual and direct them to contact the appropriate staff. The process will allow the parent(s)/guardian(s), adult learner or ratepayer to engage in communication with the most appropriate staff member.

Where a Trustee has an inquiry regarding a school related matter which was initially brought to their attention by a parent(s)/guardian(s), adult learner or ratepayer, the Trustee is directed to contact the Superintendent for that family of schools or area of responsibility.

Where a Trustee contacts a Principal regarding concerns or complaints from parent(s)/guardian(s), adult learner or ratepayer, the matter will exclude any investigative purpose. Direction to Principals will be provided by the Family of Schools Superintendent.

## Guidelines for Principals

Where a complaint or concern is raised by a parent(s)/guardian(s), adult learner or ratepayer the Principal will consult with the Family of Schools Superintendent, as appropriate, and endeavour to resolve the issue at the local level in accordance with Board policies.

Where a complaint or concern cannot be resolved locally to the satisfaction of the parent(s)/guardian(s), adult learner or ratepayer, the Principal will refer the matter to the Family of Schools Superintendent.

## Guidelines for Superintendents

Where a matter cannot be resolved at the school level, the Family of Schools Superintendent will consult with the Principal regarding the concern or complaint and endeavour to resolve the issue in accordance with Board policies. The Superintendent will inform the parent(s)/guardian(s), adult learner or ratepayer of the resolution to the matter.

Where requested, Superintendents will apprise respective Trustees, as appropriate, of the resolution of a particular matter which was initially brought to the Trustee's attention by a parent(s)/guardian(s), adult learner or ratepayer.

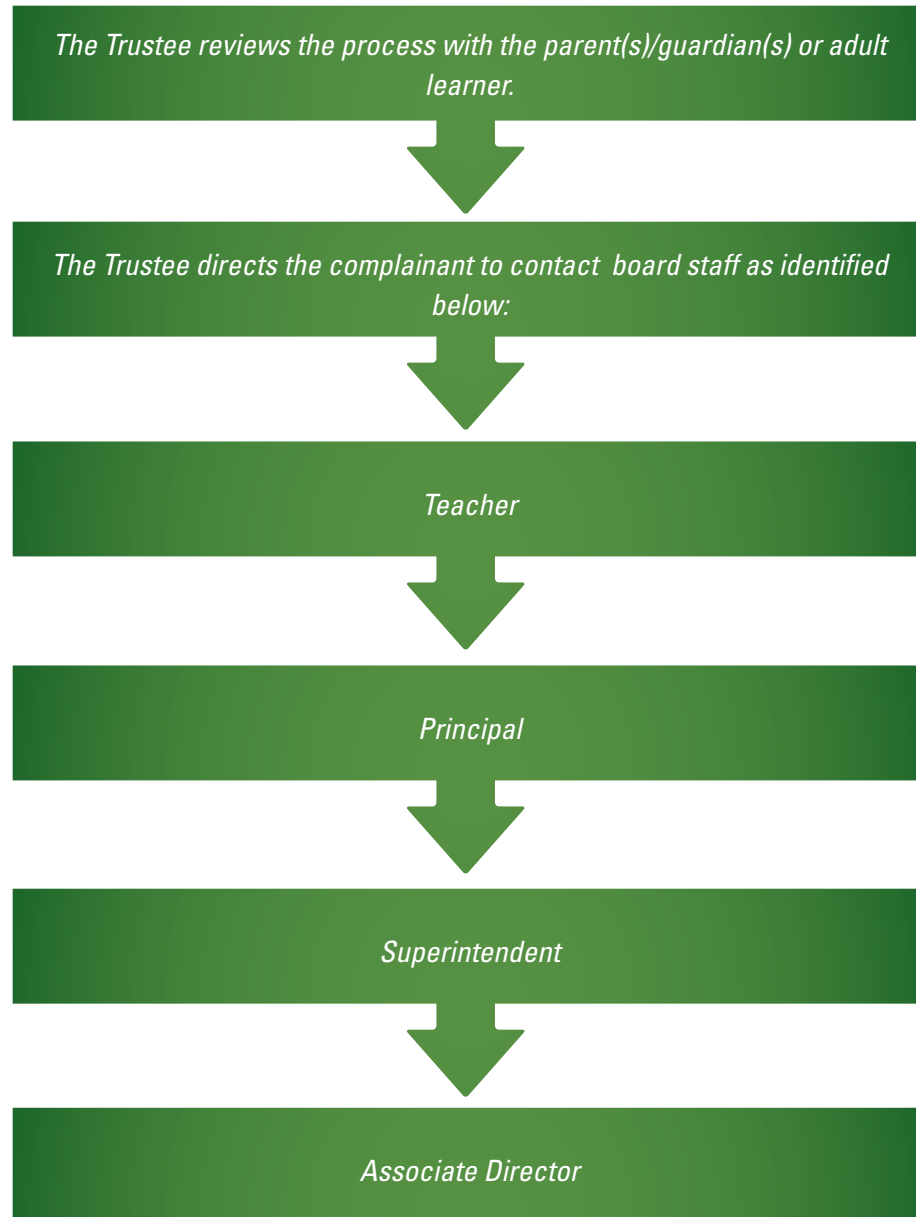
Where a Superintendent is unable to satisfy the complaint, he/she shall advise the appropriate Associate Director of the matter.

# Process for Addressing **ACADEMIC** Complaints

‘When a Trustee receives a complaint from the parent/guardian of a student about any academic problem, the Trustee will suggest that the parent/guardian contact the teacher of the student and if the complainant is not then satisfied he/she should approach the Principal of the school. If the problem is not then solved satisfactorily, the parent/guardian should contact the Superintendent for the family or area. If the complaint is still not satisfied, then they may appeal to the Associate Director of Instructional Services, or if the matter is of a corporate nature, then the Associate Director of Corporate Services.’

*(Board Policy 2.00)*

## **ACADEMIC**

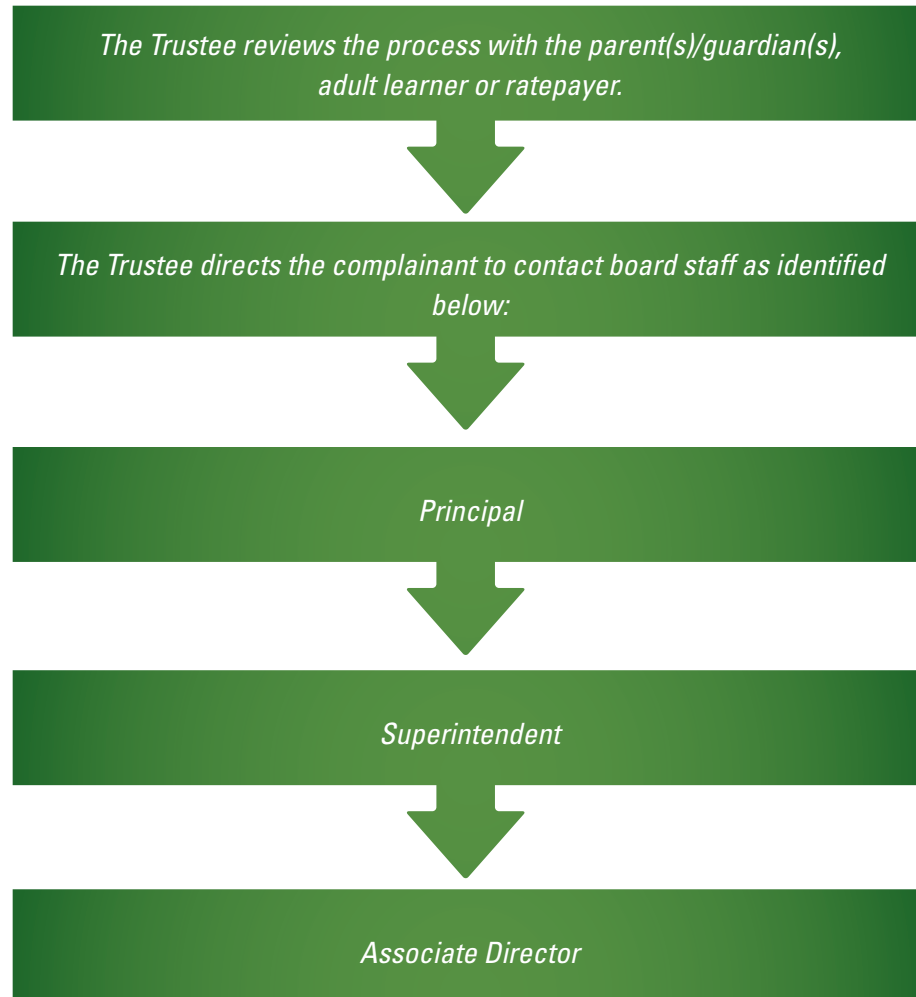


# Process for Addressing NON-ACADEMIC Complaints

‘When a Trustee receives a complaint from the parent/guardian of a student about any problem which is not strictly academic, the Trustee will suggest that the parent/guardian contact the Principal of the school, or the Trustee may contact the Principal, for information purposes and not for investigative purposes, or the Superintendent. If the problem is then not solved satisfactorily, the parent/guardian should contact the Superintendent or the Associate Director, who will respond in a timely manner.’

*(Board Policy 2.00)*

## NON-ACADEMIC

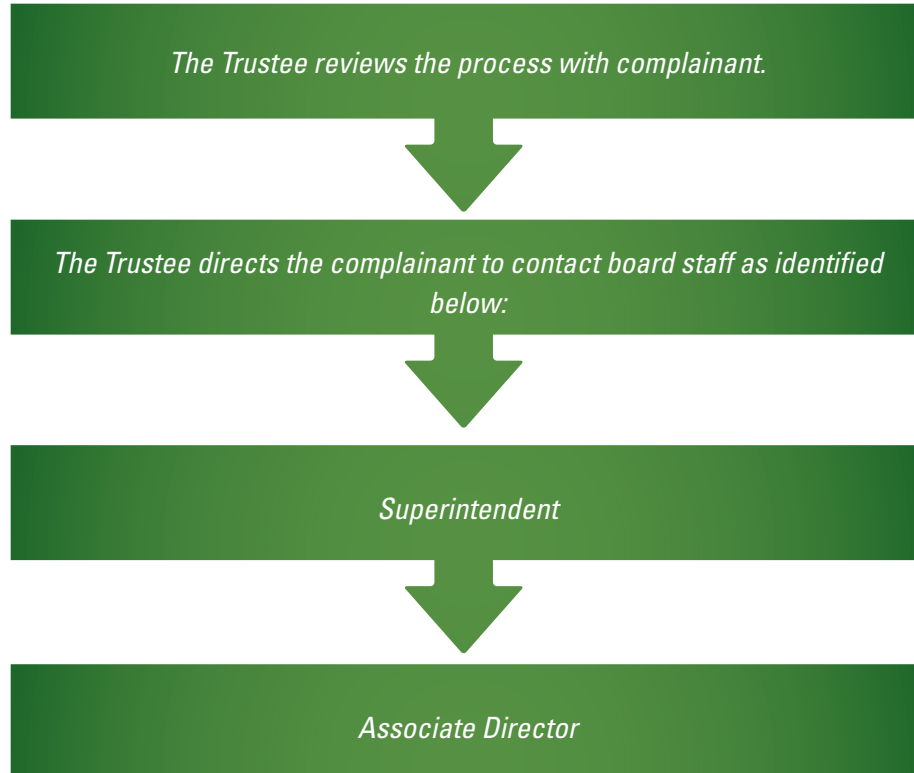


# Process for Addressing EMPLOYEE Complaints

‘When a Trustee receives a complaint from a ratepayer or any other person concerning an employee of the Board, he/she shall direct that complaint directly to the Superintendent who has jurisdiction over the person about whom the complaint was made, or the Trustee should refer the complaint to the Associate Director for that area of responsibility.’

*(Board Policy 2.00)*

## EMPLOYEES



# Process for addressing STUDENT TRANSPORTATION Inquiries or Complaints

Student transportation in school boards is governed by the *Education Act* and related regulations which mandate a joint co-terminus board consortium for the purpose of providing a common administration of transportation services for students in a specific region.

In the Dufferin-Peel CDSB, two consortia have been created to support transportation of students; one consortium for students residing in the Region of Peel and one for students residing in the County of Dufferin.

## STUDENT TRANSPORTATION OF PEEL REGION (STOPR)

'Transportation of students in Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga shall be provided by Student Transportation of Peel Region (STOPR). STOPR is the consortium that has been established by the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and the Peel District School Board, under the Ministry of Education's mandate, to provide transportation services for students within Peel Region.' (*Board Policy 7.05*)

## TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS IN THE COUNTY OF DUFFERIN (STWDSTS)

'Transportation of students in the County of Dufferin shall be provided by Wellington-Dufferin Student Transportation Services. STWDSTS is the consortium that has been established by the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and the Upper Grand District School Board, under the Ministry of Education's mandate, to provide transportation services for students within Dufferin region.'  
(*Board Policy 7.05*)

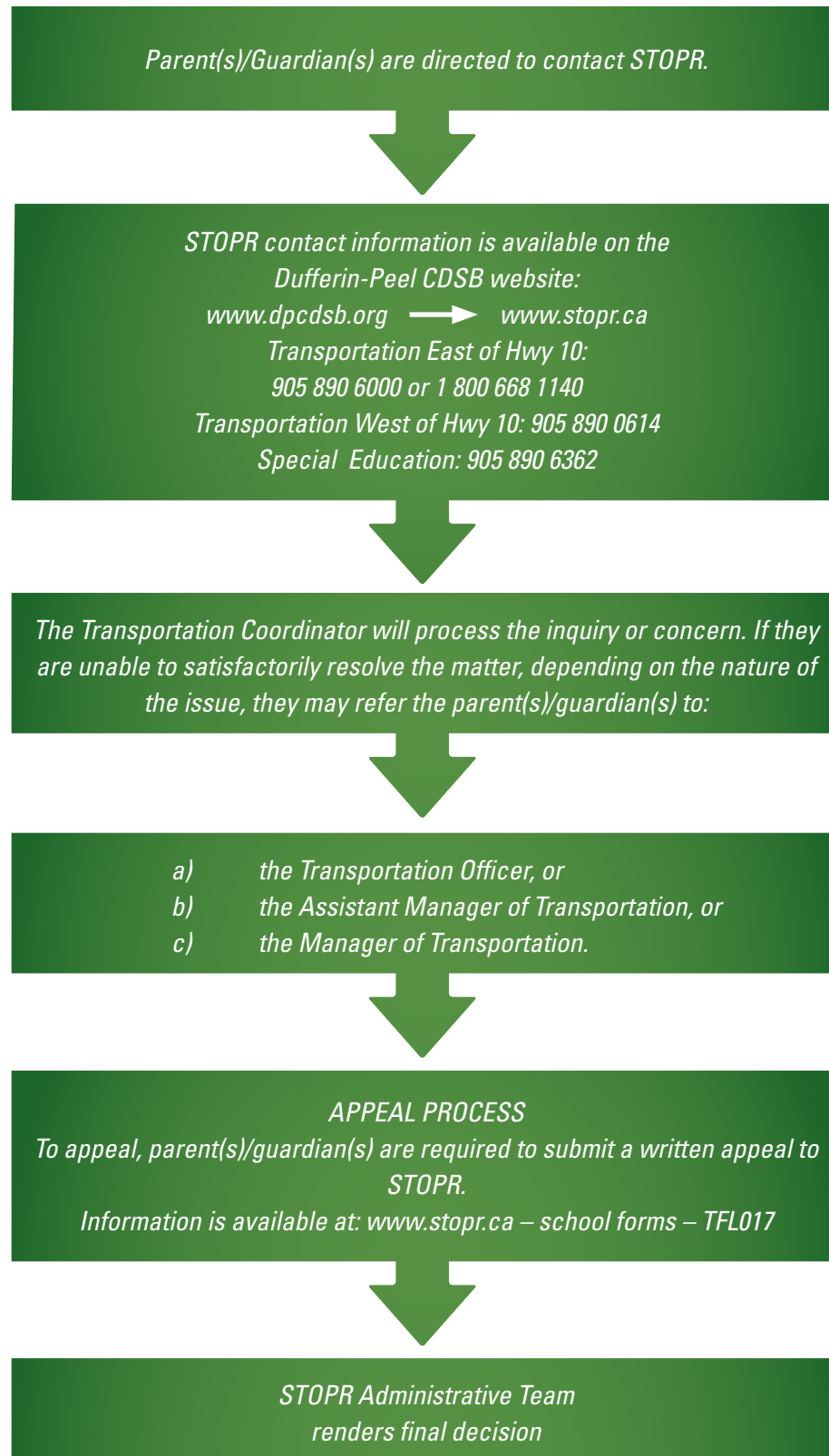
Student transportation is managed through the transportation consortia (STOPR and STWDSTS) in accordance with board policies.

When a Trustee or school administrator receives an inquiry or complaint from the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student regarding any transportation concerns, the Trustee or school administrator will direct the parent(s)/guardian(s) to contact the appropriate transportation consortium as outlined in this guide.

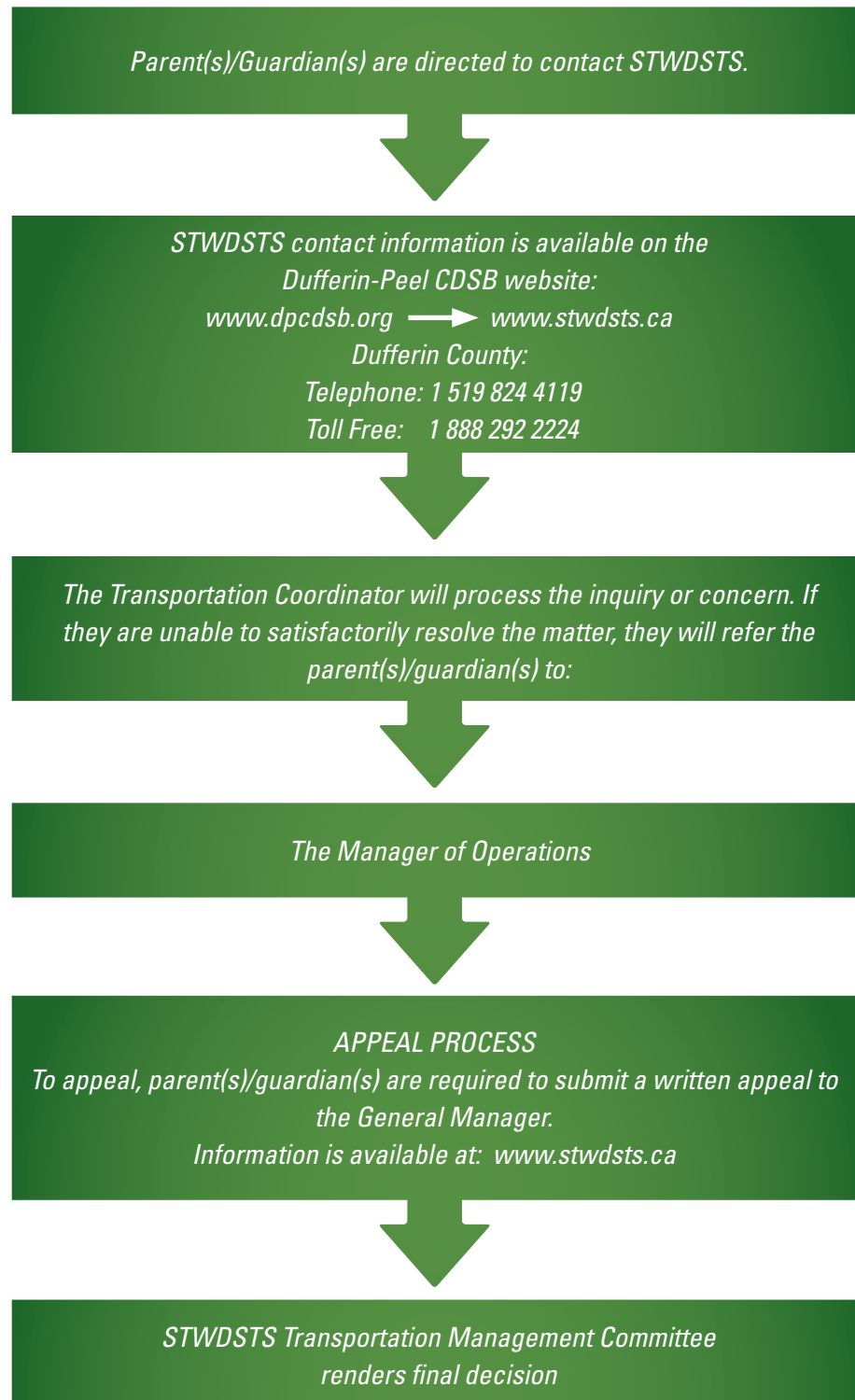
The STOPR and STWDSTS websites are readily accessible by logging onto the Dufferin-Peel CDSB website and selecting the Student Transportation icon followed by the STOPR or STWDSTS web addresses.



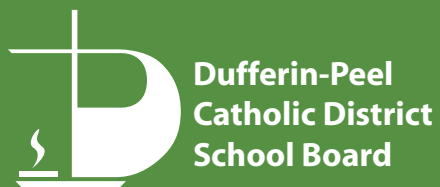
# Student Transportation of Peel Region (STOPR)



# Student Transportation for Dufferin County (STWDSTS)



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