



<b>Policy Code – Version: G4 – V2</b>	
<b>Policy Name: Complaints and Appeals</b>	
<b>Approved</b> by motion of Board on	01/10/2012
<b>Cross Reference</b>	
<b>Related Forms</b> Complaint Form; Appeal of Decision Form	

### Policy Statement

1. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority is committed to open communication with parents, member school Board administration and Trustees, principals, contracted school vehicle operators, and others regarding matters of complaint/concern and appeals.
2. While the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority acknowledges the public's right to directly contact their member school board Trustees and senior administration, the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority believes that complaints and concerns are most effectively resolved through direct communication with Ottawa Student Transportation Authority staff.
3. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority shall ensure that all complaints or concerns are dealt with in a fair, consistent and reasonable manner according to the established policies and Member Board direction.
4. Complaints and appeals shall form part of the OSTA's performance measurement program to measure effectiveness of service delivery. Annual trends regarding the number and types of complaints and appeals resolved shall be reported to the OSTA Board.
5. The OSTA General Manager shall have the authority to make the final decision for resolving complaints and/or appeals at his/her discretion.

## Procedure

### Complaints

1. The General Manager or designate will be responsible for establishing the administrative measures necessary for compliance with the above-stated Policy. The procedure and any instructions and forms will be made available on the OSTA website.
2. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority will record and address complaints once the complainant identifies himself/herself by name, and includes all the necessary information regarding the complaint – student name and date of birth, home address, pick-up and drop-off locations, phone number, email (if possible) and name of school.
3. All concerns/issues reported and not resolved at the first point of contact as minor issues, including their resolution and follow-up details, will be recorded in the electronic Complaint and/or Appeal forms as a regular complaint and/or appeal. The OSTA staff member handling a complaint or an appeal is responsible for the accuracy of data and reasonable timelines.
4. Complainants may use the Complaint/Appeal forms to submit their complaints or appeals in writing via regular mail/e-mail. A blank copy of this form may be downloaded from the OSTA webpage or obtained at OSTA office. They may also submit their complaint by telephone.
5. Management of concerns/issues will normally be subject to the following procedures:
  - a) Complainants will be provided with a resolution directly by the OSTA employee with whom they communicate. If the employee cannot provide adequate resolution or the issue is “critical” (see point 6 herein), he/she will record the details of the complaint in Complaint e-form and forward the issue to the responsible employee for a follow-up. The employee entering the issue into the form will advise the complainant about the procedure, follow-up actions and timelines as appropriate.
  - b) If the responsible employee at OSTA cannot provide satisfactory resolution or the issue is considered “critical” (see point 6 herein), he/she will record the follow up details of the complaint in Complaint e-form. The complainant may be contacted by the OSTA staff member at the next highest level of authority within the organization (follow the current organizational chart posted on OSTA website), up to and including the Assistant General Manager, to discuss the concern. The responsible employee handling the issue will advise the

complainant about the procedure, follow-up actions and timelines as appropriate.

- c) The Assistant General Manager makes the final decision with regards to complaints regarding operational items including driver behaviour, safety issues, recurring complaints and challenges to policies and procedures.
- d) The General Manager makes the final decision and is responsible for taking appropriate action for complaints regarding OSTA staff behaviour.

6. "Critical" issues to be regarded as complaints may include:

- a) issues concerning a driver and his/her behaviour,
- b) issues concerning an OSTA staff member's behaviour,
- c) safety issues,
- d) issues reported by a complainant as recurring,
- e) challenges to current or proposed policies and procedures

### Appeals

7. Management of appeals will normally be subject to the following procedures:

- a) Any appeal shall be considered as valid and be subject to the appeal procedure at the OSTA General Manager's discretion provided:
  - the complaint can demonstrate that the complaint resolution did not follow established policies and procedures in place, or
  - new information and facts are provided that were not considered in the complaint resolution, or
  - there is a safety issue, or
  - there are extenuating circumstances.
- b) If the responsible employee at OSTA cannot provide satisfactory resolution, the appellant will be directed to state the problem in writing, using the Appeal form, to the General Manager or designate.
- c) The appeal will then be reviewed by the GM, and the appellant (and other parties, as deemed appropriate and/or indicated by the appellant), will be advised in writing of any final decisions taken in relation to the appeal.

The review by the OSTA General Manager may include:

- revision of the original issue/complaint;
- consultation with the staff involved, e.g. transportation coordinators, operator, parents, superintendants, principals, trustees;

— review of the best practices in the industry;

d) The OSTA GM makes the final decision

8. The General Manager of OSTA will advise the President of the Board of Directors on matters requiring the attention, understanding and sensitivity of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority's Board of Directors and Administration.