



Parent Concerns: Guidelines for Resolution



Building a Healthy Relationship with your School

Developing a strong positive relationship with your child's teacher works in everyone's favour. When parents and teachers communicate well and work together, everyone comes out ahead – the student, the parents, and the teacher. Some ways you can build a positive relationship are:

1. Introduce yourself to the child's teachers, by phone or by person, as soon as possible. Talk about issues as they arise, not after they have built up, and make sure the teachers have your home and work phone numbers. Ask the teachers when they are generally available for phone calls and let them know when and where it is best to reach you.
2. Be visible at school functions and volunteer to help if you are able. This will show your child that home and school contact is important to you. Take some time on a regular basis to 'check in' informally with the teacher.
3. If problems do arise, set up a meeting with your child's teacher as soon as possible so you will have time to talk the issue through and plan together.

Parent Concerns

From time to time as a parent you may have a query, worry or concern about an aspect of your child's schooling. The following model represents some of the best practices for handling complaints fairly and respectfully.

1. Where do I start if I have a concern or problem?

Always start with the teacher. A face-to-face meeting between the teacher, parent, and student may be the best approach. Do this immediately and don't let problems build up. It is only fair and ethical if the teacher is made aware of your concerns and has an opportunity to address them. Briefly let the teacher know what you want to meet about and what you hope can be accomplished by the meeting. When you meet, remind yourself that, while parents and teachers may have different perspectives on some issues, each brings important information about your child to the discussion. Most problems are successfully resolved at this level.

2. Where do I go next?

The vice-principal or principal will make every attempt to solve the problem at the school level through appropriate processes and can help you contact the appropriate people as necessary.

3. Would it be appropriate to ask the PAC or other parents to get involved?

No. It is important to be fair to yourself and to the parties involved. Action on your own behalf allows

you to take ownership of your problem and follow it through. This includes using social media to air your problems. The problem can not be dealt with legally or ethically if it is presented anonymously or second or third hand. You can ask your PAC how to deal with issues without going through specifics and personal details. Or you can email the BCCPAC Parent Advisory Project for assistance (www.bccpac.bc.ca/advocacy/advocacy-main.htm).

Parent Code of Ethics

- I will demonstrate constructive attitudes toward school and its programs by supporting and cooperating with the teaching staff and the school board to the fullest extent.
- I will make no criticism of the school without ensuring that I have accurate and first hand information.
- I will encourage a positive attitude on the part of my child and will refrain from criticism of the teachers or school in her/his presence.

“I teach my child that when they have conflicts with family or friends, it is best to first work it out directly with that person.” - Michele Lavery, Parent

“We expect... parents will first begin to solve problems through the conflict resolution process available to them in their school districts. We expect that parents will attempt to resolve a conflict first by speaking to the person with whom they have a problem.” - Terri Watson, BCCPAC (BC Parent Advisory Council) President 2003