

# **What Parents Can Do To Help Their Child**

*(Adapted from the BCCPAC Speaking Up! A parent guide to advocating for students in public schools)*

## **1 Decide when to act**

When you believe something is happening at school that is affecting your child, you may need to act.

## **2 Listen to and talk with your child**

To be able to help, you need to listen carefully and consider your child's views.

Have regular and honest ongoing conversations with your child.

Make sure your concerns are based on what you know to be true from your experience or your child's experience.

As children mature, a parent's role changes from representing them to helping them build the skills they need to represent themselves. The age and needs of your child will determine how you are involved. Being there to support your child is appropriate at any age.

## **3 Identify the problem**

- Are you seeing changes in your child's behaviour?
- Do you think your child is being bullied?
- Are you concerned about your child's progress in school?
- Do you think your child is being mistreated by someone?
- Other concerns could be discipline, health or safety.

Gather details that have led to the concern (refer to Self Help Guide for Problem Solving).

## **4 Prepare**

It is important to plan your approach to the problem. If you need support, talk to someone you trust. At any step in the process you are encouraged to bring another individual to meetings with the school. This may be a relative, trusted friend or an “advocate”. Respect your child’s and others’ right to privacy by avoiding unnecessary or public discussion.

## **5 Commit to solving the problem**

Work to solve the problem using SD 42’s Steps for Problem Solving framework. (Refer to district website at [www.sd42.ca](http://www.sd42.ca) under Parents for all related handbooks, policies and procedures).

- Think the best of others.
- Face difficult situations with courage.
- If things get difficult, look for more information and support rather than give up.
- Learn who is willing and able to make the changes necessary and share your ideas with them.

## **6 How could the problem be solved?**

Be flexible and open-minded about possible solutions. The solution may be very different from what you expected. Explore how possible solutions may work for your child.

## **7 Decide whether you need a meeting**

You may find that you need to meet with the people who have the ability to help solve the problem. A meeting that includes the right people can be helpful in finding possible solutions and developing a plan.

## **8** **Setting up or attending a meeting**

Once you have decided the person(s) you should talk to, call them to let them know what you want to discuss and to set up a meeting. Let the person(s) know if someone will be attending the meeting with you. Ask who else will be at the meeting. If you are asked to attend a meeting by the school or district, don't be afraid to ask questions. (Refer to Self Help Guide for Meeting Survival.)

## **9** **Take notes**

Record the dates of meetings, phone calls, who you speak to, etc. and keep copies of everything you send or receive. If you have someone with you in a meeting who is able to take notes, ask them. It will help you to be able to focus on the conversation. Any official notes/minutes taken at a meeting should be made available to you.

## **10** **Stay involved**

At the end of a meeting, it is a good idea to quickly go over where you have reached agreement and confirm the action and follow-up plan. Make sure you and your child are part of any ongoing plans. If one solution does not work out, request another – plans must be workable to be able to meet your child's needs.